



Hansard

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

60th Parliament

Tuesday 21 March 2023

Office-holders of the Legislative Assembly

60th Parliament

Speaker

Maree Edwards

Deputy Speaker

Matt Fregon

Acting Speakers

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

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

Jacinta Allan

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

Ben Carroll

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

John Pesutto

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

David Southwick

Leader of the Nationals

Peter Walsh

Deputy Leader of the Nationals

Emma Kealy

Leader of the House

Mary-Anne Thomas

Manager of Opposition Business

James Newbury

Members of the Legislative Assembly
60th Parliament

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Addison, Juliana	Wendouree	ALP	Lambert, Nathan	Preston	ALP
Allan, Jacinta	Bendigo East	ALP	Maas, Gary	Narre Warren South	ALP
Andrews, Daniel ¹	Mulgrave	ALP	McCurdy, Tim	Ovens Valley	Nat
Battin, Brad	Berwick	Lib	McGhie, Steve	Melton	ALP
Benham, Jade	Mildura	Nat	McLeish, Cindy	Eildon	Lib
Britnell, Roma	South-West Coast	Lib	Marchant, Alison	Bellarine	ALP
Brooks, Colin	Bundoora	ALP	Matthews-Ward, Kathleen	Broadmeadows	ALP
Bull, Josh	Sunbury	ALP	Mercurio, Paul	Hastings	ALP
Bull, Tim	Gippsland East	Nat	Mullahy, John	Glen Waverley	ALP
Cameron, Martin	Morwell	Nat	Newbury, James	Brighton	Lib
Carbines, Anthony	Ivanhoe	ALP	O'Brien, Danny	Gippsland South	Nat
Carroll, Ben	Niddrie	ALP	O'Brien, Michael	Malvern	Lib
Cheeseman, Darren	South Barwon	ALP	O'Keeffe, Kim	Shepparton	Nat
Cianflone, Anthony	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Pallas, Tim	Werribee	ALP
Cleeland, Annabelle	Euroa	Nat	Pearson, Danny	Essendon	ALP
Connolly, Sarah	Laverton	ALP	Pesutto, John	Hawthorn	Lib
Couzens, Christine	Geelong	ALP	Read, Tim	Brunswick	Greens
Crewther, Chris	Mornington	Lib	Richards, Pauline	Cranbourne	ALP
Crugnale, Jordan	Bass	ALP	Richardson, Tim	Mordialloc	ALP
D'Ambrosio, Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Riordan, Richard	Polwarth	Lib
De Martino, Daniela	Monbulk	ALP	Rowswell, Brad	Sandringham	Lib
de Vietri, Gabrielle	Richmond	Greens	Sandell, Ellen	Melbourne	Greens
Dimopoulos, Steve	Oakleigh	ALP	Settle, Michaela	Eureka	ALP
Edbrooke, Paul	Frankston	ALP	Smith, Ryan ⁴	Warrandyte	Lib
Edwards, Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Southwick, David	Caulfield	Lib
Farnham, Wayne	Narracan	Lib	Spence, Ros	Kalkallo	ALP
Foster, Eden ²	Mulgrave	ALP	Staikos, Nick	Bentleigh	ALP
Fowles, Will ³	Ringwood	Ind	Suleyman, Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Fregon, Matt	Ashwood	ALP	Tak, Meng Heang	Clarinda	ALP
George, Ella	Lara	ALP	Taylor, Jackson	Bayswater	ALP
Grigorovitch, Luba	Kororoit	ALP	Taylor, Nina	Albert Park	ALP
Groth, Sam	Nepean	Lib	Theophanous, Kat	Northcote	ALP
Guy, Matthew	Bulleen	Lib	Thomas, Mary-Anne	Macedon	ALP
Halfpenny, Bronwyn	Thomastown	ALP	Tilley, Bill	Benambra	Lib
Hall, Katie	Footscray	ALP	Vallence, Bridget	Evelyn	Lib
Hamer, Paul	Box Hill	ALP	Vulin, Emma	Pakenham	ALP
Haylett, Martha	Ripon	ALP	Walsh, Peter	Murray Plains	Nat
Hibbins, Sam	Prahran	Greens	Walters, Iwan	Greenvale	ALP
Hilakari, Mathew	Point Cook	ALP	Ward, Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Hodgett, David	Croydon	Lib	Wells, Kim	Rowville	Lib
Horne, Melissa	Williamstown	ALP	Werner, Nicole ⁵	Warrandyte	Lib
Hutchins, Natalie	Sydenham	ALP	Wight, Dylan	Tameit	ALP
Kathage, Lauren	Yan Yean	ALP	Williams, Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
Kealy, Emma	Lowan	Nat	Wilson, Belinda	Narre Warren North	ALP
Kilkenny, Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Wilson, Jess	Kew	Lib

¹ ALP until 5 August 2023

² Sworn in 6 February 2024

³ Resigned 27 September 2023

⁴ Resigned 7 July 2023

⁵ Sworn in 3 October 2023

Party abbreviations

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

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Tuesday 21 March 2023

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

Bills

Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

Introduction and first reading

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (12:05): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Water and Catchment Legislation Amendment Act 2021 to make minor and technical amendments to that act, to make minor related amendments to the Water Act 1989 and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Tim McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (12:05): Could I get a brief explanation of the bill, please, Minister.

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (12:06): The Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 will make amendments to the Water Act 1989 and the Water and Catchment Legislation Amendment Act 2021. On commencement it will also amend the Water Act 1989 to extend the default commencement date of the place-of-take approvals framework from 1 July 2023 to 1 July 2024, providing further time to consult with flood-affected water users as well as making technical changes to allow the place-of-take approvals framework to function as intended and strengthening water delivery rights.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

Disability and Social Services Regulation Amendment Bill 2023

Introduction and first reading

Ros SPENCE (Kalkallo – Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Community Sport, Minister for Suburban Development) (12:07): I move:

That I introduce a bill for an act to amend the Disability Act 2006 in relation to the Secretary's functions, the sharing of information, residential services, restrictive practices, compulsory treatment and other related matters, to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 in relation to SDA enrolled dwellings, to amend the Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 in relation to registration requirements, to amend the Social Services Regulation Act 2021 in relation to interviews and hearings for WCES service users, powers of entry and other related matters, to make consequential amendments to other acts and for other purposes.

Motion agreed to.

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (12:07): Although the explanation was quite significant, I ask the minister if she has any further detail on the bill.

Ros SPENCE (Kalkallo – Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Community Sport, Minister for Suburban Development) (12:08): The bill reintroduces substantially the same amendments proposed in the Disability Amendment Bill 2022 with minor and technical amendments as well as time-critical amendments to the Social Services Regulation Act 2021 to improve the regulator's ability to monitor compliance in certain accommodation settings, strengthen protections for vulnerable service users and support the effective operation of the new regulatory framework commencing on 1 July 2024.

Read first time.

Ordered to be read second time tomorrow.

Petitions

Mental health tribunal membership

David HODGETT (Croydon) presented a petition bearing 8 signatures:

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly that the Minister for Mental Health has suspended a community member from the Mental Health Tribunal until further investigation. An investigation has since been completed, the Minister has received the investigator's report and other relevant information. It is now up to the Minister to make a final decision as to whether the member is to be returned to work or removed from the tribunal by the Governor in Council.

The member participated in the investigation process fully, as requested by the Minister, and now it is up to the Minister to do their part. The member has been off work for over 15 months now. The amount of time the suspension and investigation process, and now the final decision, has been drawn out for is unreasonable and has had a detrimental effect on the member, their family and community life.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly call on the Minister for Mental Health to make a decision about the status of the suspended community member on the Mental Health Tribunal without delay.

Committees

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee

Alert Digest No. 2

Iwan WALTERS (Greenvale) (12:09): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, being *Alert Digest* No. 2 of 2023, on the following act and bills:

Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2023

Local Government (Moirā Shire Council) Act 2023

Public Administration and Planning Legislation Amendment (Control of Lobbyists) Bill 2023

Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (Health Services Performance Transparency and Accountability) Bill 2023

together with appendices and an extract from proceedings.

Ordered to be published.

Documents

Documents

Incorporated list as follows:

DOCUMENTS TABLED UNDER ACTS OF PARLIAMENT – The Clerk tabled:

Financial Management Act 1994 – 2022–23 Mid-Year Financial Report incorporating the Quarterly Financial Report No 2 – released on 10 March 2023

Municipal Association of Victoria – Report 2021–22

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

Boroondara – C391, C392

Glen Eira – C218

Golden Plains – C101

Greater Bendigo – C266

Greater Geelong – C451

Greater Shepparton – C244

Indigo – C78

Merri-bek – C201

Moirā – C97

Moyne – C78

Victoria Planning Provisions – VC229

Yarra Ranges – C215

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987 – SR 14

County Court Act 1958 – SR 16

Planning and Environment Act 1987 – SR 17

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 – SR 15

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rules 10, 14, 16

Wildlife Act 1975 – Wildlife (Prohibition of Game Hunting) Notice No 1 (*Gazette S112, 14 March 2023*).

PROCLAMATION – Under SO 177A, the Clerk tabled the following proclamation fixing operative date:

Major Crime and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2022 – Part 4 – 3 April 2023 (*Gazette S116, 15 March 2023*).

Bills

Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023

Council's amendments

The SPEAKER (12:11): I have received a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023 with amendments.

Ordered that amendments be taken into consideration later this day.

Local Government (Moirā Shire Council) Bill 2023

Royal assent

The SPEAKER (12:11): I inform the house that the Governor has given royal assent to the Local Government (Moirā Shire Council) Bill 2023.

Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2023

Appropriation

The SPEAKER (12:11): I have received messages from the Governor recommending appropriations for the purposes of the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2023.

Committees

Parliamentary committees

Membership

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

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (12:12): I give notice that tomorrow I will move that

Ryan Smith be a member of the House Committee and that Belinda Wilson be a member of the Standing Orders Committee.

Business of the house

Program

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (12:12): I move:

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 5 pm on Thursday 9 March 2023:

Disability and Social Services Regulation Amendment Bill 2023

Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.

So another sitting week and another very full agenda from the Andrews Labor government as we focus on getting on with the job of delivering for the people of Victoria. Indeed one of the things that we will talk about during this week is the notice of motion that I put on the notice paper back in February in relation to the Suburban Rail Loop. I will, for the house's benefit, read out that motion:

That this house notes that Victorians resoundingly supported, for a second time –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, for the benefit of the house I think the Leader of the House has accidentally moved the motion referring to the names of the bills that were introduced this morning rather than those that are going to be debated in the week. For the assistance of the house, perhaps the leader may want to correct that.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: I thank the Manager of Opposition Business for being alert and focused on what is going on in the house, not just in his party room. I move:

That, under standing order 94(2), the orders of the day, government business, relating to the following bills be considered and completed by 5 pm on Thursday 23 March 2023:

Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2023.

Thank you. I ask for the house's indulgence, and I apologise for that earlier error. But, as I was saying, we are looking forward to debating the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) motion, which reads as follows:

That this house notes that Victorians resoundingly supported, for a second time, the state-shaping Suburban Rail Loop, including SRL Airport, described by the Shadow Minister for Education on social media as 'a mangy dog' of a project.

Well, I think we can all agree that Victorians saw the SRL somewhat differently. I am certainly looking forward to that debate, and indeed for each of those members – I might say, all of whom reside on this side of the house – representing communities that will benefit directly from the Suburban Rail Loop, I look forward to their contributions.

On the other hand, I wonder what we will hear from those on the other side. They have had two elections to consider the SRL, and each time they have fallen on the wrong side of history when it comes to supporting state-shaping projects, projects that deliver jobs –

The SPEAKER: Order! Can the Leader of the House come back to the motion before the house.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: Thank you very much, Speaker. As I said, I think it will be a terrific debate.

We will also be debating of course the government's Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2023. Once again, this is a bill about a very important reform – a reform that was delivered by the Andrews Labor government, because we believe that all lives matter and we believe in supporting those who are most marginalised in our community, including injecting drug users. We know that the facility has safely managed more than

6750 overdoses and has saved 63 lives. Once again, this promises to be a very interesting debate, and I will be looking forward to hearing how those on the other side attempt to argue against a facility that is providing life-saving services. I might say, unlike so many on the other side of the house, I have had the opportunity to visit the safe injecting facility. It is a comprehensive health service. There have been more than 3200 referrals to health and social services from the service –

The SPEAKER: Leader of the House, can I ask you to come back to the government business program.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: Thank you, Speaker. I have had that opportunity, and I look forward to that debate.

Finally, of course we will also be talking about the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. This is a bill that delivers much-needed reform to our building system, and consumer protection is central to those changes. It implements key foundational improvements identified by the building system review expert panel, and it will enhance our building system here, creating more jobs and opportunities. I commend the government business program to the house.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (12:18): The coalition will be opposing the government business program. Those that were watching the debate on the government business program in the last sitting week will have noted that part of the debate was about the government moving a government business program forward that lacked detail. It simply made as a final point that there could be items considered by the Parliament that week that were on the notice paper – and clearly that cuts against the grain of the concept of what the government business program is all about. But they were listening. The government were listening; I have to give them some credit. This week they have come back with a program, and they have actually listed their items that they want to debate. Unfortunately, what they have confirmed in writing for the world to see, for Victorians to see, is that they want to waste the Parliament's time. They want to use Parliament's time to sledge the opposition. That is purely what the Parliament will be doing this afternoon. The government are going to waste time and debate a motion moved by the government which is effectively a matter of public importance item or a grievance debate item, because they have no program. And the reason they have no program is because in the last sitting week a number of bills were introduced on Wednesday, not Tuesday, and so today the notice paper is spare and there is nothing for them to debate. So what do they have to debate this afternoon? They have to debate a coalition sledge motion. What a waste of the Parliament's time.

Not only is there that item, but the government has also listed for potential debate the Statute Law Amendment Bill 2022. For those that were watching, that was a bill that was introduced in the last Parliament, but it is a different bill in this Parliament. We on this side of the house are very disappointed that our side of the house and the non-government benches have been refused a bill briefing on the bill. Outrageous. It is outrageous that the government is now so arrogant it would refuse a bill briefing – a longstanding tradition not just of this place but of parliaments full stop – to brief the non-government benches on a bill. The government's line on that is that the bill is not a new bill. Well, it is a different bill. It is not the same bill that was introduced in the last Parliament, and so we have a bill before this place and a government who have confirmed in writing they are not willing to provide a bill briefing. Outrageous. It is a bill that has already gone through the Council without a bill briefing. The sheer arrogance and lack of courtesy I think is staggering. It is perhaps not surprising to all but disappointing nevertheless.

There are a number of other issues that we will deal with this week. I note that the Leader of the House moved a motion relating to some committee changes, and I appreciate that. I will note that the second part of the motion that was moved, which the Leader of the House has noted will be dealt with tomorrow, in relation to the Standing Orders Committee will change the proportion of the Standing Orders Committee, and it will change the proportion such that there will be more Labor members on that committee than there were in the last Parliament. Every Victorian should be looking at these changes the government are bringing in with a very watchful eye, because effectively they are trying

to increase their proportion – some might use the term stacked out – on a very important committee that will deal with standing orders. That debate tomorrow will be had because the Standing Orders Committee is a very important committee in this place. As someone who has a keen eye on the standing orders of this place, I hope the Speaker will note over time my obsession with the standing orders. The Standing Orders Committee is a very important committee, and I think it is important that proportions on committees are not misused by the government in a way that diminishes the non-government members' view.

We have seen just in terms of the management of the standing orders that the non-government business dealt with by this place by comparison to other parliaments is quite shameful and obvious. So for all of those reasons, the coalition will be opposing the government business program this week. I thank the government for being more specific in the program and confirming their use of the Parliament's time in a wasteful way.

Tim RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (12:23): It is great to rise and speak on the government business program, a wonderful and forward-thinking agenda once again of the Andrews Labor government. I was a bit worried today whether the coalition – because they had a big meeting today – would get here for the government business program. We wondered if they were going to be here –

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mordialloc will come back to the government business program.

Tim RICHARDSON: We wondered if they would get here in time to start debating. Just to clarify for the member for Brighton – you can envisage how he was speaking in the party room today just from that contribution just before. He would have been –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, the member for Mordialloc may not have been here last week, but I am sure he has not forgotten the rules of this place.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is there a point of order?

James Newbury: There is a point of order. I would ask you to draw him back to the motion – again – for a second time.

The SPEAKER: The member for Mordialloc will come back to the government business program.

Tim RICHARDSON: So there is a bit of confusion in this government business program from the member for Brighton, because the Statute Law Amendment Bill 2022 was actually briefed by member Davis in the other place in the Council. So I do not know how divided they are on that side, but they are not across the government business program. And I want to say also, because I said this earlier on in the year, there has been a lot of discussion around how we use the time in this Parliament, and the coalition and others have talked about getting more time. But when I go through a bit of a stocktake of who has spoken on bills in this place I see a very interesting trend – a very interesting trend. Second-reading speeches and the opportunity to contribute is really interesting. So I have put this forward, and I was going to –

Roma Britnell interjected.

Tim RICHARDSON: Well, no, Roma, you are in the Liberal crew.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mordialloc knows to refer to members by their correct titles.

Tim RICHARDSON: Thank you, Speaker. You see here that they are asking for more contributions and time in consideration in detail, but just since the start of this year we have had 29 hits on second-reading contributions as part of the government business program from the Liberals, the Nationals have had 19 and the government 88 – so 88 times we have fronted up and spoken. Last sitting week only seven Liberals contributed on the government business program during second-

reading debates – there were 10 Nationals. So it is an extraordinary thing to say you need more time and you need to contribute more and put that forward but then not rock up to speak on important legislation in this house. That is the challenge for members in this Parliament: to contribute on behalf of their communities to debate on each of those bills. Some members here have only spoken on one bill, and when you say on the government business program that you want to contribute more, you need to put that forward as well. Those contributions are really important to our communities, particularly with some of the bills that are coming forward.

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The member for South-West Coast!

Tim RICHARDSON: They get a bit sensitive because I have raised this before; I have raised their contributions before. But these are two really important bills.

The Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, as the Leader of the House has put it, is a really important bill across those various reforms that have been recommended and put forward. That is going to be important in a long context of work that is being done. We see how substantial the building industry is, particularly in construction and the work that comes with that.

Importantly – very importantly – this week there is the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2023. This will be really important, with the discussion and the contributions members make and the speeches and contributions they put forward. This is literally a life-and-death debate, this one, on whether we support the safety of Victorians. These are bills on the government business program that it will be really important that we have contributed on into the future.

It will not come as any surprise that I will be fronting up to speak on the Suburban Rail Loop motion; I have got my name up there. I hope the member for Brighton fronts up and talks about this one as well. These motions are important because they are an opportunity to speak about state-significant policy and the impact that that has on our communities. We have had that in regard to rights and respect for people from the LGBTIQ+ community. That is an important values prism. The government business program offers all members of Parliament the opportunity to send a signal to their community on where they stand on important policies with their contributions. For the member for Brighton to so sheepishly discount motions just shows how disconnected they are from how important these are in our Parliament. We have had other motions put forward in that sense as well –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: The member for Eildon!

Tim RICHARDSON: I think the member for Brighton said I am very classy. I appreciate that reflection from the member for Brighton. But this is a really important motion on the Suburban Rail Loop which will give an opportunity to every member of this Parliament to talk about a project of generational significance across our community. Once again the Andrews Labor government, after 3000-plus days, is delivering for Victorians.

Tim McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (12:28): I rise to make a few brief comments on the government business program. I certainly support the idea that if you run out of things to say, you probably should sit down, and the member for Mordialloc should take heed of that.

This is another week that is light on legislation and another week of missed opportunities, and while the priorities of this state are the corruption and the dishonesty in this state, you do not see any of that in the government business program. What we will hear is government members spruiking the injecting room – an injecting room next to a school, which is quite disappointing. The Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2023 – well, that says it all. I mean, there are so many things that we could be talking about from within our electorates

and things like that, but sadly the government members will spruik the Premier's lines. One after another they will continually speak these carefully managed lines, but not one of them will vote against an injecting room located next to a school. Not one of them wants it in their backyard, and they are happy to see the trial, which is turning permanent, in somebody else's backyard.

Obviously, the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 has got broader community support, and there is more substance in this bill. Building is going along nicely in the Yarrowonga and Bright areas from my perspective, and if you want to see a progressive and forward-thinking community, come to Yarrowonga and Bright.

I am also told there could be a joint sitting and I am also told there could be a debate on the Statute Law Amendment Bill 2022, but there is definitely nothing on the government business program talking about the corruption of this government. With those few words, we have no choice but to oppose the government business program.

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (12:30): I rise to discuss the government business program for this coming week, but I feel I must make an observation about the Manager of Opposition Business's assertion that we have no meaningful business program. We have several important bills –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, this is a very narrow debate. This is not observations on members time, this is a very narrow debate on the government business program.

The SPEAKER: I think that the member for Monbulk was just beginning, and I do ask her to speak to the government business program.

Daniela DE MARTINO: Thank you, Speaker. Coming back to my point, we have several important bills to debate, including the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2023, the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and the Legislative Council's amendments to the Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023. Some of these bills will be without much controversy, as was just alluded to, whilst others will invite a more rigorous debate – but that is actually the purpose of this place. This place is not a mere symbol of democracy, it is democracy in action.

If I may, the etymology of the word 'democracy' is well known but worth reminding oneself of whenever one has the opportunity. It stems from the Ancient Greek 'dēmos', meaning 'the people', and 'kratia', meaning 'power' or 'rule'. Democracy is literally the rule of the people, and it is the contest of ideas. Sometimes the government business program ahead of us may invite very robust debate – as I am sure you are very well aware, Speaker, as you have to manage us all and temper the robustness of some of our debates – but it is a contest we should never shy away from and hopefully engage in with dignity. That is why we are all here – to be voices for our constituents, to debate these bills before us all with respect and to exercise the power to create laws in the name of the people whom we serve. These are critical pieces of legislation, and I fully anticipate that there will be some strong debate over the coming week. I am looking forward to hearing the contributions from all the members in the chamber. It goes without saying that we eagerly anticipate hearing the contributions from members of the government, but I am genuinely always interested to hear what is said on the other side of the chamber as well. The insights that are brought into this place are important. We all have our experiences and ideas, and we are all here to reflect the experiences and ideas of our constituents. I am here to represent the people of Monbulk, and I will be putting forward the interests of my community as I debate some of these bills before us this week.

In addition to these bills that are to be brought before this place, this week the government will introduce a motion on the Suburban Rail Loop, and I know many members are looking forward to speaking to this motion. The SRL is an exciting project with overwhelming public support, and there are sure to be many fine contributions made here in this place in regard to it. We can always look forward to further addresses in reply to the Governor's speech from our returning members; they are sure to be compelling, and I look forward to hearing them all. We have certainly heard some wonderful

speeches in this place so far in reply to the Governor's speech from new and returning members from all sides of the chamber.

The Andrews Labor government has an incredibly important agenda of reform for this great state of Victoria, and the bills to be debated are evidence of such reform. This government, of which I am incredibly proud to be a member, does not shy away from the difficult decisions. As the Premier has stated on several occasions, leading is not about doing what is popular, it is about doing what is right, and we are here to do what is right. So whilst those who are here in opposition may not always agree with the government's business program ahead or on what right looks like – we may not all have consensus on what right looks like – I am sure each and every one of the 88 of us that take a place in this place can agree it is an incredible honour to come in here and represent our communities and, collectively, all Victorians. So I look forward to the week ahead and participating in our government's reforming agenda to make Victoria a better place than we found it.

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (12:34): I rise to speak against the government's business program, and already we have heard fine contributions from the member for Brighton and the member for Ovens Valley that have pretty much said that the government have run out of ideas. This is a very interesting government business program. It is one that you would expect to see in a fourth term leading into an election when you have got nothing really to talk about and you do not really want to talk about government business and bills but you want to get on with the next term of election.

The government had the four years and the government had an election, and you would think in the first year we would be up and about with a government with a huge number of bills to bring in to get on with the job – not to be lazy, not to be tired, not to be wasting our time. And this is what this government has done. This government has actually run out of ideas. In the first year in the first term they have run out of ideas, and as the member for Ovens Valley has said, they have run out of dough – they have run out of money. That is what they are doing. So what do they do instead? They bring back old bills into the Parliament, and then they decide, 'You know what? Like we're in some kind of student union debate, let's just bring up a notice of motion and let's have a debate about that and try and have a whack at the opposition.' You would think that the government would have enough to talk about themselves without having to talk about the opposition. They have had an election and they have put a number of ideas to the public. You would think that the government would be ready to go, fired up, to bring in bills – and what do we have? Two bills, and with another one, 'You know what? We'll kind of see where we go', because that is how planned they are, that is how rehearsed they are. We have got a statute bill that we still have not even had a briefing for. We are not sure whether we are coming or we are going. Seriously! And then in the notice of motion that the government have put up trying to bag the opposition they actually have not even got that right. They have not even got their own notice of motion right, because they are busy bagging the opposition but with the Suburban Rail Loop motion they are forgetting about all the other people that disagreed with the SRL – people like Michael Buxton, a planning expert, who disagreed with the SRL, and like a number of other planning experts who disagreed, like the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, which disagreed with the SRL. We have got so many people that have opposed the SRL, yet this motion before the house that we are going to debate only talks about the opposition.

They have not considered it in proper detail; they have not thought about proper detail. They are just, 'You know what? We'll give the opposition a whack.' I think you would find that those Victorians who have the time to listen in to this Parliament – I am sure they have got plenty of other things to do, but if they have the time to think about this Parliament – would expect the government that they have elected and that they have invested in would actually have things to talk about and would not run out of ideas in the first year in the first term and would not effectively have to bring in these motions that are not even right. I look forward to talking about that SRL motion. I look forward to it and to being able to add to the list a very, very long list of people, including Michael Buxton, that have called it a thought bubble. They have called the SRL a thought bubble. He is a very, very, very, very –

Members interjecting.

David SOUTHWICK: Well, I will tell you what: certainly Michael Buxton is not a planning expert from our side. He is somebody that is very well respected. It is all very well for the government to be able to take on somebody when it suits them, but like we have seen before, when it does not suit them – and we have seen that in recent times – then they distance themselves from people, like we have seen in recent times with a former judge. It is very, very important for us to get on and do things and talk about things that matter. It is appalling that the government has run out of ideas so early, and if you are going to talk about a notice of motion, let us get it right and talk about all the other people that have opposed the SRL because of lack of detail, lack of dough and lack of a plan.

Assembly divided on motion:

Ayes (55): Juliana Addison, Jacinta Allan, Daniel Andrews, Colin Brooks, Josh Bull, Anthony Carabines, Ben Carroll, Darren Cheeseman, Anthony Cianflone, Sarah Connolly, Jordan Crugnale, Daniela De Martino, Gabrielle de Vietri, Steve Dimopoulos, Will Fowles, Matt Fregon, Ella George, Luba Grigorovitch, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Katie Hall, Paul Hamer, Martha Haylett, Sam Hibbins, Mathew Hilakari, Melissa Horne, Natalie Hutchins, Lauren Kathage, Sonya Kilkenny, Nathan Lambert, Gary Maas, Alison Marchant, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, Steve McGhie, Paul Mercurio, John Mullahy, Tim Pallas, Danny Pearson, Tim Read, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Michaela Settle, Ros Spence, Nick Staikos, Natalie Suleyman, Meng Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor, Nina Taylor, Kat Theophanous, Mary-Anne Thomas, Emma Vulin, Iwan Walters, Vicki Ward, Dylan Wight, Gabrielle Williams, Belinda Wilson

Noes (28): Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Tim Bull, Martin Cameron, Annabelle Cleeland, Chris Crewther, Wayne Farnham, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, David Hodgett, Emma Kealy, Tim McCurdy, Cindy McLeish, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keeffe, John Pesutto, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, Ryan Smith, David Southwick, Bill Tilley, Bridget Vallance, Peter Walsh, Kim Wells, Jess Wilson

Motion agreed to.

Members statements

Mick Morland

Brad BATTIN (Berwick) (12:45): I rise today in relation to Mick Morland, who on 24 June 2017 lost his life at the age of 67 in Berwick. It was at an intersection which is just near the botanical gardens there, opposite Coniston Avenue. This is an intersection that people have raised issues with around safety for a long period of time. I know from having discussions with Mrs Morland on this that she has raised some of the issues around the need for lights at the intersection. Whilst highlighting the fact that she lost her husband at that intersection, she is now campaigning and fighting, because we do not want to see this happen to anyone else in the future. I know that Kay has put on record that she does not want this to happen to another family.

Unfortunately we have had another accident at this intersection just in the last couple of weeks where a young person has ended up in a critical condition in hospital due to an accident very, very close to that same intersection. This is an intersection that has got more and more dangerous, not just because of car traffic but also because of pedestrian traffic, because the botanical gardens have become a very popular place for my community to go, which was highlighted during COVID. It was a place that many people used to use within their 5 kilometres for walking. Now we have a situation where kids are crossing the road for a bus stop on either side to get to and from school and people are using it to get across to the botanical gardens and parking in unsafe positions. We need to start to find ways that we can make this intersection safer. Whether that is lights or other alternatives, I would love to work with the government to fix the problem.

Ashwood electorate schools

Matt FREGON (Ashwood) (12:46): It has been another busy couple of weeks in the Ashwood district, and it is no secret that I am very passionate about education and delivering for our local schools. In the last couple of weeks I have met with the principals of Glen Iris Primary and Ashburton Primary, Mount Waverley Primary, Salesian College and Solway Primary, and I was down at Essex Heights yesterday for their junior school council. It is a great privilege for all of us here to be selected by our peers, and the kids on the junior school council are doing the exact same thing at Essex Heights. Also, a big shout-out to principal Lyn Rodda and all the staff and the parents and friends association at Solway Primary. They had a fantastic community fair over the weekend – it had everything, including a goat.

Holi Festival of Colours

Matt FREGON (Ashwood) (12:47): On another note, happy Holi to everyone. Earlier this month I joined Hindi Niketan to celebrate this wonderful festival. A big thanks to Dr Reena Dubey, Rahul Gupta and the entire committee down there for putting on a fantastic event. Every year you prepare, you get your old white shirt, you get a couple of towels in the car ready, you throw colours at each other, and it is just a day of joy. What a fantastic festival it is.

Rang Barse Festival of Colours

Matt FREGON (Ashwood) (12:48): It was also my pleasure to represent the Minister for Multicultural Affairs at Rang Barse Festival of Colours the other Sunday at Monash Uni. A huge thanks to Dr Sunila Shrivastara and Mr Arvin Shrivastara, along with the rest of the Bhakti Tarang committee and Monash University, who put on a huge event. A quick shout-out to Dr Sushil Kumar, Consul-General of India, who is hugely active in our Indian diaspora, and it was great to see him at a number of celebrations.

School camps

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (12:48): Tourism and educational camping destinations in my electorate of Murray Plains and across regional Victoria are facing ruin because the Minister for Education has seen fit to further cut costs in her department. Barely 12 months ago the same department through its Positive Start camp program to re-engage and reconnect young students paying the price for the Andrews government's draconian lockdowns was urging schools everywhere to go on camps, espousing their positive social, physical and mental wellbeing benefits. Now the industry which responded and reinvested to help this plan is left in a positive mess by the minister. Just one business in my electorate, Billabong Ranch, has been hit by cancellation after cancellation because the minister has ruled that the department cannot pay teachers to attend and supervise and cannot afford time in lieu for those who do. The latest loss is a \$36,000 booking from Montmorency Secondary College for 120 students. The economic impact is significant on Billabong and the local community, as they always source locally, and as many as 30 people rely on Billabong for their jobs. These 30 people also spend locally.

Here is another business sector which has put its trust in a government program and now faces devastation. I would welcome the minister's advice, and Billabong would also welcome the minister's advice, on where all the money has gone and how much intelligent planning actually went into this shambles of a situation.

Bellarine Agricultural Show

Alison MARCHANT (Bellarine) (12:49): It was a great pleasure when as a local member I attended the Bellarine Agricultural Show held on Labour Day weekend at the Portarlington Recreation Reserve. With my own background in farming I have always enjoyed the local agricultural shows, and it was great to see the Bellarine event so well supported, not only by the agricultural industry but also the local community. It was a great day full of wonderful exhibits ranging from the much-loved

livestock to an extensive range of local-made produce and handcrafts. There was also a lot of interest in the working sheepdogs, the horse wagon rides, the vintage Kelly steam engine owned by Bob De Vries and a gumboot toss that was hotly contested.

Importantly, events like these show how vital our farming industry is on the Bellarine, and it continues to diversify and grow in a good indication of its sustainability and prosperous future. A month or so ago I did have a tour of some Bellarine farms with the local farmers federation reps and members discussing their issues and their views for the future, and seeing those working farms was a great opportunity. I know that organisations and events like the Bellarine Agricultural Show, though, take a lot of hard work from volunteers over many months by a lot of people, so I would like to take the opportunity to really congratulate the committee led by president Janet McDonald, Graeme Brown and Kerry and Rick Peacock, and of course I commend all the volunteers for their hard work and success for a great show.

Princes Highway maintenance

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (12:51): The Princes Highway runs right through South-West Coast, from the border with Polwarth near Terang to the South Australian border. The key feature of the drive along the highway is not the beautiful paddocks with knee-high pasture or the dramatic seascapes but rather the neglected, decaying and dangerous road putting lives at risk. I again invite the Premier and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety to visit South-West Coast and enjoy a day of sightseeing and pothole dodging.

Highway 1's condition is poor in many places, like in Illowa, Drumborg and Heywood, but how can I not mention the Allansford to Panmure section. This infamous piece of road has been a worksite since 2020, and despite the minister's assurances in July last year it is still a construction site and still not finished. Outraged constituents called me on the weekend after they saw the road was being ripped up once again. They asked: when will this end and when will they have a safe road to drive on?

The Princes Highway between Allansford and Panmure remains unsealed and dangerous and is decaying before our very eyes. Two years ago the CEO of Regional Roads Victoria admitted that this was a flawed contract, which is clear to see. Minister, I again ask that you come and see our roads with your very own eyes. Minister, how long will it be till Labor gets something right? Our roads are appalling.

Tarneit schools funding

Dylan WIGHT (Tarneit) (12:52): Last week it was a pleasure to be joined by the Premier in visiting one of the fantastic schools in my electorate of Tarneit. Tarneit Rise Primary School is one of the biggest in the state, and to put that into context, in 2018 this school opened with just over 200 students and today it is there with over 1700 students and just over 200 staff. It is impressive to see such a large and thriving educational community in action, and I would like to thank principal Nadia Bettio for hosting us. This school, along with many others, is a testament to this government's unwavering commitment to providing quality education to all students across Victoria, investing over \$12.8 billion to build new schools and modernise existing facilities across Victoria in the last eight years. This includes more than \$134 million in my electorate of Tarneit, just for schools, since 2014. This includes \$13 million to open Tarneit Rise Primary School in 2018, with a further \$1.6 million in upgrades and additions since opening; and over \$36 million to deliver Warringa Park School to upgrade and deliver a new specialist campus for primary age students with intellectual disabilities. We have also opened two new schools this year, Karwan Primary School and Nearnung Primary School.

Russell Hannan

Brad ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (12:54): Russell Hannan was a loyal and committed member of the Liberal family. Russell was a former state president, vice-president and treasurer, holding numerous positions at an executive and local level for decades. He distinguished himself with his commitment, tireless energy, loyalty and hard work, and was well known for his command of the stage as an auctioneer at many local fundraising events. He dedicated much of his life towards the electoral success of the Liberal Party and leaves a substantial legacy as a servant of the party. My thoughts are with his family: his wife, his daughters, his grandchildren, his sister and his brother. Vale, Russell Hannan.

Howard Farrow

Brad ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (12:55): I rise to also remember the extraordinary life of Dr Howard Farrow, who passed away at the age of 97 on 3 March. Howard was a loved and devoted member of the Sandringham community. He was a GP at the Bay Road medical clinic. He was on the steering committee for the construction of the Sandringham Hospital and he performed the first surgery there in 1964. Between 1973 and 1975 he was a Sandringham city councillor and later a founding member of the Sandringham Rotary Club. Howard led a wonderful and selfless life, and his legacy will live on through his wife Rosemary, his two children, his nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Vale, Dr Howard Farrow.

Felicitations

Brad ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (12:55): Finally, as Easter is upon us, I wish every member of the Sandringham district a very happy Easter.

Ballan Autumn Festival

Michaela SETTLE (Eureka) (12:55): On Sunday I had the absolute pleasure of attending the 2023 Ballan Autumn Festival. I would like to acknowledge the amazing work of the committee, who worked tirelessly to put on this fantastic event. The festival was an outstanding success, with thousands of visitors to the beautiful township of Ballan, and it was really great to have it back after several years. It is one of the absolute highlights of my year. This year the theme was superheroes. It was a very tough job, but I loved judging the parade, and this year I shared the judging with Sam Rae, the federal member for Hawke; Cr Ally Munari; and Cr Paul Tatchell. In keeping with the theme of superheroes, the community award went to the Ballan CFA. The best school group went to the wonderful Gordon Primary School with their vintage truck and array of superheroes. Studio C gave a spirited performance, winning the best sports group, and Ballan kinder won the mayor's award for their super readers. There were prizes for vintage cars and machinery. It is a great day and should not be missed.

Jenny Middlin

Michaela SETTLE (Eureka) (12:57): I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge a very special person in my electorate, Jenny Middlin, who has just celebrated 40 years of working in the office at Woodmans Hill college. The name of the school and its location have changed, but her commitment to the pupils has remained the same. Thank you, Jenny, for your care and compassion.

Gippsland East electorate schools

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (12:57): The White family contacted my office last week in relation to an enrolment issue they have with their twins Roegan and Indigo, who both have additional needs. Last year the children attended an early learning centre, with much discussion on whether they were ready to attend school this year. They were eventually enrolled at Nungurner, but despite the best efforts of the school, who did a good job, it became apparent they were not ready socially or developmentally. Their teacher and their specialists all agreed, and they returned to kinder. However, the Department of Education has now advised the kinder to unenrol them both due to them having attended prep. I ask the minister to intervene and put in place an arrangement that best suits this family.

Gippsland Lakes fishing

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (12:58): Gippsland Lakes commercial fishers can now harvest crabs and prawns for human consumption after a recent Department of Health approval following water quality concerns. However, the health advice has not changed for recreational fishers despite repeated requests. This past week I have had contact from businesses who have been significantly impacted by this. There should not be two sets of rules. If they are safe to eat, they are safe to eat. I ask the minister to fix this prior to Easter to avoid further impacts on businesses.

Firewood collection

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (12:58): A lack of firewood availability is concerning many in my electorate, with the colder months just around the corner. I ask the Minister for Environment to please explain what work is being done on the impact of available firewood from the current suspension of the timber industry. Can she ensure Victorians will have wood for heating this winter?

Extremism

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (12:58): I rise to condemn the shameful scenes we saw on Saturday on the steps of the Victorian Parliament. As a child of a Holocaust survivor living in Melbourne, I did not think that I would see the day that in broad daylight we would see neo-Nazis marching down Spring Street with the Nazi salute, holding the Australian flag, the very flag that thousands of Australians died under while fighting the scourge of Nazism across Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa. But let us be clear: these extremists did not turn up on Saturday out of the blue. They turned up to support an anti-trans rally and an activist with known links to right-wing extremist groups in another cowardly act of minority bashing and scapegoating. The Nazi regime and their modern sympathisers have always been about hate, whether it be directed to the Jewish community, the Muslim community, the LGBTIQ community or many others. The Nazi salute is used as a symbol of that hate, designed to strike fear against minorities. Displaying it in public serves no purpose other than to cause pain, fear and division. I am proud of the fact that I am part of a government that has banned the Nazi symbol, and I strongly support the Attorney-General's commitment to banning the Nazi salute as well. I also join the Premier in telling every trans Victorian that might have been feeling understandably hurt over last few days that we see you, we respect you and we are with you. It is incumbent on all members of this place to condemn what we saw on the weekend and support our fellow Victorians.

Hampton Community Centre

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:00): Hampton Community Centre is a big-hearted hub for the Hampton community. Each week the centre offers Nourish Lunch for over 60 people from Bayley House and Castlefield Community Centre. Last year over 2500 meals were served to those in need. I thank the volunteers and donors, led by acting centre manager Kate Knight, for their work in supporting the community.

Recycle Regatta

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:00): What an incredible sight it was to see hundreds of local residents on Brighton Beach yesterday for the inaugural Recycle Regatta. The event encouraged participants to build a floatable recycled boat. Over 130 participants registered, 40 boats were built and almost \$10,000 was raised for mental health charity. Thank you to Brighton North Rotary and event leader David Simpson for the first of what will surely become an annual tradition.

Brighton Little Athletics

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:01): Hundreds of Brighton children ran out onto Dendy Park field in Brighton East over the weekend as members of Brighton Little Athletics club. Over the weekend the club, more affectionately known as BLAC in the community, awarded kids for their achievements and, for a number, their longstanding membership. Thank you to Jane Fitch and the club executive for the wonderful work you do.

Montclair Aged Care

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (13:01): Our aged-care facilities are wonderful organisations that support the aged in our community to live comfortable lives. Montclair Aged Care in Brighton support their residents with fun programs. Residents put me on the chopping block on my recent visit with insightful questions about current affairs. Thank you to Julie Roppola for the invitation and the cupcakes for all – individually emblazoned with my face, which I am sure the whole Parliament would have enjoyed.

LGBTIQA+ support

Katie HALL (Footscray) (13:01): Today is Harmony Day, and Friday next week is Trans Day of Visibility. Today on behalf of my community I rise to note that in the inner west we celebrate both wholeheartedly. We wrap our arms around our trans community and our multicultural communities. We celebrate you with full hearts, and I will always be your ally. I do not want to elevate the events of the weekend beyond saying there were two hateful protests and there is a reason that birds of a feather flock together. I have received heartbreaking emails from residents in the aftermath, and my clear, unequivocal message to those community members is that you are loved and we will do everything to ensure that you can be your true, authentic selves.

To the trans community member who told me at the Yarraville Festival she was so proud to be a Victorian and proud of this government's commitment to equality: we are so proud of you. To the young people on the hardest journey imaginable, we are here for you. I stand with the broader LGBTI community, and I stand for diversity. Harmony Day is about celebrating diversity and the richness of our society, and with that I celebrate today, Harmony Day.

Electric vehicles

Tim READ (Brunswick) (13:03): A lawyer rang me the other day to tell me he had a client charged with driving an electric unicycle without a licence and facing a maximum penalty of six months in jail. An electric unicycle is basically a single wheel built around an electric motor, and the rider straddles it and steers by balancing. While an electric unicycle may sound very Brunswick, it is one of many forms of electric transport that people across the city are using daily to commute, alongside electric skateboards, the more common e-scooters and the very popular e-bikes, several of which are in the Parliament bike shed.

As the unlicensed unicyclist now knows, our road laws have not caught up with this profusion of electrified personal transport now used by thousands of Victorians trying to avoid traffic jams and infrequent public transport. These devices are all illegal on public roads. Given around half of these riders are leaving their cars at home, we should be grateful to them rather than punitive, because they are reducing congestion and emissions. With the latest IPCC report urging rapid climate action on all fronts, we urgently need policy and infrastructure that encourage people to ride these new vehicles in a way that protects both riders and pedestrians. So I call on the Labor government to expand the definition of 'allowable transport' to accommodate these vehicles and prevent the persecution of riders who are no threat to other road users and who are doing more good than harm.

South-East Monash Legal Service

Gary MAAS (Narre Warren South) (13:04): I recently had the honour of attending the South-East Monash Legal Service 50th anniversary celebration, which commemorated and recognised the invaluable work that the service provides to those in my electorate of Narre Warren South and throughout the wider south-east. The South-East Monash Legal Service, formerly known as the Springvale Monash Legal Service, provides invaluable legal support and resources to individuals and community groups who are trying to access and navigate the legal system, which at times can be quite complicated and stressful for them.

This community legal centre also provides Monash University law students a platform to explore legal practice through a social justice lens as well as get credit towards their course. It has seen many an eminent lawyer, the odd parliamentarian, judges, senior public servants and even a radio breakfast host pass through its ranks as they learned the ropes in their formative years, many of whom attended the celebration last week. South-East Monash Legal Service continues to strongly advise and advocate for systematic changes and improvements to the legal system to enable greater access, fairness and support. I would like to take this opportunity to thank executive director Kristen Wallwork and her dedicated team at the service not only for a fantastic night but for all the hard work that they do for our community.

Community sport funding

Bill TILLEY (Benambra) (13:06): Grassroots sporting clubs are the heart and soul of our communities, bringing together men, women, young, old, family and foe alike, but there are cracks appearing – cracks in the buildings, 70-year-old buildings from a very different era. They have been playing footy at Chiltern since the gold rush. They are the defending premiers in 2023, but the clubrooms are more like wooden spooners'. They have taken showerheads off a row of showers in the footy change rooms because there is not enough water pressure. The netball change room is ridiculously small. With 100 girls and women from home and away sides using it on game day, it only has two showerheads. The umpires room is a dogbox. There is no disabled toilet, and they clear out the women's toilets when one is needed. The canteen is a mix of home ovens, old fridges and pie warmers, and in the same LGA Yackandandah is in a similar boat. It has plans but no money. While Rutherglen has been offered \$1 million in an election commitment, that is half of what is needed to get the job done, and there are many more. Last sitting week the Minister for Community Sport spruiked the country football and netball funding, but it is capped at a quarter of a million dollars. Once upon a time a working bee would have knocked these jobs over, but now there is so much red and green tape that these need big money. What we need is a better funding model for all sports clubs.

Somerville Family Day

Paul MERCURIO (Hastings) (13:07): On Labour Day weekend I attended the Somerville Family Day, a great local community event that is entirely run by locals and volunteers. With humble beginnings in 2015, family day began as a fundraiser for Auskick with a sausage sizzle, three rides, four market stalls and around 500 people attending. It has now grown to over 80 market stalls, 10 rides, a huge show-and-shine car show and over 10,000 attendees. It is a day for local community groups to come together, with schools, charities, sporting clubs, the CFA, the SES, Victoria Police, the coastguard, HMAS *Cerberus* and our ambos all attending and supporting the community. Peninsula Aero Club even had a plane on display that was built by students from five different high schools. What I love most about the day is the focus on giving back. This year Peter Alp was the Community Member of the Year for his tireless fundraising work and advocacy for Somerville Recreation Reserve. The Lifetime Achievement Award was for Brenda Thornell, who has helped preserve Somerville's history through her work with the historical society, and the achievement award for Maddox Gibbs, a young 17-year-old autistic man who loves to race his sprint car and inspires and mentors others. This day could not happen without the selfless and dedicated hard work of the event organisers Cally McNulty, Chrissy Kouvaras, Leah Rawlings and Leanne Coleman. I give my thanks to them and of

course my thanks to the many people that volunteered their time on the day to make the Somerville Family Day the incredibly successful event that it was.

Toomuc Recreation Reserve

Emma VULIN (Pakenham) (13:09): On Thursday 2 March I was delighted to join Senator Jess Walsh and Cardinia shire's mayor Tammy Radford, CEO Carol Jeffs, ward councillors and staff to officially open the upgrades to both pavilions at Toomuc Recreation Reserve in Pakenham. This facility is home to many great clubs, including Pakenham Lions Netball Club, Pakenham Lions football club, Pakenham Lions junior football club, Pakenham Cricket Club, Pakenham Little Athletics and Pakenham Pumas Baseball Club. It is fantastic to see so many local clubs using this state-of-the-art facility and to see the wide range of amenities available to our diverse sporting clubs that utilise this space. All three levels of government contributed to this project, and it is great to see everyone working together to ensure our community have the facilities they need close to home. In particular I am proud of the Victorian government's contribution through the female-friendly program, which saw the redevelopment of the southern pavilion, ensuring females have access to change rooms. The Victorian football and netball program grant supported the resurfacing of the netball courts.

On 12 March I went to visit the Pakenham Pumas Baseball Club, who had three teams playing in the Victorian Summer Baseball League finals. Condolences to the reserves and division 4 whites, but congratulations to the division 3 firsts, who came away with the flag.

On my recent visit I also caught up with Pakenham Little Athletics, who are currently struggling with storage space for their equipment but are very excited to be moving over to the new IYU track once it is complete. I look forward to seeing their progress.

LGBTIQ+ support

Will FOWLES (Ringwood) (13:10): To trans and gender-diverse people across the Ringwood electorate and across Victoria I say: you are loved. In Victoria we say: you deserve love, you deserve joy and you deserve to live every minute as your true and authentic selves, and every aspect of you deserves to be celebrated because you are beautiful. I will not rest in this place until your voices are amplified because your voices are precious. You are brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, colleagues and friends, and you light up the lives of people around you. As an ally I will keep doing everything in my power to raise you up and to protect you from discrimination, prejudice and hate. My allyship to you runs deep as a dad, a brother, a boss and a human being with empathy and compassion. Your stories, your identities and your lived experiences and journeys are unique and as diverse as they come. Whether you are a trans man, a trans woman or non-binary or you fall anywhere else in the beautiful spectrum that is gender identity, you are valid and you are valued. Your diversity is strength, and your strength makes the Victorian community a better place for all of us. I am proud to stand alongside you every minute of every day that I have a seat in this place, because you are loved and you deserve nothing less.

Hume Central Secondary College

Kathleen MATTHEWS-WARD (Broadmeadows) (13:12): Hume secondary college is a welcoming and inclusive school and is getting great results. Staff are doing a marvellous job of giving students an education that nurtures their academic, social and emotional growth and preparing them to become responsible and compassionate leaders in our community. It was a privilege to attend their first ever college-wide assembly, surrounded by so much talent, inspiration and promise. I was honoured to present the student leader badges to the 2023 school leaders, and I congratulate college captains Raziye and Orshina; Town Park campus house captains Junior, Merna, Maryam, Sali, Fadi, Marya and Luqman; Dimboola Road campus captains Heidi and Zage and house captains Tony, Vaisola, Abdikarim, Faafetai, Roman, Haley and Jai; and Blair Street campus captains Lois and Ashorina and house captains Khaled, Abdirahman, Soghol, Christian, Ane, Eylul, Shay and Reyhan. We were also treated to some fabulous musical performances, including the inspiring school anthem

We Are One, celebrating their values of achievement, diversity and success and the wonderful cultures that help make up the school – particularly important today, celebrating Harmony Day. I love the words of the song:

There's a place out north on Wurundjeri land
 Where young souls aspire
 Multicultural, that's what we are
 From all the continents
 Some have travelled so far
 Compassion helps us understand
 That some come to us from war-torn lands
 And island souls, with smiles to share
 A time for learning and a time to care
 From near and far, across oceans vast
 Hume Central's a place where respect calls home.

Voice to Parliament

Nick STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (13:13): Last week I attended a forum at Brighton town hall on the Voice referendum, hosted by the federal member for Goldstein Zoe Daniel and an expert panel comprising the Honourable Fred Chaney AO, former federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Fraser government; Senator the honourable Pat Dodson; and Amy Rust from the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria. The packed hall had come together to listen to the experts, ask questions and hear about how the Voice will work and why it is so important. The forum covered a broad church of issues, but one message was abundantly clear: 'nothing about us without us'. The Indigenous Voice to Parliament in Australia will give First Nations Australians a say on the issues that directly impact them. I am proud of the work that the Andrews Labor government has done in establishing the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, and the importance of a federal body cannot be understated.

Sadly, we know that for far too long policy has not considered the wants and needs of First Nations communities. The Voice referendum is a crucial step towards rectifying this injustice. The Voice provides a national platform for Indigenous people to be consulted on policy and legislation and share their perspectives, concerns and aspirations with policymakers and government of the day. Enshrining the Voice in the constitution ensures that this recognition and consultation will continue regardless of who occupies the Treasury benches. I also see this as an opportunity for the Liberal and National parties to join a campaign of healing, and we implore them to get on board. I thank Zoe Daniel for inviting me to the forum, and I commend my state and Commonwealth Labor colleagues for their strong support.

Marnebek School

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (13:15): I was delighted to attend Marnebek School last week and commend the new school leaders and principal Jenny Hamilton for all the work that she has done. This is a fantastic school, and I was delighted to be there.

Business of the house

Notices of motion and orders of the day

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (13:15): I move:

That consideration of government business, notice of motion 1 and order of the day 1, be postponed until later this day.

Motion agreed to.

*Address to Parliament***Governor's speech***Address-in-reply***Debate resumed on motion of Martha Haylett:**

That the following address, in reply to the speech of the Governor to both houses of Parliament, be agreed to by this house.

Governor:

We, the Legislative Assembly of Victoria assembled in Parliament, wish to express our loyalty to our Sovereign and to thank you for the speech which you have made to the Parliament.

And Tim Read's amendment:

That the following words be added at the end of the motion: 'but respectfully regret that the speech fails to announce a ban on new coal and gas projects'.

Ros SPENCE (Kalkallo – Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Community Sport, Minister for Suburban Development) (13:16): I am very pleased to make a contribution to the address-in-reply to the Governor's speech, and I do so as the first member for the new electorate of Kalkallo in Melbourne's outer north. The boundaries of my previous electorate of Yuroke were altered significantly during the redistribution process, and the renamed electorate Kalkallo, whilst retaining the suburbs of Mickleham, Kalkallo, Oaklands Junction, Yuroke and most of Craigieburn, now also stretches further north to take in the suburbs of Beveridge and Wallan. I acknowledge former member for Yan Yean Danielle Green for her many years of service to Wallan and Beveridge. I am also thrilled to be joined in this place by the new member for Yan Yean Lauren Kathage, who I share the suburbs in the north with, and also the new member for Greenvale Iwan Walters, who is now representing the southern part of my former Yuroke electorate. I know that they will both serve those communities exceptionally well.

I am incredibly excited about the third term of the Andrews Labor government, building upon the achievements of the past two terms and continuing to deliver for our community. The community that I represent is diverse, it is vibrant and it is growing. They look forward to seeing the progress and the completion of existing local projects. The massive Craigieburn Road upgrade project is well underway and once completed will really transform one of the major arterial roads in the outer north, reducing congestion, slashing travel times and really boosting safety for all road users.

Having just opened two new government schools last month, building on the nine schools that have been opened in Yuroke since 2014, I am really glad that the commitment to building new schools continues. So far there are at least five more schools on the way, with one primary school in Kalkallo and another one in Mickleham due to open next year. We have got another three schools in the pipeline, and I look forward to welcoming local students to all of those schools over the next few years.

Craigieburn community hospital is on track to open next year, and this new public hospital will provide a range of day hospital, outpatient and community health services, providing that critical care much closer to home. The 24-hour ambulance station in Craigieburn North is set to open later this year, meaning more emergency response services for our growing community.

The new 501 bus route, a new high-frequency shuttle bus service between Donnybrook station and Craigieburn station, will commence service soon, and this will provide residents with better access to train stations. Of great importance to Kalkallo residents, a new slip lane at the Donnybrook Road and Mitchell Street roundabout will really alleviate traffic pressure in Kalkallo.

I look forward to seeing the completion of projects where we have partnered with Hume City Council. I look forward to seeing the completion of the Craigieburn Sports Stadium, which will provide local families with three additional, much-needed multiuse courts. I look forward to seeing the 5-hectare

active open space at Grand Boulevard reserve and a new community centre in Craigieburn that has had funding allocated from last year's Growing Suburbs Fund.

I am also pleased that we will deliver on the local commitments that we made prior to the election. These are all really important projects that were made for our growing community's needs. Local sport is getting a really big boost thanks to the re-election of the Labor government, with \$5 million towards stage 1 of the Greenhill recreation precinct in Wallan. This will ultimately be a major sporting and aquatics hub for the region. We are also providing \$50,000 towards a master plan for a brand new recreation reserve in Beveridge. Families right across Mickleham, Kalkallo and Donnybrook will enjoy some free water play with \$450,000 going towards a new splash play space in the Donnybrook Road corridor. We have seen how much families enjoy the water play space that is already at Anzac Park in Craigieburn, so no doubt this one will be just as popular. Of critical importance, we have contributed \$130 million to the upgrade of Watson Street and the Hume Freeway interchange for road users, cyclists and pedestrians in Wallan. All of these projects are important for local residents in this growing electorate, and no doubt there will be more along the way. That is the nature of a growing area, and I am absolutely up for that challenge, just as I have been for the past eight years.

I am also delighted to be returning to this place as the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Community Sport and Minister for Suburban Development. It is a privilege to be asked to continue as the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, and it was with the collective pride of this government that I was able to announce the acquittal of the 227 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. However, in making that announcement I also made it very clear that this is in no way the end of our work. Whilst we have much to be proud of, we have also got much more work to do. Victoria is leading the nation in family violence reform, and from the outset I do want to thank all victim-survivors who have helped to support, to inform and to develop our work. We set ourselves a 10-year time frame to build a new family violence system, and really good progress has been made. But as I have said, the journey is not over. There is still much more work to be done.

The Orange Door network is now operating in 17 regions across the state, assisting more than 267,000 people, including 107,000 children since opening in 2018. More than 100,000 workers have been trained to recognise, assess and respond to family violence risk through the multi-agency risk assessment and management framework, and information is shared across a range of service provision systems to ensure a robust infrastructure exists to support victim-survivors. We have passed legislation establishing a new model of affirmative consent, but again, we know that the work does not end there. The foundations laid since the royal commission in 2016 are sound and they really will set us up well for the future, and I am very keen to continue this important work.

In my role as Victoria's first Minister for Community Sport I know that the government deeply values the role of community sport and rec right across the state. At the end of the last term we had invested a massive \$1.6 billion into community sport and recreation infrastructure, and we will continue to build on that investment, having committed a further \$190 million towards community sports projects at the last election. These projects are all about increasing participation and making sure that Victorians right across the state have access to facilities that support that participation. Whether it is a \$600,000 investment in female-friendly facilities for the Keon Park Soccer Club in the electorate of Preston or investing \$10 million for a new aquatic centre for Altona Meadows and Point Cook, we are committed to creating spaces for all participants in community sport to thrive in.

We are also removing barriers to community sport. Whether it is financial barriers through the Get Active Kids voucher program or the tremendous work of the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, this work and these investments are making a real, tangible difference with more opportunities, better access and a fairer approach.

As the new Minister for Suburban Development, I am really excited about the opportunities to work with my colleagues in grassroots communities to ensure our suburbs are front and centre in the decisions that we make. This includes our suburban revitalisation boards, which partner with

communities to help them renew and prosper. In addition to the four returning board chairs, I am really confident that the new members for Broadmeadows, Preston, Tarneit and Monbulk will do a great job on their local boards. I believe that there are no better experts on local communities than the residents that live in them, so I look forward to ensuring that their views and their lived experiences are heard.

I do want to thank all the staff in my ministerial office, who support me with these portfolio responsibilities: Grant, Rebecca, Nat, Ann, Shannon, Hannah and Ryan. We have got a great office culture, and this would not be possible without their commitment and their dedication. A similar thankyou to recent ministerial staff for their support and their hard work: Varnan, Matilda, Rachel and Jo. I want to thank my electorate office staff: Josh P, Josh S, Jo and Shraddha as well as Rachel and Emre. Thank you all for everything that you do to make sure that the electorate is well served. It is vitally important that we always put the community first, and I thank them all for sharing that priority with me.

To everyone who was involved in the campaign, I say a huge thankyou. Our movement was built on the grassroots work of our volunteers, and I am immensely grateful to all of them for their help. Your contribution was absolutely central to the election result, whether it was helping out on pre-poll, hosting a garden sign, talking to family or friends, or helping out on election day. Anything and everything that was done to assist was greatly appreciated and contributed to our collective success. I cannot name all of the volunteers, but I do want to thank a few who were always there to do whatever was needed: Drew, Casey, Avtar, Guri, Emre, Mitchell, Caitlyn, Kayla, Geoff, Mahru, Rakesh, Ravinder and all of their families and friends – thank you to all of them.

To my family, thank you always for your support, in particular, thank you to Kos for putting up with the conversion of the house into a campaign office for a couple of weeks.

Michaela Settle: And the cats.

Ros SPENCE: I am getting there. With Adam having moved out into his own place, we had space to do this, so that was very good, although the cats probably disagreed with this. I cannot contribute to an address-in-reply without mentioning the cats. So unfortunately, we have lost the second dog since the last election, but the four cats are still there. Marvin, Minx, Maximus and M are still with us, and they were not overly impressed with other humans being in their house. It is inconvenient for them that the two of us are in the house longer than it takes to feed them, and increasing that number was a bit of a problem. But I am sure, like our political opponents, they individually and collectively spent a lot of time plotting our demise, albeit unsuccessfully.

I will just make a couple of comments about my opponents. I want to thank my Liberal opponent Bikram Singh for his courtesy throughout the pre-poll period. Equally, the Animal Justice Party candidate Frances Lowe conducted herself with honour, and there were also many volunteers and a number of parties that were cooperative and courteous throughout this time. I raise this issue because we needed to take a cooperative approach to look out for each other in light of what was incredibly appalling behaviour by the Victorian Socialists. This included harassment of electors, harassment of candidates and harassment of volunteers. It was completely unacceptable, and we had to work together to protect each other and the community from what was incredibly appalling behaviour. This cannot continue at future elections, and I hope that the Electoral Matters Committee seriously considers ways to address what happened, not just in my electorate but in several electorates across the state.

Finally, to the residents that I represent in Kalkallo: I am incredibly grateful that I have been given this opportunity again. I will continue to work with you and for you to improve our community, to deliver the many projects that we have underway and to deliver on the commitments that we made prior to the election, and I am very proud to do this as a member of the Andrews Labor government.

Members applauded.

Melissa HORNE (Williamstown – Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister for Roads and Road Safety) (13:29): I too am delighted to make a contribution to this debate, and I would first like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which Parliament stands today and the lands that cover my electorate, the Kulin nation, and pay my respects to elders, past, present and emerging.

Secondly, I would also like to thank the people of Williamstown for trusting me to represent them in this place for another term. Our vibrant, tight-knit community is compassionate, it is diverse, it is generous, it is concerned about the environment, it is concerned about people who are vulnerable, it is concerned about people who are less well-off than them. And whether that is represented through organisations such as the variety of RSLs we have got in the electorate, through people that participate in the Hobsons Bay Community Fund, the Lions groups or the awesome Altona Men's Shed, who are currently in the Newport Railway Workshops doing volunteer work to restore some of those beautiful gardens and some of the heritage-listed sheds, it is truly a wonderful community to represent.

We are part of a community that has a rich industrial past, and many of the challenges that we face as a community are part of that legacy. But within that legacy too comes enormous richness, and I know particularly just how dearly the Williamstown electorate holds our maritime history. From building some of the first boats through to some of the Anzac frigates, Williamstown has got this incredible maritime precinct. I am really proud to be part of a government that is investing \$6 million towards critical repairs, and this was part of our election commitment to support the reopening of Workshops Pier – one of the piers down in the Seaworks precinct, established when Steve Bracks was Premier, still in public ownership and doing amazing work through the acting chair Patsy Toop – through to \$11 million to rebuild Altona Pier, which will truly transform the Altona community and foreshore. And of course there is \$11.3 million to redevelop the Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club. Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club is the biggest swimming and lifesaving club in the state and is truly one of the most diverse and community-minded groups that we have. This investment will breathe new life into our foreshore and ensure that these much-loved assets can be enjoyed for generations to come.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Honourable Jill Hennessy, because in the redistribution of the Williamstown electorate I picked up most of Altona, and the work that Jill did over a decade there has been a legacy and a testament to her incredible work. For example, without Jill's advocacy and hard work the \$8.3 million investment in Altona College would not have been possible. This enabled the college to expand from a P-9 facility to a P-12 with a brand new senior centre and upgraded classrooms. We are a government that believes that quality education close to home is so critical in ensuring the best start in life for all members of our community. That is why it is terrific to not only have that, but build on our investment of several million dollars in Bayside college and Williamstown High. I cannot wait to see the works start very soon at Wembley Primary School. There will be a new student centre and administration block that was co-designed by the kids there, and I really cannot wait to see that. On top of that, we committed in the election to work that should start after the budget at Altona Primary School. That was a \$1.16 million investment to reimagine the playgrounds there and for a new school fence, which will be a fantastic addition for those kids.

I want to take a moment to talk about inclusion and diversity in my community, because it is so much of a hallmark of the Williamstown electorate that we are home to a really diverse community but one that is tolerant and inclusive and supports vulnerable people. Because what we have seen in the last few days has been a vile hate spread, and it is astonishing that we are living in a time when other people think that that is okay. These ideologies hurt and demonise many in my community and have no place in 2023.

It is astonishing to me that there are parties that continue to preselect and support candidates and members who hold these views, particularly as, standing on polling booths and pre-polls – and I know we all did it for those two long weeks throughout the four seasons in one day that we have in Melbourne – you hear the vile hatred spread at polling booths by some who are in the other place. It

is just not on, because you cannot be a voice for all communities and also be representative of transphobia and antisemitism.

My community does not support homophobia; my community does not support transphobia. So my message to the LGBTIQ+ community in Williamstown is that we see you, we hear you and we stand with you. That is why words without action only mean so much. That is why this government has taken action to support our most marginalised and vulnerable communities. I am really proud to be part of a government that outlawed gay conversion therapy and removed the need to have undergone sex affirmation surgery before being able to apply for a new birth certificate. I was really proud in the previous term of government as well to be the responsible minister that decriminalised sex work, because we know that so many people working in that industry are vulnerable and can be discriminated against. We have criminalised the public display of Nazi symbols, and I am really proud to be part of a government that have committed to a legislated ban on the public display of the Nazi salute. We have committed \$3 million towards an anti-Islamophobia campaign that will directly benefit people in my community, and we are strengthening our anti-vilification laws so that people who discriminate and spread hatred are penalised. We will also establish a multicultural and a multifaith law reform consultative committee to ensure the voices of diverse communities are heard and considered in the development of Victorian laws.

We can never do these speeches without thanking so many people that support us along the way and work tirelessly to ensure that the Labor government can continue to implement life-changing and life-saving policy. I would like to give a shout-out in particular to Sam and Takara. To Jen, Cindy, Steve, Ann and Effie, your constant work and your constant counsel were invaluable during the campaign, and of course nothing is done without the support of their families too, who gave up their loved ones to be able to support me and the Australian Labor Party. To my former ministerial staff, Chris, Kasey, Hailey, Miriam and Ross, thank you for your hard work and dedication. To my friends and to the Williamstown electorate branch members, who are too numerous to name in their totality – and I will always risk leaving someone out – thank you so much for your support and your generosity. And there is my family. It is always a wonderful privilege to have your father come down and get into his old role of being a former member of Parliament, a former marginal seat federal member, and get out there and enjoy the cut and thrust of campaigning. I can see that also being reflected in the pests that I am bringing up: my eldest son Phoenix – it is an opportunity to get ‘pests’ into *Hansard* again – and also to my youngest one Sacha. I am so incredibly proud of you and enjoy seeing your activism spread throughout your school years.

In the remaining time that I have allocated to me I would like to just touch on one of the portfolio issues that I have that is very dear to my heart. I feel incredibly privileged not only to have retained the portfolio of ports and freight but also to have picked up roads and road safety and retained local government, because I think this is a perfect combination to be able to build on the success of many of the ministers who have gone before me but also on the commitment of the Andrews Labor government to build on the key economic wealth generator in our state, because the livelihoods of many Victorians depend on a functioning and efficient road network. It is why we have been really quick to prioritise repairs to the road network in the wake of the last year’s devastating floods. We have invested \$351 million in helping regional Victorian communities recover, with half of that going to road repairs. There was a \$165 million emergency road repair blitz that has been finding and fixing potholes and shaping and repairing road surfaces damaged by those October rains. But it is even bigger than that.

We have been focused on getting more resilience into the network so that events like we have seen do less damage. We want to prepare the network for the future. On top of that, we have made considerable investment in the state’s rail freight network, because it plays that vital role in the state’s economic wellbeing. I think if I had a dollar for every time that I said ‘We are investing in our rail freight network’ – because we recognise at the heart this drives wealth into regional Victoria. Having those functioning rail lines and having that functioning road network drives productivity for our primary

producers, and to be able to do that and achieve that and see some of the best product in the world go out through our ports is truly wonderful. We have got our port rail shuttle network up and running, and it has been backed in by industry. Only just a few weeks ago we saw the commitment of \$1.8 billion by the private sector to Somerton intermodal rail freight terminal to be able to really back in government policy.

We have got a freight plan, which is about giving those indicators to the private sector that we have to get more freight on rail, because we know not only is this more efficient, it is beneficial to our environment and it also gets many of the heavy trucks off our streets. We have also invested in technology as a means of boosting the capacity of the road network. The \$340 million Smarter Roads program, which was a legacy of the former Minister for Roads and Road Safety, is one of the most significant of these investments and seeing out on the ground three key traffic hotspots, which are in the west, east and the south-eastern suburbs, is really changing the lives and the commute for so many of those communities. I appreciate that there is a mountain of work left to go, but I am standing on the shoulders of giants, and I am so honoured to be in this place to continue that important work.

Members applauded.

Darren CHEESEMAN (South Barwon) (13:43): It is with some pleasure this afternoon that I rise to make my contribution to the address-in-reply to the Governor's speech. I must say I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which this Parliament House is built, the Woiwurrung people, and of course I would like to recognise their ongoing connection to the land and waterways of greater Melbourne. I would like to pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. I would like to also acknowledge the traditional owners of the Geelong region, where my seat is located, the Wathaurong people, and pay my respects to them and their elders and acknowledge their ongoing care for country in the greater Geelong region. I very much look forward to working closely with them as we strive for treaty and voice over the coming period of time. I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who might be listening to us today.

From my perspective, my journey in this place commenced in 2018 – so just a little over four years ago – and I must say that from the moment that I was preselected to represent the Labor Party at the 2018 election I was tremendously grateful for the hard work of the Premier of Victoria Daniel Andrews and his very capable Labor team, because I had the opportunity to campaign in South Barwon, a noted growth corridor of Victoria and indeed the fastest growing regional growth corridor in this country. Very pleasingly, despite not holding the seat of South Barwon, the Andrews Labor government not only had a very clear plan to deliver that growth, to deliver that economic opportunity, but also had a very clear plan around delivering the infrastructure that that growing community needed. In so many ways, whilst it was a lot of work, it was very easy to get out there and tell Labor's story in that community, to represent the Andrews Labor government and indeed the Labor Party with a very strong plan, a plan that was based on recognising the challenges of that community and indeed the challenges of the broader Geelong region, which is a very proud community – we have the greatest football club of all time, in the Geelong Football Club – and I was able to take up Labor's cause in that seat with a tremendous team of volunteers.

Through the last term, over the last four years, we were able to build on that tremendous record, a record of achievement, locally. We had a very strong plan that we took to the voters in 2018, and of course in the first half, really the first 18 months or so of that term, we worked exceptionally hard as a government – I worked exceptionally hard – to make sure that we were delivering the things that we said we would deliver, and make sure that the ministers in the Andrews Labor government were clear about what we took to the election and were clear about the things that we said we would do and that we had a strong plan. We got on with it in those first 18 months or so.

Then the global pandemic came along, a one-in-100-year event, and none of us with any clarity were sure where that journey would go. I very much want to acknowledge again the leadership of the

Premier of Victoria in staring down the naysayers and standing up for the health of every Victorian. That was not an easy thing to do, to get out there every single day and to prosecute, with a storm of words coming back at him, what we needed to do as a government to make sure that we could get our community through the global pandemic. Every single day for months and months and months the Premier was out there on his feet prosecuting those arguments on behalf of all of us against a huge wall of noise. I think when we got to the last 12 months of the last term, we were through the worst of the global pandemic, we had made the necessary decisions to protect the health and safety of every single Victorian and we had put in place the necessary mechanisms to help support small business, and our economy was so much the stronger for it.

In terms of the election held late last year I think of an age-old saying in politics which is true – and it is so true in so many other walks of life – and that is that you cannot fatten a pig on market day. You have got to have a strong plan in politics. That plan has to be clearly communicated to the Victorian people. They have to be brought on that journey with the parties that seek to govern, and that is indeed what we did. If you reflect on what we had achieved and the fact that we were able to remind people what we had achieved and also go into the Victorian election with a very clear plan about the things that we would seek to achieve on behalf of the people of Victoria if we were given that great gift of government, the Victorian community roundly endorsed us for that clear plan.

When I reflect on the offering that we made to the Victorian people, I think there are a number of things that very much shine through to me as a strong plan for the people of Victoria which they considered and they reflected on and they judged at the ballot box. One was the redelivery of the State Electricity Commission, and I must say when I was out and about doorknocking or phone-banking or down at pre-poll talking to voters, this was a piece of public policy that resonated with so many people and very much provided a set of strong reasons for the Andrews Labor government to be re-elected. That was a hallmark of my campaign and a hallmark of the conversations that I was having. We also must think about the other important issues in my part of the world, and I would certainly say treaty, the Commonwealth Games, the delivery of free kinder, the delivery of free TAFE and of course the commitment to put in place nurse-to-patient ratios particularly for midwifery nurses. I think these things very much made an important contribution to our re-election.

I am very fortunate to be part of a very strong local Labor team, and we have seen already two fantastic additions to the Labor team of Geelong in the new member for Lara and the new member for Bellarine, who both made outstanding inaugural speeches in this Parliament. I would very much like to acknowledge both of them, along of course with the member for Geelong Christine Couzens, who I have had the opportunity of working very closely with over the last four years. I think the four of us will hunt as a pack. We will certainly pursue with some vigour all of our ministerial colleagues to make sure that we deliver for the people of Geelong.

I must also take the opportunity to acknowledge that the labour movement is built on the shoulders of an amazing volunteer army. I had an amazing team that came together to help support my re-election, people who were willing to go and doorknock, to go out and phone bank, to spend time putting up signs and writing to newspaper editors and the like, and that hard work, that hard investment of their time, very much meant that we as a Labor Party had the opportunity to again win the support of the people of South Barwon.

In my final few moments I do very much want to acknowledge Hutch Hussein, a great friend of mine, a person with tremendous integrity, who took on the challenge of attempting to win the state seat of Polwarth and got awfully close. I look forward to working with Hutch, as a Labor Party veteran, in the Geelong community for many years to come. She is a person who I have been close to and a friend of since the mid-1990s, and I look forward to helping her and supporting her to hopefully take, for the first time for the Labor Party, in years to come the state seat of Polwarth. That seat is up for grabs, from my perspective, and I would like to acknowledge her.

I will also take the time in the last moments to acknowledge a fantastic Labor team at HQ. I have had the privilege of working for a couple of decades now, I think, with Nicola Castleman, the assistant secretary of the Labor Party. She has been a good friend of mine for a long time, and I continue to look forward to working with her. I will also take the opportunity to acknowledge the team built by Chris Ford. There is absolute truth in the saying that the Victorian Labor Party and the Victorian Labor Party branch led by Chris are the most formidable campaigning machine in Australia. I think given what we faced at the recent election they stood up and shone through as an amazing campaign outfit. I might also in the few seconds I have got left particularly acknowledge Young Labor Left. I was a member of Young Labor Left a few decades ago, and I would like to thank them.

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (13:59): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to take the time to thank the community of Cranbourne as I respond to the Governor's address. How honoured I am to be able to serve the community again for four years – the community of course being the people of Cranbourne West, Cranbourne East, Cranbourne South, Devon Meadows, Junction Village, Clyde and Clyde North – and be joined by my colleagues in Narre Warren South, Narre Warren North, Bass and my new colleague in Pakenham, who have joined me in the south-east in being able to ensure that we are serving our community and providing the infrastructure and the services that the community need and expect. Like so many others before me –

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The time has come for me to interrupt business for question time. The member will have the call when we return to the address-in-reply. I ask the Clerk to ring the bells.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Members

Minister for Climate Action

Absence

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (14:01): I rise to inform the house that this week the Deputy Premier will answer questions for the following portfolios: climate action, energy and resources, and the State Electricity Commission.

Questions without notice and ministers statements

Member conduct

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Assistant Treasurer. Did the Assistant Treasurer sign an approval brief authorising DTF to enter into a new telecommunications lease with Telstra for 1 Macarthur Street and 1 Treasury Place?

Danny PEARSON (Essendon – Minister for Government Services, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, Minister for Consumer Affairs) (14:02): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, and as I have indicated I have always acted appropriately, I have always declared my interests and –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Speaker, if I can refer you to standing order 58(1)(a), the minister was asked a very particular question about whether he signed the brief and I would ask you to refer him back directly to that question.

The SPEAKER: I cannot direct the minister how to respond to the question.

Danny PEARSON: As I have said, I have always declared my interests and I have always acted appropriately, and I refer the Leader of the Opposition to my previous answers on these matters.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:02): Did the Assistant Treasurer hold Telstra shares at the time he signed this brief to approve a lease with Telstra?

Danny PEARSON (Essendon – Minister for Government Services, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, Minister for Consumer Affairs) (14:03): I refer the Leader of the Opposition to my previous responses.

Ministers statements: LGBTIQ+ support

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Medical Research) (14:03): The Andrews Labor government has always stood in solidarity with LGBTIQ+ who are our partners, our friends, our family members, our colleagues and our loved ones. Under this government the Victorian Population Health Survey expanded to cover that LGBTIQ+ community. This gave a starter to measure the community's health and wellbeing for the very first time. The outcomes from this measurement were clear: LGBTIQ+ Victorians experience poorer physical health compared to other Victorians. This happens because of stigma, because of discrimination, because of hate. It requires leadership to call this out. Transphobia and discrimination against any member of the LGBTIQ+ community have no place in our community, or indeed in our health system. That is why we will continue always to work with the community to live on their priorities, just as we did in the development of the *(i) Am Equal* report for the intersex community.

We know that trans and gender-diverse Victorians face significant challenges in the difficult process of questioning, defining and affirming their gender identity. This can be met with a lack of understanding and compassion from people in this community and the services that they need to seek care and support. Our government has proudly invested \$21 million to support trans and gender-diverse young people with expanded specialist services at the Royal Children's and Monash Health gender clinics and additional community peer support. We are also delivering the trans and gender-diverse health initiative to expand the health system's capacity to support and better meet the needs of trans and gender-diverse Victorians. Despite the life-changing and life-saving progress that has been made, there is always more to do. We will continue to show that leadership. The question is – *(Time expired)*

Member conduct

Jess WILSON (Kew) (14:05): My question is to the Assistant Treasurer. As reported yesterday, the Assistant Treasurer signed a brief on 25 June 2021 in which he authorised DTF to enter into a new telecommunications lease with Telstra whilst holding a substantial parcel of shares in Telstra. Why didn't the Assistant Treasurer recuse himself from this decision because of his clear conflict of interest?

Danny PEARSON (Essendon – Minister for Government Services, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, Minister for Consumer Affairs) (14:06): Well, I just refer the member to my previous answer.

Jess WILSON (Kew) (14:06): This latest example of a clear conflict of interest is in addition to the Assistant Treasurer profiting from Commonwealth Bank shares whilst overseeing a new government banking contract awarded to the Commonwealth Bank; profiting from government decisions that benefited CSL, Beach Energy, Computershare, Bega Cheese and Telstra all whilst an active shareholder in each company; and profiting from Commonwealth Bank shares whilst authorising three new government contracts with the Commonwealth Bank. How many more examples of the Assistant Treasurer breaking the ministerial code of conduct are needed before he will do the right thing and resign?

Danny PEARSON (Essendon – Minister for Government Services, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, Minister for Consumer Affairs) (14:07): I do not accept the underlying proposition put by the member for Kew, and I refer the member to my previous answers.

Ministers statements: equality

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Minister for Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:07): I wish to thank all of our vibrant multicultural communities for their contribution to our state, not only for maintaining and celebrating their own cultures but for sharing their traditions with all of us. As the

Premier says, we do not just tolerate diversity in Victoria, we celebrate and embrace it. We support that diversity not just with words, but with tangible support. On top of existing programs and support the Andrews government is delivering \$70 million in election commitments to our diverse multicultural communities, including community infrastructure, festivals and anti-vilification campaigns. That is why it was so disgusting to see out the front of this place on Saturday Nazis spreading their hate. We know that Nazis and extremists target minorities and vulnerable groups. They seek to divide by spreading their fear and hate and they rely on good people doing nothing. They rely on good people not speaking up on behalf of the vulnerable. We saw that as darkness fell over Nazi Germany in the 1930s. To borrow a few lines from Martin Niemöller:

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me.

Well, on Saturday 18 March 2023 right here in Melbourne they came for the trans community, and the Andrews Labor government stands with the trans community. Every member of this place will be judged on whether they stood up for our trans community or are happy for them to be targeted. I say to the trans community: we will not let them come for you. We will speak up for you and for every other part of our diverse community. And the Leader of the Opposition should do the same thing.

Small business support

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (14:09): My question is to the Minister for Small Business. On 27 November 2020 the former Minister for Small Business announced the government's fair payment policy. Minister, is that fair payment policy still in place?

Natalie SULEYMAN (St Albans – Minister for Veterans, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Youth) (14:09): I thank the member for the question. Let me say the Andrews Labor government has not wasted a moment when it comes to supporting small businesses across Victoria. As we know, there are over 700,000 small businesses across Victoria, and just last year we had over 70,000 new businesses created here in Victoria. We are continuing to support our small businesses – there has been billions of dollars in support in the last few years when it comes to supporting over 270,000 businesses. We are going to make sure that we continue to back that up with \$17 million towards our vibrant multicultural –

Peter Walsh: On a point of order, Speaker, on the issue of relevance, I would ask you to bring the minister back to answering the very simple question: is the fair payments policy still the policy of the Andrews Labor government?

Mary-Anne Thomas: On the point of order, Speaker, the minister was being entirely relevant to the question, which did ask about small business. The minister is outlining the great support that she and her department deliver to small businesses right across Victoria. So I would ask that the Leader of the Nationals just sit down and listen to the answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Small Business was being relevant to the question.

Natalie SULEYMAN: As I was saying, we will continue to support small businesses across Victoria, and that includes improving some of our programs and making sure that they are tailored for small businesses across Victoria. We have been doing this since 2014. We have stood side by side with our business community with various programs and supports, and I look forward to continuing to deliver to our over 700,000 small businesses across Victoria.

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (14:12): I take it that the fair payments policy is still in place, and I ask the minister, given it is in place: why are small businesses in Swan Hill still waiting for payments

from invoices from November 2022 for the provision of services to government agencies relating to the emergency response during the October floods?

Natalie SULEYMAN (St Albans – Minister for Veterans, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Youth) (14:12): Again, thank you very much for that question. If the member can provide the details, I will be more than happy for my department to look into those matters, but we will continue to support small businesses in Victoria.

Ministers statements: student mental health

Natalie HUTCHINS (Sydenham – Minister for Education, Minister for Women) (14:13): I rise to update the house on the ongoing leadership that this government is showing in supporting student mental health in our schools and in fostering inclusive environments for our LGBTIQ+ students across all of our schools as part of a \$600 million education policy response to the royal commission into mental health. The mental health menu and fund is successfully rolling out in areas like Brimbank, Melton, north-eastern Melbourne, outer eastern Melbourne and southern Melbourne, in addition to the regional and rural schools that it rolled out in in the last two terms of last year.

We will also continue to provide support and leadership through our Safe Schools and Respectful Relationships programs because equality is not negotiable here in Victoria, and the rights of trans Victorians are not negotiable here in Victoria. As Minister for Women, I proudly stand up for all women – that includes trans women. In contrast, there has been a failure of leadership from those opposite in standing up for the rights of the LGBTI+ community and a failure of leadership in looking after the mental health of our young Victorians. Those opposite have been advocating for tough love policies across our school system for struggling students. Well, I tell you what, tough love policy just does not cut it for Victorian parents, nor does it cut it for this government. Instead we are taking real action to implement the recommendations of the royal commission and make landmark investments to improve the mental health of our students and our broader communities.

LGBTIQA+ support

Gabrielle DE VIETRI (Richmond) (14:15): My question is for the Premier. This weekend saw anti-trans campaigners join forces with neo-Nazis to spread hatred towards our trans and gender-diverse communities. We welcome the swift action from this government to consider banning the Nazi salute, but there is more to be done. Right now Victoria's anti-vilification laws do not protect people against vilification based on their sexuality or their gender. That means someone can stand on the steps of Parliament, as they did this weekend, and spread hatred towards trans and gender-diverse people and get away with it. In 2021, following an inquiry, the government gave in-principle support to expanding anti-vilification laws to include gender and sexuality and expanding them beyond race and religion – laws that could have prevented what happened on the weekend. Our queer community is strong. Will the government urgently expand anti-vilification laws to protect our queer community?

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (14:16): I thank the member for Richmond for her question. There were a number of parliamentary inquiries, one in this chamber and another in the other place. The government has responded to one and will soon respond to the second, and I would draw in the first instance the member's attention to the response we have already provided.

In terms of these issues, what we saw on the steps of Parliament House on Saturday was an absolute disgrace, not in keeping with mainstream values, harmful, dangerous and hurtful and needs to be called out in the strongest possible terms. Whilst I do not seek to find a disagreement between the government and the member for Richmond, I think we do need to be careful to make those points and then pause and not rush to find inadequacies in our law. The attention should be on those people – that is who the attention should be on – and those that stood with them. It is not the first time that we have seen people with extremist views on the steps of this building, and it is not for the first time that we have, I am sad to have to say, had to reflect on those who stood with them.

Members interjecting.

Daniel ANDREWS: Yes. Or invited them or ushered them through the gardens of this building and through this precinct.

Members interjecting.

Daniel ANDREWS: It is shameful. What I would say to the member for Richmond is that the government over its time in office has, through principled positions and urgent action, always sought to protect our diversity, whether that be cultural and linguistic or faith diversity, but also of course our LGBTIQ+ community. We do not have a Minister for Equality for any other reason than that good states – states that care about these things – put in place arrangements to deliver a comprehensive agenda. Minister Shing in the other place and Minister Foley before her have worked hard every single day, and I would not want to think that the Greens political party, given some issues of their own late in relation to the trans community, would be critical of the government's efforts.

Let us work together, all of us, hopefully, as a Parliament to protect the most vulnerable in our community. There can be no doubt that the trans community and indeed the LGBTIQ+ community more broadly more often than not constitute a real vulnerability, or can do. We need to protect those who need protecting. We need to be clear about what is acceptable and equally clear about what is not. I am more than happy to have a discussion with any member of this place about these matters or refer them to the relevant minister for that sort of a briefing.

Gabrielle DE VIETRI (Richmond) (14:19): I thank the Premier for his answer and for his strong words on principle. I have checked the government's response to the inquiry, and in 2021 this government said that they would consider expansion to the anti-vilification laws subject to funding considerations. However, unfortunately, the government has committed no funds and therefore nothing has happened. In fact this Labor government is cutting funding to protect our LGBTIQA+ communities, cutting funding to the human rights and equal opportunity commission, reducing staff and asking them to make do with less funding. If protecting rights is subject to funding, could the Premier please clarify how this government will prioritise legislative reform and anti-vilification to protect trans and gender-diverse people's rights in the coming budget?

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (14:20): Well, I would simply say, with the greatest of respect to the member for Richmond, the budget will be delivered in May, and it is not being delivered today. I do not accept the contention that she puts forward that there have been cuts to funding when it comes to these areas. The government has delivered the most comprehensive agenda and program of protections and reforms in the history of this state. Whilst it is pleasing to think that the green political party have, in the main, been supportive of those measures, there are some who were a moment ago interjecting and perhaps thought better of it and are not interjecting right now, who did not support that agenda – far from supporting that agenda. Whilst I appreciate the intention of the question, this is not just about laws and funding, this is about calling out abhorrent behaviour and leadership. It is about leadership, and if you are not prepared to show leadership within your own political party, then you are not capable of showing leadership across our state.

Ministers statements: LGBTIQA+ support

Gabrielle WILLIAMS (Dandenong – Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Ambulance Services, Minister for Treaty and First Peoples) (14:21): Today I rise to update the house on the Andrews Labor government's commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ young people here in Victoria. LGBTIQ+ young people are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicide. They are also more likely to experience social exclusion and face horrific stigma and its ongoing impacts – impacts that result in trans youth being 15 times more likely to attempt suicide than the general Australian population, with some studies estimating that nearly half of Australia's trans community have attempted to take their own life. That is why, through a record

investment of \$62 million, we are delivering programs and services which ensure that LGBTIQ+ communities are safe, empowered and celebrated for who they are.

Just this week we have announced the next round of Healthy Equal Youth grants, part of a \$1.9 million investment for LGBTIQ+ Victorian youth, and this includes funding for peer support groups such as the Rainbow Alliance in Stawell and Rural Rainbows in the Yarra Ranges to create opportunities for connection, celebration and of course advocacy as well. As the members for Broadmeadows and Glen Waverley will know, the Brotherhood of St Laurence is delivering a peer network for LGBTIQ+ youth living at the Education First Youth Foyers in Broadmeadows and Glen Waverley, and in Shepparton. These investments change lives and they save lives.

This government will always ensure that LGBTIQ+ Victorians get the care and support they need to not only survive but to thrive. Any trans member or trans person or member of the LGBTIQ+ community who feels triggered by the rally that took place over the weekend should know that support is available through Queerspace, through Switchboard or indeed through Lifeline. Please reach out if you need that support. While those opposite, as we all know, play footsies with far-right groups and anti-trans groups – *(Time expired)*

Payroll tax

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (14:23): My question is to the Treasurer. How many GP clinics will close as a result of the Treasurer's decision to impose and backdate payroll tax on Victorian GPs?

Tim PALLAS (Werribee – Treasurer, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Trade and Investment) (14:23): I thank the member for her question. Of course primary care is the responsibility of the Commonwealth government. As a government, can I inform the member –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I cannot hear the Treasurer's response.

Tim PALLAS: I can barely hear myself. The noise, the pitch, is so high, Speaker. But can I advise the member that I have met with GPs –

Members interjecting.

The SPEAKER: Member for South-West Coast!

Tim PALLAS: I have had the opportunity to talk about their concerns regarding problems that seem to have originally emanated out of Queensland with regard to some concerns about a change to the way in which GP practices were being taxed for payroll. I had the opportunity to confirm then, and I will confirm now, that we have not changed in any material way the procedure by which the State Revenue Office seeks to raise payroll tax from GPs. In fact I went further than that. I took the opportunity to indicate to the representatives of GPs that the SRO would sit down and work with them and issue a practice note to make it clear to GPs that there was no intention to change the tax liability of GPs, because as a government we recognise and we regard the hard work that GPs do.

Of course this government has spent a lot of time and effort making sure that GPs are supported. As I say, primary care is not the responsibility of state governments. Yet the Andrews Labor government has invested \$43 million in 25 primary care clinics, and those clinics will provide free care for people with conditions that require urgent attention, taking a lot of the load off our emergency response. So as a government we take their concerns seriously. But can I assure the member, as I have assured the representatives of the GPs who came in – many of whom told of some quite substantial problems around being able to find staff and being able to effectively run their practices – we are a government that has been prepared to make a demonstrable effort in an area that is not our responsibility, a government that has wanted to lend a hand, has made a very profound impact and continues –

John Pesutto: But they're still paying payroll tax, right?

Tim PALLAS: I hear from the Leader of the Opposition that we are still raising payroll tax. Yes, but we are not in any way changing the liability, and importantly, everybody has to pay a contribution towards the support that this government put in place to ensure that this state was able to deal with the travails of the pandemic – after all, some \$14 billion worth of support to business.

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (14:27): Can you guarantee that GPs will not pay more in payroll tax?

Tim PALLAS (Werribee – Treasurer, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Trade and Investment) (14:27): In response to the member's question I can simply say that the payroll tax regime has not changed and GPs will pay payroll tax consistent with that regime, whether or not that increase will be as a consequence, effectively, of the size of their payroll. If the question goes to what the government's plans are with regard to the budget, well, you will have to wait for the budget.

Ministers statements: LGBTIQ+ support

Daniel ANDREWS (Mulgrave – Premier) (14:28): I rise to update the house on the fact that the government is in conversation with a number of different service providers who provide direct support and assistance – often life-saving support and assistance – to our trans community as a result of what occurred on the steps of this building on Saturday. We will work with those service providers, Switchboard and others, to see whether they need increased support, because what we know is that when we have shocking, awful, harmful displays like we did on Saturday, the number of people reaching out for support, often life-saving support, increases notably. So we will not leave those service providers short in the important work that they do.

While I am speaking about the events of Saturday I want to make it very clear that that was an ugly, evil, harmful gathering long before the Nazi salute was used. Fancy a group of people or anyone allied to them finding one of the most vulnerable cohorts in our community and then setting out with elaborate organisation and planning, real passion and indeed a sense of urgency, to make that vulnerable community's lives even harder – to find the most vulnerable and then make their lives even harder. As if 15 times the self-harm and suicide rate was not enough – what do you want it to be, 20 times, 30 times? We stand with the trans community, with the LGBTIQ+ community, with every person who represents diversity in our community, because all too often they are the targets of those who do not have love and goodness in their hearts but something very, very different.

Can I just say as well: consistency is important. It is not good enough to say one thing on Joy FM and another thing on 3AW. It is not good enough to say one thing on Fitzroy Street and another thing on Spring Street. Either you are for equality or you are not. Either you are a member of this government or you are a Liberal.

Tim Bull: On a point of order, Speaker, it is disappointing that so early in this term there are so many outstanding questions that have not been answered within the time frame, and I would like to bring them to your attention to see if we can get the ministers to answer: question 76 to the Minister for Housing, question 74 to the Minister for Mental Health, question 73 to the Minister for Housing, question 72 to the Minister for Health, question 67 to the Minister for Housing, question 66 to the Minister for Housing, question 65 to the Minister for Agriculture, question 64 to the Minister for Agriculture, question 63 to the Minister for Agriculture, question 62 to the Minister for Agriculture, question 61 to the Minister for Agriculture, question 60 to the Minister for Agriculture, question 59 to the Minister for Agriculture, question 58 to the Minister for Agriculture, question 57 to the Minister for Agriculture, question 22 to the Minister for Emergency Services, question 21 to the Minister for Emergency Services, question 17 to the Minister for Child Protection and Family Services, question 16 to the Minister for Consumer Affairs, question 11 – I am getting there – to the Minister for Mental Health, question 9 to the Attorney-General and question 3 to the Minister for Education. I hope that we do not fall into the trap of getting so far out of date this term, and I ask you to bring those questions that are already outdated to the attention of the ministers.

The SPEAKER: I will bring those matters to the attention of the ministers that you referred to.

Constituency questions

Croydon electorate

David HODGETT (Croydon) (14:32): (80) My question is for the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, and the question I ask is: Minister, why are Victorian holders of the Commonwealth seniors health card worse off than those living in other states or territories, and what plans does the government have to rectify this discrepancy? Minister, as you would know, the Commonwealth seniors health card allows each state or territory government to provide discounts on any of the following cost-of-living expenses, including electricity and gas, property and water rates, ambulance, dental and eye care as well as public transport for cardholders. Victorian Commonwealth seniors health card holders, however, are offered nothing to assist with any of these cost-of-living expenses. While other states and territories offer a range of discounts across these areas, Victorian cardholders are left out completely. Minister, why are Victorians who hold a Commonwealth seniors health card worse off than those in every other state or territory in Australia, and when will the minister and the Victorian government rectify this discrepancy, ensuring fairness for Victorians, and provide much needed financial assistance to combat the ever increasing cost of living?

Pakenham electorate

Emma VULIN (Pakenham) (14:33): (81) My question is for the Minister for Energy and Resources. The Andrews Labor government's \$1.3 billion Solar Homes program is charging ahead and putting power stations on the rooftops of everyday Victorians through its \$1400 rebate and choice of having a \$1400 interest-free loan. It does not stop there. With rebates available for solar panels for rental properties and small businesses, we are bringing all Victorians with us as we turn on renewable energy. Battery and hot-water systems are also available through Solar Homes, with many Victorians even eligible for both a hot water and a panel rebate. Minister, I know that there have been over 240,000 installations through the solar homes program. How many households in the Pakenham district have taken up this nation-leading program?

Lowan electorate

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (14:34): (82) My question is to the Minister for Environment, and I ask: when will Parks Victoria sign off on a renewed licence for Coleraine Field and Game so they can again operate at the site they have maintained and protected for decades? It was about a year ago that Parks Victoria requested that Coleraine Field and Game undertake a cultural heritage management plan and banned them from accessing that site. Coleraine Field and Game have been enormously proactive. They have engaged with local elder Uncle Johnny Lovett, who has inspected the site for cultural heritage and has recommended that Coleraine Field and Game continue to operate at their location. It is now just waiting for Parks Victoria to sign off on that renewed licence. Coleraine Field and Game are still paying the lease, even though they cannot access the site, so I ask the minister: when will the licence be renewed so that Coleraine Field and Game can again get on site to maintain their site?

Glen Waverley electorate

John MULLAHY (Glen Waverley) (14:35): (83) My question is to the Minister for Health. How is the Glen Waverley Priority Primary Care Centre supporting my constituents in getting the primary health care they need? When a constituent in my electorate is unwell, the first port of call is their local GP. However, we all know it has been harder and harder to see a GP and even more difficult to find one that bulk-bills. Nine years of neglect and cuts by the former coalition federal government have made this so. Fortunately, the Andrews Labor government once again stepped up and established the priority primary care centres, providing an alternative to GPs and emergency departments, with the Glen Waverley PPCC being one of the first to open. Four weeks ago on Sunday I referred a friend to this clinic to get their dislocated finger checked instead of them going to the ED. My friend sent me the following message:

Thank goodness the Victorian Labor Government has opened up 25 new Priority Primary Care Centres across the state.

It really seems as if they're doing what matters – reducing the pressure off Emergency Departments while servicing local communities. What a great initiative!

Hopefully the minister can join me in touring the facility so we can be sure that it is meeting my constituents' needs.

Eildon electorate

Cindy McLEISH (Eildon) (14:36): (84) My question is to the Minister for Water. Will the minister convene a meeting to be led by Goulburn–Murray Water and to include the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Parks Victoria, representatives from the Murrindindi shire along with representatives from the community? The issue of concern is the lack of action regarding access to the Lake Eildon pondage and the subsequent lost business and tourism opportunities in the town and shire. Access to the pondage is a key component of the Lake Eildon strategic plan. There is an opportunity for people to safely enjoy non-motorised water activity. There is an opportunity for the development of the Lake Eildon waterfrontage. There is the opportunity now to improve available safety and rescue equipment, such as lifebuoys, around the pondage for unexpected accidents or situations. The community has been asking for this access for over 15 years, and I implore the minister to kick it off and support the community by convening this meeting.

Albert Park electorate

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (14:37): (85) My question is to the Minister for Creative Industries, and I ask: how are we supporting the arts community in Albert Park? The arts and cultural sector in Albert Park is at the very heart of Victoria's reputation as the creative state. We boast the highest concentration of state, small, medium and independent art centres, from the Gasworks Arts Park on Graham Street to the NGV on St Kilda Road. Indeed it is our Labor government which is delivering the \$1.7 billion transformation of the Melbourne arts precinct, which will create jobs and better facilities for our arts sector. As the member for Albert Park, I am proud to also represent all of our independent local artists. Recently I had the great opportunity to visit Linden New Art in St Kilda, which supports the creation and exhibition of brave new art by mid-career artists as well as mentoring, connections and exposure. As a government we have shown our commitment to our creative and cultural communities, and I look forward to receiving the minister's update on how we are continuing to support this industry in Albert Park.

Morwell electorate

Martin CAMERON (Morwell) (14:38): (86) My question is for the Minister for Police and Minister for Crime Prevention, and the information I seek is on the resourcing of protective services officers at the Morwell train station. The Andrews government's own website states that PSOs are stationed at every single one of metropolitan Melbourne's 212 stations but at only four stations in regional Victoria, not including Morwell. The latest data from the Crime Statistics Agency shows that crime in the Latrobe Valley is disproportionately high. There were more than 10,000 criminal incidents per 100,000 population recorded in the region in 2022, the highest of any municipality in the state outside of Melbourne. People continue to raise concerns with my office about the prevalence of antisocial behaviour in Morwell, particularly around the train station and bus terminal. Crime in Morwell spiked 6.5 per cent last year, and despite the irrefutable evidence, the Andrews government does not see the need to allocate PSOs to the Morwell train station, further proof of – (*Time expired*)

Tarneit electorate

Dylan WIGHT (Tarneit) (14:39): (87) My question is to the Minister for Health and Minister for Health Infrastructure. How many extra patients will be able to be treated at the Werribee Mercy Hospital emergency department when the \$109.6 million Andrews Labor government expansion is completed? This investment will help ease pressure on the existing emergency department for the hospital's dedicated doctors, nurses, orderlies and allied health workers. The expansion will also help our hardworking paramedics get back on the road more quickly, as the extra spaces to care for patients will mean more people can be seen at the same time. This investment includes four new resuscitation bays, 16 short-stay beds and 36 emergency care cubicles to care for a rapidly growing population. The project is also expected to create and sustain more than 300 construction jobs.

Rowville electorate

Kim WELLS (Rowville) (14:40): (88) My question is to the Minister for Youth. Minister, why is it that the Andrews Labor government is providing vast amounts of funding to improve Scout halls across the state and yet the two Scout halls in my electorate of Rowville are yet to see any of the \$5.5 million allocated by the state government? The neighbouring Labor electorate of Bayswater's Scout hall has received \$100,000 worth of upgrades, and yet neither 1st Rowville nor 1st Wantirna South Scouts have received a cent of funding to upgrade their ageing halls. It is time the Andrews Labor government stopped playing partisan politics when it comes to funding local Scout hall upgrades and finally provided Rowville and Wantirna South with the funding that they deserve.

Lara electorate

Ella GEORGE (Lara) (14:41): (89) My question is for the Minister for Housing, and the information I seek from the minister is how many social and affordable homes are being built or redeveloped in the Lara electorate as part of the Big Housing Build. Across the Lara electorate there are many people who reside in public and social housing, and unfortunately we are seeing an increase in demand for housing support. This government's investment of \$5.3 billion in the Big Housing Build to deliver more than 12,000 new social and affordable homes is remarkable. Every Victorian deserves stable and secure housing, and this project will go a long way to increasing the number of houses available in Victoria. I look forward to receiving an update from the minister on the Big Housing Build project.

Address to Parliament**Governor's speech***Address-in-reply***Debate resumed.**

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (14:42): Thank you, Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak about how important the Cranbourne community is and the amazing work that the Andrews Labor government has committed to and fulfilled not just over the past four years but actually, if we look back, over eight years.

I was very pleased to be able to have conversations with many people in our community who were delighted to hear about our plans to build a community hospital in Cranbourne. At every door and during every conversation and every telephone conversation I tended to start by chatting to people about the community hospital and what a difference it would make, and so it was something that became a cornerstone of the conversations. I would start by saying, 'Have you heard we're building a new community hospital? It's right between the library and the road to Narre Warren South,' and people would know straightaway that that hospital was going to be built, because that was a commitment that we had made. As with so many things we have committed to, not only have we fulfilled them but many of them we actually did ahead of time.

The Minister for Government Services, who is at the table, would be aware that we committed to duplicating the train line all the way from Dandenong to Cranbourne. Not only did we duplicate 8 kilometres of track, but we did it 12 months ahead of schedule. What was important when I was talking to people about us fulfilling our commitments was the change they made in people's lives. Obviously, there is a great deal of change that comes with having jobs and having employment for the thousands of people who are employed on these really important infrastructure projects, but I will never forget a conversation I had with a mum, a woman who was needing to get her children to school on time. To do that, to get her children to school on time, she needed the trains to run reliably. She had had two warnings at work and was on her third warning. Having the train line duplicated means not only that the trains run more often and that there is a turn-up-and-go service but, more importantly in many ways for many people in the community, that the train line is reliable.

As part of that reliability and having the Cranbourne line duplicated, we are also removing level crossings. We removed the level crossing at Evans Road. It is a very well-known level crossing that we had to remove, and the reason it was so well known was because the whole road had been closed off. It had been closed off for so many years that people were unable to get from one side to the other, and that made an enormous difference to people having to get their children to school from one side of the train line to the other. So I was able to point to projects like the Merinda Park station upgrade and say, 'We said we would do it; we fulfilled that commitment, and in the case of some of the commitments, we didn't just fulfil them, but we did them a year ahead of schedule.'

We have a community where we can point to the extraordinary work that is being done on our early parenting centre in Clyde North, on our police station – we have got the land for the police station in Clyde North – and of course a fire station. All of this is located in these growth corridors where people arrive often from other suburbs, sometimes from other states – people who are altruistic and optimistic and expect the best from their children and from the community. That altruism, optimism and aspiration were cornerstones of the conversations in Cranbourne. So I was delighted leading into the election to be able to remind people not just of the work that we had undertaken but the plans we had and the obvious changes that they had seen in our community. Some of those conversations also were deeply involved in children and the future of the children in the community. I was delighted to be able to remind people that we would have, and we did in fact have, a new primary school built and opened in the Quarters estate. The Quarters estate, like so many other parts of Cranbourne, is an area with lots of young families, and the excitement about having a new primary school in their own community was something that led people's eyes to sparkle.

As I moved around Cranbourne West, I tended to go back to have conversations with people I had already spoken to, and that included a woman I have mentioned before, Maria, who I had met initially as a cleaner. She works on the other side of the city and was having to commute an extraordinarily long way, and Maria was able to get access to the sick pay guarantee. I could go and see Maria and remind Maria that the sick pay guarantee was something that she had access to and make sure that she knew that my office was there to support her, not just in accessing the sick pay guarantee and giving her information but in fact, because she does not have the internet, being able to provide that service that only an electorate office can provide. It was very important to me to be able to look people in the eye and know that we had given the best service we possibly could. And that gives me an opportunity to segue to a note of appreciation to the people who served the community in my electorate office.

Jamie Trotter is well known through the Labor Party and through the labour movement but particularly well known in the south-east. He is somebody who I spoke about in my inaugural speech, somebody who was raised by a formidable woman and a person that the Labor Party is very proud of. Jamie was a hairdresser before becoming an electorate officer – he is a hairdresser by trade – and has that philosophy that people experience with their hairdresser, somebody who treats people without judgement, is discreet and gives everyone their full attention. Jamie would never ask anyone how they voted. He would always serve the community. As a result, people might have come in to have a view about something, but Jamie would always find a new opportunity and a new way to serve the

community. Time and again people, as they approached me as I was going about my work as a member of Parliament or as they came in through the electorate office, mentioned and identified that Jamie had given them service as it related to topping up their Myki card or as it related to making sure that they had access to the power saving bonus, so I do want to take the opportunity to recognise that work.

Also Ali Edwards and Margie Raman are great women who make sure that – whether it is the senior citizens, whether it is our culturally diverse community, whether it is our young families and the early childhood centres – everyone is there and available and able to get what they need to live full lives. So it is an opportunity for me to thank that team in the electorate office, who work so hard and who often bring their own family members in and get involved in not just volunteering around election time but volunteering in other ways as well in service to the community.

Alessandra Soliven, who I was so pleased to have gotten to know when I met Alessandra as the valedictorian at Alkira Secondary College, who came and worked with me in the electorate office, took on every task imaginable and did not just take on the tasks but really took them on with great passion and care. Alessandra has gone on to other things. It was an inevitability, somebody of that capability, and I am very grateful to Alessandra for the work she did and also Darcy Cleeland. Both took on the tasks of serving the community in whatever way and of course are able to do that partly through their capacity to manage things that young people actually manage, so making sure that our social media is up to date with information that is relevant. I would also like to thank and acknowledge Connor Taylor, who took on the role as a volunteer, another young person who has been working very hard in the electorate office, initially as a volunteer for a long time, who went to school locally and has now taken on more duties. How proud I am of the role that they have taken on.

All of those people, all of those skills and the capacity to serve the community meant that as I faced the opportunity to put myself forward as a member of Parliament again I was able to feel a sense that the duties required by people in the electorate office were fulfilled, and that was really important to me and really important to the people I work alongside. That is an opportunity for me to thank and acknowledge the other people who put their hand up to stand as candidates in Cranbourne. I have been very impressed by many people who have acknowledged not just the current members of Parliament but previous members of Parliament – people who have put themselves forward in Cranbourne. I was pleased that, despite some behaviour not being what we would have wanted, the candidates themselves did attempt to do what was required by putting themselves forward, and that was a great credit to the democracy of our community.

I would like to thank those many people who supported the work on the campaign, including of course the many, many volunteers and the mighty Electrical Trades Union. Graeme Watson – or, as he is known in the vernacular, Watto – stood shoulder to shoulder with me hour after hour, day after day, in the rain and in the heat, making sure that everyone had exactly what they needed and that we had the support, so I do want to acknowledge and thank Watto. After the announcement about the SEC and the decision to put the SEC back into public hands, Watto did end up having the opportunity to speak to so many more people with great passion about why it was important to have the SEC, something that worked for the people of Victoria, rather than for a handful of very wealthy people.

As I said just before question time, as I started my contribution, the work with the group of people in the south-east was also something I was incredibly honoured to have the opportunity to participate in. We are a formidable and close group in the south-east, so it is an opportunity for me. I previously acknowledged the wonderful people in this place who have worked with me, especially as we supported each other through the election campaign, but also Mr Galea and Mr Tarlamis in the other place were with me shoulder to shoulder through this whole process.

But I would like to particularly acknowledge and thank the people of Cranbourne. I often speak about diversity being our strength. The South Sudanese-Australian Academic Society were able to work so hard on behalf of young people, so I was able to let them know that they would be successful, if we were re-elected, in having access to funding to be able to support the work that they have done. There

is our extraordinary Afghan community – people supported us in so many ways – and there are the Indian diaspora and the Sri Lankan diaspora. All of the community stood side by side with me and were with me through the rain, through the storms, actually telling the story of why a Labor government is also really important.

It has been an honour to have this time, and I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to be able to serve the community again. I look forward to all of that work, and I thank the house for the indulgence.

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (14:56): I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned until later this day.

Motions

Suburban Rail Loop

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery) (14:56): I move:

That this house notes that Victorians resoundingly supported, for a second time, the state-shaping Suburban Rail Loop, including SRL Airport, described by the Shadow Minister for Education on social media as ‘a mangy dog’ of a project.

We will come back. I promise my colleagues – it is a promise – I am coming back to that.

Colin Brooks: Really?

Jacinta ALLAN: Oh, yes. I am coming back to that comment. I know props are not appropriate, but I even have a copy of the tweet in which that comment was made. But I will come back to that in a moment.

As the Victorian community have seen over the past eight years, the Andrews Labor government has built up the strongest construction pipeline in the country. We have done this for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, we have done this because quite simply we needed to get moving. After a period of indolence, a former Liberal–National government that promised all sorts of projects to the people of Victoria and delivered none of them and a construction industry that was crying out for a pipeline of projects, we literally got this state moving in terms of the jobs and investments that we made in the construction pipelines but also, importantly, actually getting on and building the road and rail projects in the city, in the suburbs and in country communities that the community needs. If you look at where we are – just a quick snapshot of where we are today – we have already removed 67 dangerous and congested level crossings on our way to getting rid of 110 in total, which, when you look at the difference that makes, makes our suburban roads safer. It makes them less congested and also, importantly, it means we can run more trains because quite simply the boom gates are not down for long periods of time, which chokes up the local road network.

We have been progressively upgrading every regional rail line, and we are doing this so we can run more train services for those regional communities. A terrific example of that is the work we have done on the Ballarat line. After the completion of that project there are now something like 125 additional services a week in and out of Ballarat because of that project. We are building better suburban and regional roads, again so we can reduce travel times, but there is an important safety element in this as well.

There are also the bigger transformational projects that we have invested in and got moving, and some of these have been talked about literally for decades. A second river crossing for the western suburbs has literally been talked about for decades; an alternative to the West Gate Bridge is something that our city very much needs. That is why we are getting on and delivering the West Gate Tunnel Project,

to get trucks off local roads, to provide a direct connection into the port and, most importantly, to provide that resilience our road network needs, not just for the western suburbs or people from further away like Geelong and Ballarat but because we know that when an incident happens on the West Gate Bridge or the West Gate Freeway it can cause chaos across our road network. That is why we are getting on and delivering the West Gate Tunnel Project.

Building a train line to the airport: well, that has been talked about for a very long time – almost forever. As long as there has been an airport at Tullamarine, since the mid-1970s, a train line to that place has been talked about. We are getting on and delivering it.

My ministerial colleague at the table, the Minister for Housing, knows well about the North East Link project, as does the member for Eltham. Again, it is the missing link in our suburban ring-road network – talked about for decades. There has been a line on the *Melway* map for longer than I have been alive to join up that part of the road network.

Colin Brooks: Trucks off the roads.

Jacinta ALLAN: We are now getting on and delivering that project. Tunnel-boring machines will be moving towards the end of this year. Importantly, as my colleague has reminded me, we are again getting trucks off local roads – roads like Rosanna Road and Greensborough Road. We are getting trucks off those local roads so we can turn those local roads back to local communities. That is going to also be vitally important for our busy and important freight network, given the importance the freight and logistics industry plays in our economy and supporting jobs in our community.

Then of course there is the Metro Tunnel. We are deep, deep into the construction of this fabulous project. Tracks are being laid, the tunnels have been completed, the underground stations have been dug out and we are now fitting out those stations with the technology, with the platform screen doors, with the signalling and with everything that is needed to run a modern train system. This is the project that is going to untangle the city loop, and by untangling the city loop it means we can run more trains more often, particularly on the Cranbourne–Pakenham–Sunbury line, which will be joined up by building the Metro Tunnel, but also it will provide capacity across the rest of the network.

At the same time, we have got the opportunity, particularly at Arden, to create new precincts by having in effect – which is unique really in terms of the work we have done around the city and the state – an entire precinct. It is not quite a greenfield site, because it was a former industrial site, but the Arden station is going to be located in an entire precinct where we have already announced we will be building new campuses of the Royal Women's and the Royal Melbourne hospitals, putting jobs and services next to a train station where you will be able to be 4 minutes to the city and you will be able to connect directly through to Melbourne Airport as well, all by getting on and off a train at Arden station.

These are exactly the sorts of strategic transport planning and land use considerations that the Andrews Labor government are working on as we think about how our city and state grows into the future. That is why the debate on this motion is important, because we do need to get on and deliver the Suburban Rail Loop project. We literally do not have a moment to waste on getting on and delivering this project, because as our city and state continue to grow we need to make sure that we are getting on and building the transformative infrastructure that helps connect our communities. It provides equality of opportunities for jobs, for services, to get to uni and to TAFE, to access hospitals, to access those medical appointments or simply just to be an active and productive citizen of our community. Whether you want to go to the footy or go to the arts centre, it is making sure that these choices are available to you and you are not limited by a lack of good transport infrastructure.

This is particularly why the Andrews Labor government put the Suburban Rail Loop to the Victorian community at the 2018 election, and it was resoundingly endorsed at that election. We put it again to the Victorian community at the 2022 election, and indeed we had some assistance on this front. We had some who wanted to make the election all about the Suburban Rail Loop. I am looking at you, Glen Waverley. They absolutely wanted to make the debate during the 2022 election all about the Suburban

Rail Loop – this notion that governments should not do more than one thing at once. Well, not only has the Victorian government, the Andrews Labor government, proven them wrong over that journey – that we can absolutely do more than one thing at once – but I think the member for Glen Waverley is an outstanding example of how that strategy failed, and we are very glad for his success. We are very glad for his success and that he has joined the government benches, along with you, Deputy Speaker, to absolutely continue that powerful advocacy for not just why we need the better transport infrastructure that the Suburban Rail Loop delivers but the reasons why we are making this intervention. Why are we building the Suburban Rail Loop? Why are we building this orbital rail loop that connects all of our metropolitan train lines, that makes sure that we can have that orbital link that other cities around the world build and that also makes sure that there are jobs and housing and services around those particular train station locations? It is because quite simply we must make this intervention.

To not do so would see the challenges of a growing city and state simply overwhelm us. Let me share with you some information that goes to this. Even with some of the challenges that we experienced during the course of the pandemic, Melbourne is still on track to be a city of 9 million people by the late 2050s. That is actually not that far away. It might seem like a long way away, but it is actually not that far away in terms of making the decisions and investments now to plan for the sorts of projects that a city of that size and scale needs. Having a city of 9 million people means that in order for people to move around a city of that size, there will need to be an extra 11.8 million trips on our public transport network every single day. Contemplate that for a moment. On the existing public transport network, even with the addition of the Metro Tunnel, the duplication of the Cranbourne line, the airport rail – even with all these additions we are making to the public transport network – with that sort of growth, that is the demand that comes on the network when you are a city of 9 million people.

In addition to that, the road network would also be under significant pressure. The road network would need to cope with something like an 80 per cent increase in private vehicle trips per weekday. So think about your challenges now as you move around the city and state – and again, this is even when we have added significant capacity to our road network, with the West Gate Tunnel, with the North East Link; with those suburban and regional road connections that we are building right now, our city and state would have to cope with that extra traffic on our road network. So to do nothing, to turn our back on this challenge that is before us, is saying to the people of Victoria, ‘We’re not worried about your future. We’re not worried about the fact that it would take you longer to be able to get to work, that you’d have to live further away from your place of work, that you’d have to make that battle on congested roads and crowded trains.’ That is what is behind the government’s push to deliver the Suburban Rail Loop.

Victorians have voted for this now, you could say, at three elections. There were the two state elections and then of course there was a federal election, where we very much appreciated the support from the then federal Labor opposition of a \$2.2 billion commitment to this project, because they understood that we needed to make this investment not just in city-shaping infrastructure but in nation-shaping infrastructure, because it is going to deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits to the state.

We have done a comprehensive business and investment case, and I am confident that those opposite will say, ‘Where’s the detail? Where’s the information? You’re hiding it from the Victorian community.’ Nothing could be further from the truth. I know I have been here a while, but I think I can see a scare campaign when it is coming. Let me tell you, all of this information was released in August of 2021. The Andrews Labor government released a business and investment case in August of 2021 that provided the details in terms of how the Suburban Rail Loop would be built, how the investment case stacked up, the way the city would shape and grow and most importantly the case for why we just had to get on and build this now.

It is a bit rich for those opposite to complain about a lack of detail when there are literally thousands of pages available to them, and I think I might have even made a few briefings available along the way for those opposite. But no, they want to ignore the evidence. Just as we have seen in the last few days

that there are members of the Liberal Party who are anti almost everything, it appears that when it comes to the Suburban Rail Loop they are anti that as well. They are anti the evidence. They are anti wanting to invest in the sorts of projects that our city and state need, and they are also saying to Victorians, 'We don't care too much about the challenges that you're facing with being able to access affordable and available housing' – because that is also what the Suburban Rail Loop is about, and we have seen this from examples. Go to Sydney, go around the world: we see that where you have good public transport links, where you build stations and you do the appropriate land use planning around it, then you can provide more access to jobs, houses and services for growing communities. That is exactly what the Suburban Rail Loop is. It is bringing together that land use planning, it is bringing together delivery of transport infrastructure and it is looking at how we can continue to support our growing city and state, because otherwise quite simply, as I said, we will be saying to the Victorian community, 'We don't want you to be able to access those jobs. We will exclude people from being able to access health services and education services.'

Let me give you an example of what education opportunities will open up with the Suburban Rail Loop. The Suburban Rail Loop will deliver a train line to Monash University at the Clayton campus. Just as I said before, there are a few projects that have been talked about for decades and not delivered, and a rail line to Monash University has been talked about for a really, really long time. Indeed I remember a promise made by the Liberal Party in the 2010 election to deliver rail lines out to that part of the world – they did not do a thing on that front. The Suburban Rail Loop will deliberately connect up our universities, like Monash University and like Deakin University Burwood, and it will connect up Box Hill TAFE, quite deliberately connecting these existing activity centres to the orbital train line, because we understand that is going to open up access. Monash University is the country's largest university. There is also that enormous activity that sits around the university campus – the heart hospital at Clayton, the Monash Hospital, the synchrotron, the growing research, university, health community around Monash University – and that is before we even start talking about the manufacturing hub that it is for the south-eastern suburbs. Putting a train line into the heart of this precinct provides more opportunities for people to connect to jobs, to university education, and similarly too I could say the same thing about Box Hill, where at Box Hill you have got the TAFE, you have got Box Hill Hospital, you have got access there for people from around the state.

I reckon there might be a National Party MP who might pop up along the journey this afternoon and say 'But what about regional Victoria?' This is a train line that is also deliberately designed in a way to connect to regional communities, and I remember well when we released that business and investment case, which those opposite obviously have not read, I had the opportunity to brief representatives from the Gippsland community. I remember well the representatives from the Gippsland community understanding how, by building the Suburban Rail Loop and by deliberately connecting it through Clayton, you could jump on a train at Traralgon, you could come through to Clayton and you could keep going through to the city as you currently do now on that train line or you could get off at Clayton, and all of a sudden Monash University, Box Hill TAFE, Box Hill Hospital, Deakin University Burwood are all so much closer, because the Suburban Rail Loop will slash travel times as well. That journey from Gippsland into, say, Box Hill will save something like 30 minutes one way off that trip. It will make it easier, it will make it more accessible, and if you achieve those outcomes when you deliver better transport infrastructure, you are achieving a better, more equal community and society because you are providing for fairer and more equal access to jobs and services.

That is one of the many reasons, and there are so many more, why we are passionately committed to delivering the Suburban Rail Loop, and most importantly there is construction happening right now. Indeed it has been underway since June of last year, with early works happening around Clayton. We had to work hard to get this away because it is a big program of works. Yes, the Suburban Rail Loop east is projected to be concluded in 2035, but projects of this size and scale do take a long time – you have got to get the planning right, you have got to get the detail right because of the difference it makes.

We are starting on two sections of the project at once. Suburban Rail Loop east between Cheltenham and Box Hill is 26 kilometres of twin tunnels and six underground stations that are going to provide for that access. It also means that that journey time from Cheltenham to Box Hill will come down to something like 22 minutes on the train. You just cannot do that in a vehicle, even on a quiet – well there are no quiet days really now; weekends are busy, the weekdays are busy. A 22-minute journey between Cheltenham and Box Hill gives you a sense of the travel time savings that you will get with the Suburban Rail Loop. And of course we are also underway on the Suburban Rail Loop airport section, where we are getting on and delivering that connection because we had the opportunity to make sure that as we are working in the east we are working in the west and we are working on how we connect the northern section as well, because this is a multigenerational project, and that is why the planning that is being done is being undertaken in many parts of the city and the state at the same time.

I have mentioned jobs a couple of times. I just wanted to come back and speak on that in a bit more detail. There are the construction jobs that the Suburban Rail Loop project will support; the Suburban Rail Loop east will support 8000 construction jobs and another 24,000 jobs across the economy. Let us just unpack the construction jobs for a moment. We are already seeing the first of those jobs out there in Clayton that are working on the project. At the heart of these jobs will also be our commitment to supporting apprentices, trainees and cadets, as we do across all of our projects. This means that you can be a young person starting on this project, you can finish your training, finish your apprenticeship, and keep going on the Suburban Rail Loop project, because it is a multigenerational project that provides an important pipeline for the construction industry.

For every 100 jobs you see in people on construction sites in hi-vis, and they are important jobs for our community and our economy, there is another 200 jobs in the supply chain. And that is a big and diverse supply chain. It is in the manufacturing sector, professional services, cleaning, hospitality and landscaping. It is a big and diverse supply chain that supports our construction projects. These are the jobs and these are the industries that can look to the future with confidence, because we are investing in the Suburban Rail Loop and not only investing in it but out there right now delivering on it.

Also, I have mentioned there are other jobs that will be supported. The growth in job opportunities that we will see, that you get from the work that will be done around each of the station precincts, will see further economic activity. I mentioned before the work around Monash, Deakin University Burwood, Box Hill, Glen Waverley, Cheltenham, Clayton. We will all see additional job opportunities come because we know businesses want to invest in their private operations where there are good transport connections, because quite simply that is where you get a great rate of return. It is how you can attract a strong workforce: make it easier for people to access those jobs.

Now I want to talk for a minute because I reckon there will be another criticism that will come this afternoon, asking, ‘What about consultation with the community? You have not talked to the community’. Well, I reckon we have talked to the –

A member interjected.

Jacinta ALLAN: I know your lines. I reckon we have already spoken to the community on three occasions in an election sense. The Victorian community has had an opportunity to have its say on three different occasions, and it has said yes each and every time to the Suburban Rail Loop. But we are doing more than that.

I mentioned before, we released a strategic assessment in 2018 and took it to the Victorian community. We have undertaken the most comprehensive planning and that included the independent environment effects statement process that had a huge amount of consultation across the community. There are the project precinct reference groups that have been set up in each of the six locations as well as at Heatherton. There have already been something like 605 meetings with stakeholders. There have been thousands and thousands of inquiries come through the Suburban Rail Loop Authority, and there is also the opportunity that is happening right now where we are going out and actively working with

councils and communities in each of those areas. We are not saying we know what is best. We are saying we want to hear from you about how we can grab each and every opportunity that comes from having a train station come through your community – the Suburban Rail Loop come through your community. For some, it is a brand new station, like at Monash University, like at Deakin University Burwood; for others, like the other four stations, it is connecting, it is providing additional connections. Well, we want to make sure we are hearing from those local communities about how we can best achieve those outcomes both through the delivery of the rail infrastructure, but also those really great economic and community opportunities. Some of the opportunities will be in looking at how we can support more open space, some of it will be in supporting more access to more housing choices, and some of it will be additional employment and educational opportunities. This is the work we are doing right now with local communities.

All this work, all of this opportunity, all of the challenges that come with addressing how we support a growing city and suburbs – all of this is what the Liberal Party opposes. They opposed it in 2018, they opposed it at the state election in 2022 and they opposed it at the federal election in May of last year as well. They are turning their back on future generations – and on existing generations – in terms of what we need to do to address the challenges of a growing city and state.

They are turning their back too on the job opportunities that come. If you are a young person considering, ‘What sort of job do I want to do in the future? Do I want to go and study, go to TAFE, go and work in the construction sector?’ or if you want one of those jobs in the supply chain that I mentioned before, under a Labor government you can have the confidence to go and train in those areas, because you can see the pipeline. What we saw at the last election from the Liberal Party was that not only was the Suburban Rail Loop on the ballot paper, those jobs, those construction and supply chain jobs, were also on the ballot paper. The Liberal Party were saying to the Victorian community – and indeed they have not changed their tune to this day on this project – that they would continue to oppose those jobs that this project supports. They would oppose those opportunities that a kid going to TAFE today might have down the track. They would oppose the support that those families who rely on these pay packets get each and every week from these projects. And they are also opposed to those businesses who partner with us – the private sector who partner with us – in terms of making business decisions with confidence now because they can see that pipeline. All of this is opposed and not supported by the Liberal Party.

Indeed not only did the Liberal Party opposition to this project go to terms like ‘We oppose this project’ – and they used every opportunity almost every day to talk about the project – they actually went so far as to call this project ‘a mangy dog’. The then Shadow Minister for Transport Infrastructure – he is now the Shadow Minister for Education and a member of the opposition’s leadership team, but we are not seeing a lot of leadership from this mob, not a lot of leadership at all – called it ‘a mangy dog, to be dealt with in customary fashion’. That was something that member for Eastern Victoria Matthew Bach tweeted on 30 October last year. This is the sort of attitude that the Liberal Party have towards investing in transport infrastructure, investing in jobs and the people who work on these projects and investing in the sorts of projects our city and state need. To call them ‘a mangy dog’ simply speaks to their values, and we are seeing those values on display in the last few days. It absolutely speaks to the absence of values from those opposite. The Andrews Labor government is absolutely determined in its efforts to deliver this project, because quite simply this is a project we cannot afford not to build for the reasons that I have outlined to you today.

When you look back, it was about 40 years ago that the city loop opened. In 1985 it opened to great fanfare. When we do our openings these days, we do them in a slightly different fashion to how they did them back then, but certainly there was a lot of fanfare with the opening of the city loop – as there should have been, because to look at Melbourne today without the city loop is almost unthinkable when you look at the way the city loop opened up those connections around Southbank and into St Kilda Road and how it spurred not just the businesses down there, the housing down there, but the opportunities that are on the doorstep of the CBD. Well, the city loop was first considered in 1929. It

literally took decades to get this project underway because there were decades of inaction, decades of indecision, decades of opposition and decades of politicians not having the confidence and the courage to stand up and say, 'You know what, we need to build this project. Yes, it's a project that will take many years, yes, it's a project that needs significant government investment to get away, but yes, it's a project a city and a state like Melbourne and Victoria need.' That is why today we have the city loop and that is why the Andrews Labor government is determined to get on and deliver the Suburban Rail Loop, because we do not want to waste decades talking, debating, walking away from those challenges of making these sorts of decisions. We know we do not have that time to waste, and quite frankly, nor should we. We are not elected to sit around and not take action. That is definitely not the style of the Andrews Labor government. That is why we will continue every step of the way to prosecute the case for why the Suburban Rail Loop is important.

We simply have to get on and build the Suburban Rail Loop for the jobs, the opportunities it supports. That is why we will absolutely every step of the way stand up to the inevitable scare campaigns. They have already tried to do it. We have seen it a bit, haven't we, member for Glen Waverley? We are seeing it already – these scare campaigns – because they are fundamentally opposed to this project. They want us to spend decades not getting on and delivering the Suburban Rail Loop. They want to scrap it – scrap the jobs, scrap this most important public transport project that will also support housing and access to services for people in the city and in the country. That is why we will continue to support this project. I can promise the Liberal Party this: we will continue to absolutely vigorously prosecute the case for why this project is important and run a very clear case for why your anti-Victorian, anti-housing, anti-jobs, anti-construction workers, anti-public transport approach is simply the wrong one for this growing city and state.

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (15:26): I rise to speak on the motion presented by the Deputy Premier and ask, at the outset, that my amendment to the motion be circulated. My amendment reads:

That all the words after 'house' be omitted and replaced with the words –

- (1) acknowledges that Victorians expect integrity, transparency, and good governance in the implementation of the Suburban Rail Loop; and
- (2) calls on the government to release the full business case to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, have the project independently assessed by Infrastructure Victoria, and release accurate costings to Victorians'.

We have just heard a tirade from the Deputy Premier about how wonderful the Labor government is in delivering infrastructure. If we have ever seen a government that puts politics and spin first and people last, we have seen that in the Andrews Labor government. The only thing that I will agree with the Deputy Premier on is that infrastructure is vital. Jobs and infrastructure are vital to the future of this state. When we look at public transport, we have got to have a public transport system for everyone – not located where marginal seats lie, not located to win votes at the expense of people in the north and people in the west. We have got to have a public transport system that connects Victorians, that is reliable, that is on time and that works. Unfortunately, that is not what we have seen from the Andrews Labor government.

I would have thought that the Premier in his press release of 7 October 2015 would have actually put people before politics in his idea to create what was and now is Infrastructure Victoria. In that press release, the Andrews government announced the make-up of Infrastructure Victoria as an independent body that would take the politics out of infrastructure planning. It said that infrastructure expert Jim Miller had been appointed as the inaugural chair to do that. In this press release the quote from the Premier at the time was that:

Governments come and go, but our long-term infrastructure priorities always remain.

That's why we've appointed a board to give us clear, expert advice that is independent of politics and focussed on our state's priorities.

This is absolutely crucial to this motion, because when you put people first and when you have an independent board, as Infrastructure Victoria is, and when you fund that board, as the government has

done, you would expect the government to then actually use them, and you would expect the government to say, 'Right. Instead of just going about our business of deciding what marginal seats we need to shore up coming into an election, we're going to take the advice of Infrastructure Victoria and have a planning system that actually works.'

The Deputy Premier alluded to other states and the way that they run their public transport systems. States like New South Wales over many years have looked at the overall connectivity of their system and how they can ensure that it is connected, that it is fair and that people can get from A to B no matter where they live, no matter where they reside, no matter what margin their seat is held by and no matter who, whether it is Labor or Liberal or Greens, holds the seat.

Unfortunately that has not been the case with this government. It has not been the case with this government when it comes to level crossing removals – that has been clear. We saw what were originally the top 50 level crossing removals in VicRoads' most dangerous level crossings list, which was released back in 2010 – that 'most dangerous' list – when the government went out and said, 'Here are the 50 that are going to go'. Within the top 10 Glenhuntly, which is one in my electorate, was not even considered. After a lot of lobbying, a lot of fighting and a lot of noise from residents around Glen Huntly, we finally got that onto the list. But if you look at the Sandringham line and if you look at Richmond or Malvern, there are so many level crossings that are dangerous that have been forgotten. So if you ever want an example of a government that just says, 'We're going to put politics over people when it comes to infrastructure', just have a look at the level crossing removal program. We on this side agree that level crossing removal is important, but let us do it properly, let us do it sensibly, let us do it fairly and let us remove the most dangerous level crossings first. That is what the public would expect, but unfortunately that is not what the public have received.

Let us get back to the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) or link with an airport rail – whatever we are up to at the moment. I note that the government have used the opportunity of this motion to have a smack at the opposition – to say, 'Well, your former spokesperson on infrastructure described it as not very favourable, therefore you're wrong, we're right.' But the core element that the government has missed out on in this is that actually nobody lined up with the government and said how fantastic this project is. In fact it was quite the opposite, and I will talk about this in a moment. Infrastructure Victoria, the government's own independent agency, which the Premier set up, has hardly mentioned it, certainly not reviewed it and never advocated for it as a major project that the government should be doing. So the government ignored its very own body to get on and deliver a project.

Let us go further. Forget about what the Liberals have described the SRL as only as far back as a week or so ago – in fact, to be specific, only as recently as 15 March – Professor Buxton, an environmental planning expert at RMIT, lashed the SRL as a '\$200 billion thought bubble'. If the government has an issue with the way that the Liberals describe the SRL, why aren't we debating what Professor Buxton, an expert, has to say about this particular project? It is very interesting that the government is quite selective, again playing politics over these issues. If they were really serious, they would listen to Professor Buxton and what he has to say – but that is not all – and they would listen to the Institute of Transportation Engineers, including Michael Buxton, including Graham Currie and including John Stanley, who all took aim at the 90 kilometre loop, which they doubted would be kept within the \$125 billion price tag that had been estimated.

Again, no-one knows how much this thing is going to cost. The Deputy Premier did not even know when it was announced. I mean, every single time in the lead-up to the election we had an initial figure, the figure changed – it was \$50 billion, it was \$100 billion – and then finally when push came to shove it was 'I'll get back to you' and we never got a number. We never got a number, and that was the problem. We do not have the details.

The Deputy Premier today has said, 'We've done the consultation. We've spoken to the people. We've done the consultation from an election' – from an election! 'We've had an election we've won – that's our consultation.' Well, that is arrogance – that is what it is. That is arrogance, because where the SRL

is being developed, in the 15 precincts where it is being done, what consultation has the government done in those areas? I doubt the 15 precincts in places like Box Hill and in places like Cheltenham, which the transport engineers, Buxton and co all talk about – only a week ago they all said that to get this done and to jam in a million people as part of the plan you are going to have to build sky towers as part of this to 15 to 20 storeys. That is what you are going to do. Do the people that live around these 15 precincts know what they are going to get as part of this SRL project? 1.6 kilometres of sky towers. Do they know what that means in terms of congestion, in terms of movement, in terms of planning, in terms of environmental footprint, in terms of parking, in terms of overdevelopment? Do they know that? I doubt it. You cannot go to an election and say, ‘You know what, we’re going to build something and not give people the detail’ and say you have consulted. That is what the government has done. They have gone to an election and said, ‘We’re building the SRL’ – and who wouldn’t want to have a transport system that connects you? Who wouldn’t want to do that? But you have got to give them the facts. You have got to tell them that along with this SRL come 15 to 20 storeys and these precincts. And as Professor Buxton says:

Is it going to be 20 storeys? Or is it four or six storeys?

In a sense the people are being treated as an enemy.

That is not consultation when Professor Buxton says, ‘In a sense the people are being treated as an enemy.’ And that is what the Deputy Premier calls consultation – I do not think so.

Further to that, after Professor Currie, who is the chair of public transport at Monash University – again, the Deputy Premier has talked about Monash University and what they are going to get as benefit from the SRL – Professor Stanley said very clearly:

It is economics without a budget constraint ...

And that is why our amendment to this motion is so important, because we need to understand what this is going to cost, we need to ensure people are getting fair value and we need to ensure that the business case covers all of this. What we heard from Professor Currie was:

“Can we really afford this massively expensive project? Well I don’t think we can and there are much better ways to go.”

This included investigating putting more money into transforming existing National Employment and Innovation Clusters, and alternative transport links within precincts ...

And that is an alternative proposition from somebody that knows – an expert. Do not take a politician’s word for it, take an expert’s, and that is what we are hearing here. The Victorian Auditor-General in terms of the analysis of the SRL business case found that its content did not meet a single one of the Auditor-General’s five benchmarks for expected processes and relevant guidance. Instead the Auditor-General’s own summary of the SRL’s business case speaks volumes. It says:

- the high-level problems and benefits articulated in the SRL business case lacked necessary and sufficient supporting evidence –

no detail –

- a narrow set of options were considered and analysed both before and as part of the business case development
- the economic analysis does not cover the entire SRL program and lacks consistency with the guidance in key areas.

But here is the kicker when it comes to the economics. The independent Auditor-General’s finding is stark – that this government has pulled the wool over our eyes and has cooked the books. The government tell us – and again the Deputy Premier was talking about their business case – that the expected benefit of the SRL is \$1.70 for every dollar spent. But when calculated using the objective guidelines laid down by the Department of Treasury and Finance, the business case return is just 51 cents, so the SRL will lose 49 cents for every single dollar. It is the complete opposite, but the government will have you believe that this is a winner and delivers economic benefit.

The Deputy Premier went to absolute lengths to say, 'Yeah, well, when the opposition get up, they'll talk about the business case – which we've got. Go to the website.' In the Victorian Auditor-General's Office's report the recommendation for the business case is to:

... provide ... a full business case for the entire Suburban Rail Loop program of investments that includes economic analysis results for all stages of the proposed investment program ...

That is what the Auditor-General said; it is not what the opposition said. The government can make stuff up as much as they like, but at the end of the day this is from the Auditor-General and this is what they have said.

The Deputy Premier in 2018 told Victorians that the entire Suburban Rail Loop would cost just \$50 billion. Then in August last year the independent parliamentary office, again which the government has ignored, costed the project at \$200 billion – four times what the government promised. After the Parliamentary Budget Office released the report, the Premier said he did not have the cost figures on hand but told the media to ask the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Again, nice handball. Then the following week the minister was asked about the cost not once, not twice, not three times but five separate times at press conferences, and as reported in the *Age*, the minister refused to repeat the government's previous estimate and only gave estimates for stage 1.

That is the problem with the government's infrastructure. You cannot do infrastructure with a blank cheque. We are heading for very serious economic times. We have seen the budget blowouts. Our government continues to throw money like it is confetti. We have got \$30 billion of budget blowouts on infrastructure without a ribbon cut. Yes, we have cut some ribbons on level crossings, but in terms of some of these major infrastructure projects that we are talking about we are already up to \$30 billion of overruns – and counting. Imagine trying to build your house like that and realising that you literally cannot afford to finish it because you have run out of money. That is where Victoria is going at the moment. We are running out of money, and we do not have the necessary money to finish these projects. We saw that again with the transport infrastructure minister and Deputy Premier's own Commonwealth Games running out of money and going to the government for help. We have seen that with this project for the SRL. They are going to the federal government and asking them for help. They are doing that because they talk a big game, but they do not deliver when it comes to detail, and you have to be able to deliver otherwise you are going to end up with nothing.

You can look at the figures to be able to see this. Look where we have been. One of the best examples of this again was where the Victorian Auditor-General scored the state's delivery of key transport projects as a fail – not the opposition. An article states:

... Auditor General ... scores state's delivery of key transport projects 'a fail'

This is back in 2021.

... an analysis of publicly available information on projects costed at \$100m or more ... warned on Monday the government's tendency to underquote "can have consequences for Victorians, such as delays in obtaining needed infrastructure or increased costs".

And it goes on to talk about each and every one of these projects:

While the government has confirmed the completion of 46 of its ... 75 level crossing removals, it has not said how much money has been spent to date.

The first 50 level crossings were initially expected to cost \$5bn to \$6bn to remove, but a 2017 Auditor-General's report found it had blown out to \$8.3bn.

There you go – from \$5 billion to \$8.3 billion. Following the government's promise to do an additional 25 level crossings, the full estimated costings were costed at \$14.8 billion, and the last cost an average of \$260 million compared to an average of \$160 million. So it goes up and up and up.

We start with a figure, the figure blows out, and that is where we have got to a \$30 billion blowout, where we have got level crossings; North East Link, initial cost \$10 billion, we are up at a revised cost of \$15.8 billion, with the clock ticking; and Metro rail, \$11 billion – again, a \$2.7 billion blowout.

These are the Auditor-General's numbers, and they have gone up since then. But these are, as stipulated, not our numbers but the Auditor-General's numbers. Melbourne Airport rail, with an initial cost of \$10 billion, with each government meant to pay \$5 billion, is up to \$13 billion. West Gate Tunnel – again, blowouts. Suburban Rail Loop – who knows where we are going to get to. That is effectively where this stuff is at. So we have got blowouts. We are not able to deliver this stuff on time. Even as recently as last week we had again the Auditor-General report looking at our Metro contracts actually delivering current projects, and what it says is that the government has no idea when it comes to delivering value. They have no idea whether we are getting value or not, and we are not meeting targets in terms of reliability. We are down to 50 per cent on reliability, and punctuality only meets its targets two-thirds of the time. So we are down when it comes to actually meeting our targets. We are literally writing cheques to an agency and have no idea what we are getting as far as those cheques are concerned, and the Auditor-General has said that the government needs to sit down and work out the detail of what we are looking for and has suggested a whole lot of changes when it comes to that.

We have had a huge amount of criticism when it comes to the SRL. We have heard urban policy professor Jago Dodson say:

It looks almost like a complete failure in metropolitan planning that a project of this financial magnitude could be decided to proceed with almost no ... planning whatsoever ...

Grattan Institute cities program director Marion Terrill said:

... the project needs a rethink – not just stations, but lock, stock and barrel.

Stephen Anthony, former chief economist at Industry Super Australia, said the Suburban Rail Loop is the 'worst infrastructure project of all time'. These are not Liberals. These are experts. The government today has put a notice of motion that attacks a Liberal transport spokesperson but ignores what experts have actually had to say on this, because they have not consulted. There has been no consultation on this. It has just been an election commitment with no detail, and that is the issue with this particular project.

But I suppose the biggest, most interesting thing of all time – it just shows you where we have gone on this project – is we had back on 31 October 2022, so less than a month out from the election, 'The rail loop rebrand is no accident as spin over substances reaches a peak':

Premier Daniel Andrews stood with a straight face and rebranded the bipartisan Melbourne Airport Rail Link as part of Labor's Suburban Rail Loop.

This was "SRL Airport", Andrews and his chosen successor ... said.

They said it is significant, it is now an extension, it is now an additional one with the lot. Public Transport Users Association Daniel Bowen got this absolutely right. Described as 'the human antithesis of spin', he called it an attempt to piggyback on a popular project, sharing a satirical meme saying, 'Did you know if you combine wine and dinner you get winner?' It is a bit of a chicken dinner here, because what we have got is a Suburban Rail Loop, and they were having trouble trying to sell it, so they called it the suburban airport rail loop and whacked in 'airport rail', then away we went. That is what Daniel Bowen said. That is what he gets, because with a project that was really finding it hard to actually get traction, they threw the Melbourne Airport rail in and then we got one with the lot.

We got not the suburban rail but the suburban airport rail loop. Because then that makes it exciting. Then it makes it something that we on this side of the house have been talking about and have supported, but certainly that detail got left out. Then there is a whole lot of detail when you add the airport rail into it – because it was literally just a thought bubble, it was a last-minute bit of a show to try and sell something in the election with no detail, no consultation.

Then you start to get things like people going to Broadmeadows heading to Werribee. How do we get there? Via the SRL North link in a couple of decades. At this stage the SRL Airport would also be built with an elevated station on the south side of the airport, but the elevated structure prohibits outer lines, such as SRL North, coming in and connecting to the station. This means that Broadmeadows passengers would need to go between stations – board toward Sunshine and then cross over. So by the

time you get there, you might as well walk, because it is going to take you that time. Same with Sunshine – same deal. By the time you actually start getting this going, it is going to take you so long. There is no direct link. Again, the west was left out. The west was last.

If I come back to where I started, if the government actually took politics out of this and did what the people wanted, they would start the Suburban Rail Loop in the west. They would start getting the west connected up first. They would give the basic transport systems to the west so they have got accessibility, but the west is forgotten. The west is completely forgotten. Even the Premier himself after the election came in here and said, ‘Oh, you know what? I better actually start thinking about the west, because I’ve forgotten them for a while and the huge swings that we got in the west show that maybe I haven’t done the work in the west.’ I would say to the Premier, I would say to the government –

A member interjected.

David SOUTHWICK: I take up the interjection in terms of whether I would know where the west is. I spend a lot of time in Werribee, a lot of time in Laverton. You know that. Have a look at that Laverton pool, which the government will not put any money into. You know, you can see that very, very proudly –

Members interjecting.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Michaela Settle): Order! There is too much audible noise.

David SOUTHWICK: Very, very good. I have upset the government, because we know that we care about everybody. We do not care where you live. We do not care if they are Labor-held seats. We take politics out and we are focused on people.

Infrastructure Victoria was a program. It was an authority that was established by the Premier, and we accept that. But what I would say to you is: where was the SRL in Infrastructure Victoria’s recommendations? I am still looking for it. I cannot find it. I would be very happy if the government would turn their attention and give me some detail, because again it was ignored.

Infrastructure Victoria talks about 24 other transport projects. They are mentioned in this document – 24 other projects. Metro 2 was mentioned, transforming Melbourne, Ballarat and Bendigo cycling was mentioned, a new rail network and technology was mentioned. A whole range of projects in terms of regional Victoria are mentioned in here: fund and plan for ongoing regional rail freight network development in Victoria and redesign regional public transport to meet local needs. There are so many projects: reallocate road space to priority transport modes, redesign tram routes, activate urban renewal with new tram links, plan for and fund public transport accessibility and tram stop updates. Adopt permanent off-peak discounts for public transport fares – that would be a good idea. Reduce bus and tram fares, remove the free tram zone, appoint an independent transport pricing adviser – it goes on.

I am still looking at all of these: ‘deliver a new intermodal freight terminal for inland rail’, ‘construct an outer metropolitan road and rail corridor’, ‘trial congestion pricing in inner Melbourne’, ‘incorporate congestion pricing for all new metropolitan freeways’. It continues: ‘extend rail services in Melbourne’s western and northern growth areas’ – there you go, mentioned again. ‘Extend rail services’ – that would be a good start, wouldn’t it?

In the next two years, develop business cases to extend electrified metropolitan train services from Sunshine to Rockbank, from Craigieburn to Beveridge, and on the Wyndham Vale corridor, to be delivered by 2031. Deliver extra services to south-east Melbourne by running Rockbank services to Pakenham via the Melbourne Metro Tunnel. Consider adding extra stations on the Wyndham Vale and Melton corridors ...

to secure remaining land required on those stations. I would expect government members that are going to talk on this motion from these areas would say, ‘I tell you what, Infrastructure Victoria’s got some good ideas here – great ideas. We should take them up.’

In the next year, introduce ‘next generation’ bus services towards Clyde, Mornington Peninsula, Wollert and Armstrong Creek ...

Expand Melbourne's outer suburban road – again, the arterial road congestion; there are so many ideas. But do you know what is not in here? The Suburban Rail Loop is not in here as one of the key projects to deliver. Do you know why? Because it has been a politically motivated project to try and win marginal seats, to shore up marginal seats with no detail. What I can assure you is we will be consulting with the 15 high-rises in the areas, in the Labor-held seats, to make sure they get the detail and they know exactly what this government will be delivering – high-rise and skyscrapers.

Nick STAIKOS (Bentleigh) (15:56): Thank goodness that drivel is over. Can I just say to my neighbour the member for Caulfield – I get on okay with the member for Caulfield: we get on well, member for Caulfield, but that was probably the worst contribution I have heard in eight years in this house, the absolute worst contribution. It had it all. You know how he started his contribution? I listened to most of it in my office, and then I came here and he was still going. He went for the full half an hour. He even took credit for the Glen Huntly level crossing removal. Well, can I say, my electorate was first cab off the rank with the Andrews government's Level Crossing Removal Project – Centre Road, McKinnon Road and North Road – and throughout that construction period members of the opposition were petitioning against those projects. Those opposite have never supported the Level Crossing Removal Project. They do not support the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL). In fact they do not support building anything. The only thing they still want to build, even after three election losses, is that dead dog of a project, the east–west link. They are still trying to dig that up. They do not want to build the projects that Victorians voted for, they want to build projects that Victorians did not vote for, and that is why they sit on the opposition benches in such low numbers – and may that continue to be the case for a long time yet. They did not want to do anything when they were in government, and they oppose every aspect of this government's Big Build. We think it is disgraceful.

We also think – and we are unanimous on this side of the house – that Melbourne is one of the world's great cities, and a great city of the world like Melbourne needs a transport system that is befitting a great city of the world. By the 2050s, by the time the Suburban Rail Loop is fully complete, Melbourne will be the size of London. Can anybody imagine London without the Tube? Could any of us who have visited that majestic city imagine that city without the Tube? You could not possibly imagine London without the tube, and when the SRL is built, just like we say in relation to the city loop, we will be saying we could not imagine Melbourne without the Suburban Rail Loop.

I am going to focus on the first stage of the Suburban Rail Loop, SRL East, which is from Cheltenham to Box Hill. As a consequence of the redistribution from the last election, Cheltenham has come into the Bentleigh electorate, and I feel very privileged and honoured to represent the good people of Cheltenham – and the Suburban Rail Loop is starting in Cheltenham. I think one of the greatest benefits of this first stage of the Suburban Rail Loop is that finally Australia's largest university, Monash University, will be connected to rail. Monash University of course was opened in 1961, a long time ago.

It was one of a number of megaprojects of the 1960s – Monash University was one, Waverley Park or VFL Park was also built during that time, and there was Tullamarine airport. But what were not constructed with those projects were the rail services needed to connect them. It has just been talked about ever since. In 1969, I think it was, the Bolte government released a transportation plan for Melbourne. It actually included a rail line to Doncaster via Monash University, but it has just been talked about since. This government is getting on and building this railway line, which will include Monash University. Monash University of course, when you combine students and staff, is a community of around 100,000 people. Again, there is no rail line, but we are addressing that.

If you take the community of Cheltenham as an example, if you are a resident of Cheltenham and you are a student at Monash University enrolled at the Clayton campus, your transport options to get there if you do not drive are very, very limited indeed. I will take you through the two main options at the moment. First, if you just want to take buses from Cheltenham to Monash University, you would walk to a bus stop for the 822 bus service, you would get off at the intersection of East Boundary Road and Centre Road in East Bentleigh and then you would wait for the 703 to pick you up and take you to Monash University. That is 1 hour and 9 minutes; that is how long it takes. And Cheltenham is not in

the middle of nowhere. Cheltenham is part of the middle ring of Melbourne. Just going to another part of the south-eastern suburbs – an hour and 9 minutes by bus. If you were to take bus and train, you would walk to Cheltenham station, catch the train to Ormond station and then take the 630 bus service to Monash University. That is an hour and 3 minutes. When the Suburban Rail Loop is built, from Cheltenham to Monash University will be an 11-minute journey. That is how city shaping this project is – 11 minutes as opposed to an hour and 9 minutes or an hour and 3 minutes. That is the practical, tangible difference that the Victorian community will enjoy once the Suburban Rail Loop is built.

That is what you would expect in a great city of the world, and Melbourne is a great city of the world. Those opposite do not believe that Melbourne is a great city of the world. That is why they have not built anything. When they were in government and the member for Murray Plains at the table was a cabinet minister, they did not build a single thing. They talked about building all sorts of things, like the east-west link; they even for a split second talked about a rail connection to Doncaster that might have included Monash University. They did not actually do anything. They even talked about airport rail. You know, I remember at the 2014 election campaign they were handing out these fake train tickets to Tullamarine airport. They did not actually get on and build it. They did not do any of that. But they come in here and try to stop this government's proud infrastructure agenda, and of course they will not succeed.

Melbourne is changing and Melbourne is growing, and the Suburban Rail Loop is the project that is needed to facilitate that growth and to facilitate that change, because it is not merely a transport project, it is something that I think will change Melbourne. It will indeed decentralise Melbourne, because it will mean that you have this orbital rail network that goes through all of these different precincts around middle suburban Melbourne, and it will mean that we will co-locate jobs with housing and with transport. And that is the future. That is the way that we are going to manage Melbourne's enormous growth going into the 2050s, going into that time when Melbourne will become the size of London, but also ensure that we are creating jobs and opportunities for the future. That is a big part of it.

I am really, really privileged to be able to chair the Suburban Rail Loop East Cheltenham precinct reference group, and that is a group of a number of different representatives of our local community. On that group we have got local government, we have got residents associations and we have got transport groups. I can tell you there is a lot of enthusiasm in our local communities for the Suburban Rail Loop.

I remember last year when those opposite made the announcement that they opposed the Suburban Rail Loop that certainly my opponent in Bentleigh thought she was on a winner pushing that particular policy. I did find it curious that she was telling the voters in Cheltenham, 'I'm not going to build that new train station that is coming to Cheltenham.' In that regard she did strike me as a bit of a rookie: vote for me and I won't build your train station – genius! But obviously she did not succeed, and I am still here for a third term and really happy about that. I do not think I will be the member for Bentleigh in 2056 when the Suburban Rail Loop –

Members interjecting.

Nick STAIKOS: I could be, you never know – I would be as old as Methuselah by then. But I am very enthusiastic about this. As the Premier says, this is a project that we will not open but that we need to start, because it is not about politics, it is about Melbourne's future and Victoria's future.

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (16:06): I rise to support the amendment moved by the member for Caulfield, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party:

That all the words after 'house' be omitted and replaced with the words –

- (1) acknowledges that Victorians expect integrity, transparency, and good governance in the implementation of the Suburban Rail Loop; and
- (2) calls on the government to release the full business case to the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, have the project independently assessed by Infrastructure Victoria, and release accurate costings to Victorians'.

The previous speaker the member for Bentleigh spoke about this being not about politics but about building things. Can I say this project is all about politics. It is all about politics; it was designed about politics. As I understand it, when this project was being designed the secretary of the department, Richard Bolt, was actually excluded from any discussions about how this project might be put together. Those that were working on this in the Premier's office and the departmental office had to sign confidentiality clauses so they did not talk to other people within the department. So this is all about politics, it is not actually about doing the right things by Victorians. It was a secret deal that was done without the department secretary knowing. I know he was very, very miffed about the fact that he was excluded from all discussions around this particular project before it was released, and those that were involved had to sign secrecy documents not to tell others in the department that this project was going ahead.

Victorians do expect transparency. They do actually want the truth, and they are not getting the truth about this project and they are not getting the truth around a whole range of other projects. I think Professor Buxton put it very well – he is an environmental planning expert at RMIT – when he lashed the Suburban Rail Loop as a \$900 billion thought bubble. We do not know what the cost will be. The cost for the first stage was estimated at \$50 billion. It could blow out to \$125 billion. The whole lot was supposed to be \$100 billion. It is not going to be finished until 2056. With the way that this government does major projects, it is probably going to be \$300 billion, \$400 billion or \$500 billion. If you actually put that on top of the record state debt we have here, we will be a banana republic. We will go back to Paul Keating's banana republic in this state, because we will just have so much debt.

As everyone knows with their own personal budgets at the moment, the cost of living and interest rates are really biting for people in their own household budgets. Government is no different: the cost of interest is going up for Victoria all the time. We are spending \$10 million a day now on the interest bill, and over the next three to four years that will double to \$20 million a day. That is when Victorians are going to wake up to the fact that this government has blown so much money. And it is not the Big Build, it is actually the big bill that we are going to see here in this state into the future.

The member for Bentleigh talked about the great city that Melbourne is. Melbourne used to be a great city before the Andrews government, through COVID lockdowns and through continual driving of business out of this area, took away our status as the most livable city in the world. For year after year after year Melbourne was voted as one of the most livable cities in the world. Not anymore. That is because of what the Andrews government has done to it.

If you think about this project, the Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, the member for Bendigo East, has a track record of running major projects into the ground. You talk about the other transport projects across Melbourne – \$28 billion over budget and adding. If I look at the other country MPs in this place, think about what \$28 billion would do to fix the roads we have. Instead of having speed restriction signs of 60 or 40 kilometres on major arterial roads because they are so bad, we might actually have fixed that with that \$28 billion in cost overruns on projects. Think about the health system in Victoria, what we might need for a new hospital in the seat of Narracan, what we might need for a new hospital in my electorate or in Bairnsdale in the member for Gippsland East's seat. They are the sorts of projects that could be done without any additional cost if we did not have that \$28 billion in cost overruns in the major transport infrastructure projects here. So how can Victorians have any faith that there will be transparency, that there will actually be good value out of a project that is being run by the member for Bendigo East over that particular time?

One thing I would like to touch on about the member for Bendigo East and the projects that she has been managing over this time – I have not spoken about this in the house for a while: the Murray Basin rail project. It was a project that was going to be a once-in-a-generation, probably once-in-two-generations opportunity to actually upgrade and standardise the freight rail lines of north-west Victoria. When we were in government, in partnership with the Commonwealth, there was over \$400 million invested into that project. After the member for Bendigo East has managed that project through her time on the government benches of this house, that project is only half finished and the rail speed on those lines is actually worse than when it started.

Wayne Farnham: Couldn't believe it. Seriously?

Peter WALSH: Very seriously, very seriously. Yes, the line from Mildura to Maryborough has been standardised and the line from Maryborough to Ararat has been reopened and standardised, but what did they do with that line? They actually went and got hundred-year-old railway line from the old Maryborough to Castlemaine railway line – surprise, surprise, hundred-year-old steel with today's steel does not weld properly; it cracked. There is still, as I understand it, a 25-kilometre speed limit on that line from Maryborough to Ararat, and instead of the trains going through from Maryborough to Ballarat to Gheringhap up to the port and doing what the aspiration was for those freight forwarders from Mildura, having a 24-hour train turnaround, by the time they go from Mildura to Maryborough to Ararat to Maroona to Gheringhap and back to the port – most places running at 25 to 30 kilometres an hour because the line is not good enough – they cannot get the turnaround time to get the freight efficiencies they need for that particular project.

So I do not believe Victorians should have any faith in the minister delivering the Suburban Rail Loop. The histories of other projects have seen huge cost blowouts, as I have said. The history of the Murray Basin rail project has been an absolute disaster for those people of north-west Victoria. And dare I start on what is going to happen with the Commonwealth Games. The Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery – I think it might be the same person – is now saying, 'We actually don't have \$2.6 billion to do this project; we want the federal government to kick money in to do this particular project,' and going to Canberra and going to local government. If you think about what is going on with the Geelong council at the moment, the appointment of the CEO is being called off because the person may not be the best person for the government's intent. As I understand it, the issues there are about: how much is Geelong going to kick in to make up for the shortfall that the Andrews government has to provide the infrastructure for the Commonwealth Games in Geelong? The same thing is going to happen to the Latrobe Valley, the same thing no doubt will happen in Bendigo and the same thing no doubt will happen in Ballarat – big promises, \$2.6 billion, great boom for regional Victoria. The Big Build, as it is called, will be the big bill again for ratepayers in those particular council areas, because they will end up picking up the tab for the Commonwealth Games. So I support the member for Caulfield in what he is saying Victorians need.

The last thing I want to touch on is the fact that if you are going to spend \$100 billion, \$200 billion, \$300 billion on a project, wouldn't you actually send it to Infrastructure Victoria, your own independent body that assesses these sorts of projects? Wouldn't you actually send it to Infrastructure Australia to have it assessed? But no, hang on a minute – Infrastructure Victoria is being starved of funds, IBAC is being starved of funds, the Ombudsman is being starved of funds, the independent Parliamentary Budget Office is being starved of funds, because the Andrews Labor government does not actually want anyone to know what is going on in this state.

What we will see when history is written – and the Premier may get his statue in front of 1 Treasury Place; he may get his statue. As he says, that is up to a future Premier. He may get his statue, but what the rest of Victoria will get is a huge debt, a debt that you will not be able to jump over for two or three generations. For those that were around to remember the end of the Cain-Kirner government and what that did to the Victorian economy, we were the laughing-stock of the rest of Australia. We were the rust bucket state, where people were moving out. We have actually seen that with COVID – the number of people that have left this state, that have taken their skills, their employment elsewhere because they are just sick of doing business in Victoria.

I have many examples of people right across Australia who will no longer do business in Victoria because of this government, because of the restrictive practices in this place, because of the red tape, because of the green tape, because of the cultural heritage tape in this state. We are going backwards at a huge rate of knots, and the Suburban Rail Loop will probably be the millstone around our neck that will sink us in the future.

Luba GRIGOROVITCH (Kororoit) (16:16): I rise to speak in support of the motion by my colleague the Deputy Premier and to put on the record the benefits of the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) despite what those opposite us have to say about it. It is the biggest infrastructure project ever undertaken in Victoria, and it is going to do great things for our state. The Suburban Rail Loop plan was praised for its long-term vision and ambition as well as for being an innovative solution to the difficulties faced by Melbourne's transport network. The Suburban Rail Loop will do more to transform our public transport network with the new transport connections and investments in station precincts, which will influence where people choose to live and where businesses choose to locate, helping Melbourne grow in a planned and sustainable way.

The Suburban Rail Loop will connect every major railway line, from the Frankston line to the Werribee line – even though some of those opposite us seem to think we are forgetting about the west – easing demand on the existing public transport network and encouraging people to leave their cars at home. The Suburban Rail Loop is a project that our city and state needs and will move 600,000 car trips off our roads every day, reducing congestion across the entire transport network. It will slash travel times to and from key destinations, including universities, hospitals and key employment centres, and we can simply not afford to not build it.

Three transport superhubs, at Clayton, Broadmeadows and Sunshine, will connect regional services so that passengers outside of Melbourne will not have to travel through the CBD to get employment, visit world-class hospitals or attend the universities. Two of the Suburban Rail Loop's four stages are already under construction. Work is underway from Melbourne Airport through to Sunshine, with an expected completion date of 2029. The Sunshine hub is literally on the doorstep for my constituents in Kororoit, so this has major benefits in delivering better transport connections and cutting congestion for travellers.

But not only will this project improve cross-suburb transport, it will increase economic activity around the station precincts, which will drive business opportunities and clusters of new jobs, with the Suburban Rail Loop precinct set to become home to more than half a million jobs by 2056. For the people in Kororoit, that will enable more people to work closer to where they live and give them greater access to more diverse employment opportunities. This long pipeline of construction activity will be supporting up to 24,000 jobs across the Victorian economy to deliver the Suburban Rail Loop both north and east. Up to 8000 direct jobs will be created as part of delivering SRL East. More than 5000 additional direct jobs will be created as part of the delivery of SRL North from Box Hill to Melbourne Airport. Delivered in stages and over several decades, the construction and the delivery of the Suburban Rail Loop will provide opportunities for up to 10 per cent of the workforce to be the next generation of apprentices, trainees and cadets. I would like to note that 32 apprentices and cadets are already working on delivering these initial works.

Last sitting week, as some of you would remember, we celebrated International Women's Day. I want to make mention that currently in Australia females make up just 16 per cent of engineering graduates and 13 per cent of the engineering workforce. The Suburban Rail Loop will ensure that in training the next generation of skilled workers, there will be more training and job opportunities for women in science, technology, engineering and maths. Already more than 40 per cent of the Suburban Rail Loop Authority, the SRLA, employees are women, including 50 per cent in senior management roles, and they are actively recruiting women into graduate programs and supporting experienced women to thrive through development and leadership programs.

This project also has an emphasis on ensuring that Indigenous businesses can benefit from the major economic activity which is being generated through the SRL. Ten Aboriginal businesses have already been employed on the project, including Indigenous construction firm Wamarra, which established the Clayton site where construction kicked off in June, and Panku Safety Solutions, which supplies site workers with prescription safety glasses. First Nations business Djurwa is providing waste management services to SRL East worksites during early construction, joining the 8000-strong workforce that will deliver SRL East. SRL East is providing fantastic opportunities for both Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be involved in this city-shaping project, with a 3 per cent workforce target for the first phase of construction. With my background at the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, I know that the workforce that will deliver, engineer and regulate this project during construction and when it is completed are highly professional, skilled and proud to be delivering transport options to people in this state.

The Suburban Rail Loop is much more than a transport project. As well as building much-needed transport infrastructure and improved connectivity, it will change public transport in the state and support vibrant precincts like Sunshine, which is close to my electorate of Kororoit, with more diversity in jobs, something we will all very much look forward to. More than 20,000 people were engaged in stakeholder and community engagement through online and face-to-face consultation activities. The feedback played an important role in helping to define what was valued in terms of infrastructure and the development of precincts, and what improvement opportunities could be considered during all stages of the project's planning, development and delivery. I must say I was out with Brimbank City Council last week discussing this very matter and they are quite excited about the SRL being on their doorstep.

As the Deputy Premier mentioned earlier, back in October 2021 the then Minister for Transport Infrastructure introduced legislation to establish the Suburban Rail Loop Authority as a statutory government body, but of course we all remember that during the state election campaign last year the opposition announced that they would cancel – I did say cancel – the Suburban Rail Loop if they won –

Members interjecting.

Luba GRIGOROVITCH: That is correct – only to then backflip slightly when they realised that they needed the support of people they were asking to vote for them in the very suburbs that would benefit greatly from it. They quickly did a backflip.

The opposition have made it clear that they will ignore the message that the Victorian people sent to them in the last two elections and that they will continue to oppose every aspect of the SRL every step of the way, and that is what this amendment today is doing. Victorians knew that this project would make travel easier. It would make travel faster and it would make travel more convenient to access Melbourne's fastest growing precincts. It will provide access to employment, to health, to education and to retail for more future generations and that is why the Labor government, my government, which I am proud to be part of, won a third term at the election – yes, a third term – with an increased majority. Premier Daniel Andrews said that the result was a clear endorsement of the project by Victorian voters, and I think many of us in the chamber in agree. The outcome simply speaks for itself. This project is part of Melbourne's 2050 vision of a well-connected city and it is what Labor does: we connect people.

It aligns transport investments with precinct plans and potential precinct development projects. Labor has always been the party of vision, innovation and investment in the future. Labor's plan, as we all know, is to build a state that has infrastructure for the future. As was said last year, we are getting on with delivering it and we will continue to do what matters, because we know that the SRL does matter. We know that it is important to our constituents around the state to make sure that this project is delivered. It is a project that we cannot afford to not build, and that is why I support the motion as it stands.

Chris CREWETHER (Mornington) (16:25): I rise to speak against this motion moved by the Leader of the House, the member for Macedon. This motion states:

That this house notes that Victorians resoundingly supported, for a second time, the state-shaping Suburban Rail Loop, including SRL Airport, described by the Shadow Minister for Education on social media as 'a mangy dog' of a project.

The state Labor government has committed \$11.8 billion towards this project and the federal government has committed \$2.2 billion, but the Parliamentary Budget Office estimates a cost of potentially up to \$200.3 billion for SRL East and SRL North, if not more. That is four times what the government has promised for the full project at the original \$50 billion. Instead of expanding services

to places that already have rail services, why don't we look at other places that do not have rail access, such as Baxter right near my electorate of Mornington or a station for Mornington itself? If you look around the state, there are places like Mildura, Horsham and Koo Wee Rup; these places are not getting a service at all. But instead we are in a situation where we have SRL West being subject to further investigation, planning and development.

Professor Michael Buxton, who is an emeritus professor of environment and planning at RMIT University, has described the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) as a '\$200 billion thought bubble' and said that people are being treated like the enemy as real consultation has not occurred. He wrote:

... design problems are the inevitable outcome of the secretive decision-making around this project. Instead of using public sector and other expertise, the government outsourced the planning and design to a consulting firm and then established a nominally public body which operates essentially outside government and has only one task, to build transport infrastructure.

The Rail Loop Authority continues the Victorian tradition of regarding public open space as free land for development. Moorabbin's William Fry reserve will be plundered and used for development to raise funds and the Heatherton Chain of Parks concept destroyed as 35 hectares is used for train stabling.

Victorians want to know the truth about the costings for this project. With the way the Andrews Labor government manage major projects, costs could, and I suspect will, blow out to be much more – hundreds of billions of dollars potentially, as my colleagues rightly note. No-one knows how much this project will cost or how long it will take, and we do not have any full costing details. We need to know how much this project will cost and if it will deliver true economic, social and further benefits. The subsequent stages of this will be for governments in the very late 2030s, 40s and 50s.

On cost blowouts, building the first two stages of the Suburban Rail Loop project is expected to cost up to \$125 billion – more than double the government's initial estimate for the entire project. According to the Parliamentary Budget Office, the north and east sections of the rail loop could blow out to more than \$125 billion before their completion in 2085. An opinion poll found that only 20 per cent of people in the Suburban Rail Loop area think that it will provide value for money, so perhaps the state Labor government should start listening to the people who will be affected by the Suburban Rail Loop.

The Auditor-General found the business case for the Suburban Rail Loop does not:

- clearly identify how the proposed benefits flow from the problems identified
- adequately demonstrate how some of the benefits are a direct consequence of the SRL project
- immediately point to the need for a transport-related intervention

Meanwhile, as I mentioned before, we are failing to invest in projects that will deliver rail services altogether – for example, Metro rail services where there are currently regional rail services to places like along the Frankston to Baxter railway line. This would greatly benefit residents in the electorate of Mornington as well as residents right down the Mornington Peninsula.

A number of years ago, in 2016, I secured, when I was a member of the federal Parliament, \$3 million for the business case for this project. Subsequently, in 2018, I secured \$225 million towards building this project to extend the Metro rail line from Frankston through to Baxter, which involves electrification and duplication of that line, the upgrade of Baxter station, a new station at Langwarrin and an upgraded station at Frankston East as well. Now, that \$225 million is still on the table from the federal government and remains there unless the Albanese federal government decides to remove it, which is a real risk in the upcoming federal budget. Even Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and the member for Dunkley Peta Murphy had pledged before the 2019 federal election that an elected federal Labor government would not only deliver this Frankston to Baxter rail project, but they would do it ahead of schedule.

But since they were elected to government last year we have not heard much at all about this project, and I suspect they are looking to work with the state Labor government to drop this project altogether, particularly when you look at some of the words expressed by the member for Frankston. I was very

proud, with the Liberals and Nationals leading up to the state election, to be part of a commitment that we would commit to building the full \$971 million Frankston to Baxter Metro rail extension if we were to win government. Unfortunately this was not matched by the Labor government, and unfortunately we did not win, so at this point in time this project cannot go ahead. This project, as I mentioned, has in the past received support from the state Liberals, the federal Liberals as well as federal Labor, who are now in government, of course. The only people who have actually not supported this project are the state Labor government, but it is a state Labor government that is needed to allow this project to go ahead. This project would mean Metro rail services, as I mentioned, to Frankston East, Langwarrin and Baxter stations, also benefiting Monash University Peninsula campus and Frankston Hospital; closer Metro rail services for Peninsula residents; less parking issues at Frankston, Kananook, Seaford and Carrum; opening the way for returning Metro rail services to Mornington East in my electorate of Mornington; as well as enabling the potential for the historical rail service that currently operates between Moorooduc railway station in Mount Eliza and Mornington to be extended to run from Baxter through to Mornington. That would then link into the potential for a Mornington to Hastings bus service, which I believe the member for Hastings is personally supportive of, but during the election campaign Liberals, again, committed to that project but we got no commitment from the state Labor government. So these are projects that I think should be invested in instead of this potential massive cost blowout through the Suburban Rail Loop.

One of my colleagues before mentioned the Murray Basin rail project as well. When I was the CEO of Mildura development corporation in the past, I advocated very strongly with many others for the funding that was given, initially by the then state Liberal government but also the federal Liberal government and then the state Labor government when they were elected in 2014. I was very glad to see a bipartisan commitment for that project of more than \$440 million. I continued to advocate for that project when I was the spokesperson for the NorthWest Rail Alliance; however, that project has been delivered extremely poorly. It has been cut back. It has been cut back when it comes to the Sea Lake and Manangatang lines, which would see mass agricultural produce and mineral sands move through our ports. It has been cut back so there is not true competition between our ports of Portland, Geelong and Melbourne. We have seen rail speeds worsen, and we have seen massive cost blowouts. So effectively within the funding that was given we have seen less delivered and an enormous amount more needed to actually deliver the project that was initially envisioned. That is what I really worry about when it comes to the Suburban Rail Loop – that a similar situation would occur.

I also note that many other things could benefit from this funding, whether it is the Rosebud Hospital, which will benefit residents in the south of my electorate, or the Mornington Community Health centre or, as I mentioned, local roads, which in many cases are suffering from potholes and mismanagement and more. We need a lot more investment in both existing and new infrastructure, in particular for those residents in my electorate and across Victoria who may not even have rail or bus services to start with, instead of expanding more and more metro infrastructure to places that are already serviced.

Matt FREGON (Ashwood) (16:35): I rise with delight to speak on the motion about our Suburban Rail Loop (SRL). It is probably no surprise to the house that I do not think it is a mangy dog of a project – although mangy dogs can be cute. Presumably you would want to get rid of the mange, but little mutts can be very cute. I do not see it is a dog but more of a puppy of a project, a very cute puppy – a very big and expensive puppy with very large feet. It is a very big puppy, but it is a very good puppy. The people of Ashwood are very happy with this puppy, I have got to tell you.

There has been some talk about it in the media and in the opposition, and I think the Manager of Opposition Business said this morning in government business that he thought this would be an opportunity for the government to have a go at the opposition. Usually we do not need an opportunity – it just sort of happens – but no, I am not going to do that. I am going to talk about how great this is and let the other side do what they want to do.

To be fair – I will throw this in with a bit of indulgence, Speaker – in my address-in-reply, because it was all very hurried, I did not get a chance to thank the other candidates in the Ashwood election in

November. I will just name some, because what we do in this place is put ourselves up for election, and it is a big job and worthy of respect. Asher Judah was the Liberal candidate; Peter Morgan was the Greens candidate; we had a couple of independents, Michael Doyle and Lynnette Saloumi; and there were some others. We had a very robust campaign, and the Suburban Rail Loop, as you can imagine in Ashwood, was something of note. The Liberal Party did a lot of work in telling people what they thought about this project. They spent a lot of time, handed out a lot of DLs and did a lot of walking around, and they worked hard – credit where it is due. So they took their views to the people, and I and we took our views to the same people. The SRL was a key part of that message, and I am here, and I was here in 2018. A large part of me being here, I think – credit to the Premier, cabinet and the minister at the table, the Minister for Education, who were a very big part of that – is the SRL. It is another very big part of that as well. It is one of those projects that is generational, as others have said. I can remember standing at Mount Waverley train station in 2018 when I got a call in the morning saying there was going to be a bit of an announcement, and when I heard what it was my jaw dropped and hit the floor, because I just would not have thought that we would be taking on something this big – and it is big. It is a big puppy.

I have had this conversation with my constituents previous to elections and after elections – I can talk about the SRL all day long – but I want us to think about the Belgrave-Lilydale line, which I grew up near. That was built, from memory – I am not a gunzel and I am sure others would probably know more – in the early part of the 20th century, the 1920s, 1910s; some of it was probably earlier, from the 19th century. Back then a lot of that area – Ringwood, Ferntree Gully – was orchards and farms. Population density was, to be fair, very low. Even on the Glen Waverley line, with Glen Waverley station established in the 1950s, population density was very low. It is not now. If the arguments that we get from some about the size of this project and it therefore being a reason not to build it were to come from similar voices a hundred years ago for the Belgrave-Lilydale line, I put it to you that the arguments against the cost to build that today, should it not be there, would be the same arguments. It would be huge. You would not build it above ground, because you would not be buying that much. We have got some properties being acquired as part of the SRL, but nowhere near the amount if you were going to build something like this above ground. It would not get done. It takes not only the vision to join up the spokes of a train line but the commitment to see it through and then commitment to explain that to the people, which we have done now for two consecutive elections and the 4½ years in between.

The environment effects statement process I think was 30,000-odd pages online of information about everything from noise to cracks to soil distribution to traffic. I have been a part of precinct reference groups in the Glen Waverley area in my previous seat and now happily in the Burwood area, and there is a lot of change that is going to happen because of the Suburban Rail Loop. That precinct planning process that starts this year is crucial to involve our communities in. But again and again when I have conversations with people in my electorate about the Suburban Rail Loop, they get it. They understand that we are a city that is growing to effectively 9 million people in 2050. But that is only 27 years away, so you start to think about what our city looks like in not just 27 years but 57 and 107 years.

I have a hunch – time will tell us all if I am right, and I will not be here for it – that a hundred years from now my great-great-grandchildren or whatever it is will take the Suburban Rail Loop for granted just like I take the Belgrave and Lilydale lines for granted. All of these conversations about ‘It should be here; it should be there’ are great. We need experts to have the debate. The debate is healthy, and we are not all going to agree, obviously. That is why we are here. But at the end of the day if you put it to the people and the people choose it, we should have a level of respect for what that means, and if you put it to them twice and they say, ‘Yes, we weren’t just guessing last time and we agreed then, but we agree now too,’ it is very hard to go against the whole thing as an absolute, which is what – and it was not just the SRL, but in effect – the Liberal Party found out in November.

I am very excited about the future of my patch, of my community. Back in the old days I went to uni. I went to Swinburne for two years before they told me to go somewhere else.

Tim Richardson: It was a loose goose era.

Matt FREGON: It was a bit of a loose goose era, member for Mordialloc. When I was going to Swinburne, growing up in Ferntree Gully, I caught the train every day. Then after two years, when they said, 'Matt, you might want to try something else', I went to Deakin Uni to do business, and I got that one right eventually. But I did not take the train to Deakin Uni, obviously. There is no train. I drove my car every day up Burwood Highway. To add to that, my sister also lived in Ferntree Gully. She went to La Trobe Uni, so she drove to La Trobe every day from Ferntree Gully. I am looking forward to the North East Link because that is going to make car traffic from our part of town up to the north so much easier. I just cannot wait for that. But to think that in – and let us hope future governments keep pushing this through – 30 or 40 years that could be a train visit. That would mean that another person who is in Ferntree Gully going to La Trobe Uni does not drive all the way back every day and have to worry about the rego and have to worry about the petrol and have to worry about the occasional bingle and all the other costs that go along. They will get the train.

That is what we are doing. The SRL is not just a very big puppy of a project that is going to cost us a lot of money – and yes, it is – it is the future of this state. I know our government will back it in, but I hope future governments will back it in too and see the benefit of what our state could be in a hundred years. I would ask the experts out there – and I am sure they are very learned – who for whatever reason do not like it to think about what can be and think about the future of this state.

Cindy McLEISH (Eildon) (16:45): We have before us a motion and an amendment to the motion. The motion allows the government to do two things. It is a filler because they do not have a strong legislative agenda. They have not got enough business and we have seen them have to pad it out today. They have put this notice on the notice paper as a means of being able to do that. They got caught out a little bit when they realised on Wednesday of the last sitting week, after they introduced the second-read bills, that they had adjourned them for 14 days, which meant they could not debate today the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Bill 2023. That is what they had hoped to do, but they had not realised that there are mechanisms in place so that if you put it aside for 14 days, then that 14 days stands. So we have got a filler here, but we have also got an opportunity that the government would like to take to attack a member of the opposition, to attack the opposition and to make some statements that I certainly do not agree with.

We have got the alternative – the amendment motion put by the member for Caulfield – which I will certainly support because we need to have integrity, transparency and good governance around the Suburban Rail Loop project. We would like to see the full business case released to the Auditor-General and have that project assessed by Infrastructure Victoria and for them to release accurate costings to Victorians, because we know the government are not at all strong in this area. It is something that they will avoid at all costs.

I am just going to begin with the member for Bentleigh, who was banging on and said that when the coalition was in power we had really not done anything in this space. We absolutely kicked off the level crossing removals. We had a number of level crossings removed – Mitcham Road and Rooks Road – and the one at North Road in Ormond was all but done by the time the government changed. It was only a month or two later that they actually cut the ribbon; you cannot deliver a project like that in 5 minutes.

The minister in charge of these projects we know does not have the Midas touch – far from it. She is well known for her projects going to mud. There are blowouts, waste and overruns all the time. At the moment we have got some \$28 billion of blowouts in her portfolio already, and they are rising. What the minister does – and I heard her in her contribution spruik the project, but it is not her money – in the way that she spends is allow budget blowouts to just keep rolling along. She is putting this state in a pretty scary state, financially. We note also that the government have never really been committed to and have never loved airport rail. They have had to be dragged into thinking of doing something about that. They had to start to incorporate airport rail into this project, so they have called it the

suburban airport rail loop. I know they have never been committed; members on the other side have told me that personally previously. Some of the members who are new, even though they have been there for four years, think they know everything, but they really do not.

What has local government had to say about this? I spent a bit of time out in the western suburbs prior to the election, and Moonee Valley in particular were outraged to think that so much money was going to be spent between Cheltenham and Box Hill on this one leg of the project. I also had a lot to do with the Kingston City Council, and the Kingston council made a statement on the Suburban Rail Loop. They are not big fans of it by any means. They were led at the time by the mayor, Cr Staikos – certainly not a Liberal, I would say, and he would know that. Kingston council, and this is a direct quote:

... joins with our community in disappointment that the train stabling yard will proceed next to Heatherton homes at the Delta Site in Kingston's Green Wedge.

We have a government here that constantly put the scare campaign out there about the Liberals and the green wedge. We are committed to the green wedge, but we see pretty quickly that the government have thrown their commitment towards the green wedge out the window. They have absolutely opposed the use of the Delta site for a train stabling yard. It had been identified through a public acquisition overlay for decades as part of the Sandbelt Open Space Chain of Parks project. And if anyone has invested time in having a look at the chain of parks project, I think it is particularly worthy, and I commend the Kingston council for that, because they have a big shortfall. Not just Kingston council but many councils in the area have a shortfall for sporting infrastructure. Nearby Glen Eira have virtually no land. They flogged that all off years ago. The only real land that is left is in the Kingston area, and this chain of parks would allow them to do so much. The acting mayor at the time Jenna Davey-Burns said:

Council is keen to now see the significant promise of the chain of parks delivered. This means a fit-for-purpose replacement for the 34 hectares of planned regional sporting facilities, which will be lost to the train stabling ...

We know that kids were absolutely hard done by during COVID. They went backwards in terms of attendance or they could not go to sport, and that had implications for not just their physical wellbeing but also their development and coordination. We need kids to get out to play more sport, and it is pretty difficult if we do not have the sporting facilities. We had a great packet of land there that was designated for sporting facilities, and it is gone. So we know Kingston are not a fan of this. They were a bit reluctant to have too much of a go at the government because they do like to have the government in their back pocket as well.

We also have the debt. We have got \$10 million a day at the moment that is required –

A member: How much?

Cindy McLEISH: \$10 million a day to pay the interest bill. Add that up for 365 days and in four years it is expected that that is going to be \$20 million a day. We see the government being absolutely cash-strapped. They do not have the money to do this, but they are pushing on regardless. We had the Treasurer talking about borrowing. He was carrying on about how easy it is to borrow and that the cost of borrowing is really low. The cost of borrowing was really low, and it changed. To have the philosophy that you can just keep borrowing to your heart's content and there is never going to be any impact on the budget – well, he is living in fairyland.

They lifted the ceiling on the debt borrowing, and we see at the moment for some of their big projects – the SEC, the Commonwealth Games – that they are going begging, cap in hand. They have gone begging to the federal government. The Albanese government needs to put money in. The councils need to put money in – money that they do not have. I know for Geelong city council this is something that is extremely distressing for them. Their legacy projects are looking less and less likely. They are pop-up and remove, not long-term legacy.

How much is this going to cost? Well, we really do not have a handle on exactly how much this is going to cost. We saw in 2018 the minister told Victorians that the Suburban Rail Loop would cost up

to \$50 billion. In August last year, not much further down the track, the independent Parliamentary Budget Office put the cost at \$200 billion – that is four times what the government had promised. So either the government have done those initial costings on the back of an envelope, which it sounds very much like they have, or they have not considered everything that they need to do on this. After the PBO's report the minister was asked about the cost five separate times in a press conference. As reported in the *Age* the minister refused to repeat the government's previous estimate and only gave an estimate for stage 1. So how much is this going to cost? We do not know. \$50 billion? Certainly not, but the PBO says up to \$200 billion. The north and east sections could blow out considerably.

The Auditor-General has concerns about this, as do a number of experts. The member for Caulfield in his opening comments went into some detail about these. The business case content – the Auditor-General feels like the government has actually cooked the books here because the government tells us the expected benefit is \$1.70 for every dollar spent, but when calculated using the objective guidelines laid down by the Department of Treasury and Finance, it is just 51 cents. So far from a profit, the Suburban Rail Loop will lose 49 cents for every dollar. There are so many experts that have come out and said the government have just failed on so many accounts here.

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (16:56): I am very happy to rise and speak on the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL). I was thinking and reflecting about something you actually said yourself, Deputy Speaker, about what this means for community, because that is what this is really all about – time. That is it – time, because people do not want to spend hours and hours commuting in their cars. So we are thinking about quality of life, of people actually being able to spend time with their children, being able to get them to and from school, or getting to and from university or to hospitals or otherwise saving them that time which they can spend very constructively – maybe going out and getting some more exercise at the end of the workday. I do not know, maybe they can visit and chat to their neighbours. There are so many other community benefits. Maybe they can get involved in their local RSL – I do not know. They can buy time literally through having these kinds of major visionary infrastructure projects, because as you say, it is not just about building tunnels, is it? It is what it translates to for those communities who directly benefit as a result of this historic but critical investment for the future of our state.

We know that a radial train line will slash travel times to and from key destinations, including universities, hospitals and key employment centres. This is a great thing. And when we are saying about how this will literally shape and change the way our city functions for the better, it is because it means that people – now it depends obviously where you choose to work and live, but you can actually make choices about being closer to where you live in terms of your job – are not necessarily having to commute from one side to the other side of the city. This is also great because it is reducing that terrible congestion that nobody likes and is not good for anybody. So we can see that time is actually one of the key benefits that this major infrastructure project will deliver.

Jobs – the SRL will create 8000 construction jobs and support another 24,000 jobs across the economy, and I think that is something that can actually get lost in these debates when we just reduce it down to the minutiae and we do not think about the global benefits, because with Labor we always think in a holistic sense. It is not just about people saving time, it is also about generating jobs not just for today, not just for tomorrow but for years to come. People need this, because actually small businesses, which those opposite spruik loudly about so often, rely on people having jobs so they can afford to buy and purchase products from those small businesses. So I think you know where I am going with this: this is a holistic project in terms of what it delivers for our state.

It will take more than 600,000 daily car trips off our roads, slashing congestion across the entire transport network. Now we can see that that will take an enormous amount of frustration away from people who do not generally – I mean, I do not know about you, but I do not particularly like being stuck in traffic myself. So that certainly is going to be very helpful in terms of managing the road network, but it is terrific for the environment, because we are not only, as I say, making the roads flow better – bearing in mind that the population is increasing – but we are also reducing emissions at the

same time. So this is absolutely necessary –vital – because we cannot just sit on our hands. It is all very well to nitpick over this and that, about the project and why we should not do it and this, that and the other, but at the end of the day what solutions are they putting forward? How are they going to get 600,000 daily car trips off the road? They have got nothing; they have got absolutely nothing. That is all fair and well, but we are actually doing it. We are making it happen, and the project is underway.

I know there were some important points raised – you know, concerns; I get this – about how the project has been compiled. I should say that the business and investment case is complete; I hope that allays some of the concerns.

A member interjected.

Nina TAYLOR: No, the business and investment case is complete. The legislation has passed, the environment effects statement hearings have been completed and construction is underway. You can actually see it happening. I mean, feel free; go and have a look. You can see it in action. There we are. We are not hiding the works. You can go for yourself. I mean, do it safely of course. Make sure you wear the proper hard hat et cetera. But, you know, it is happening. It is happening before our eyes.

On that note, early works are underway on SRL East, between Cheltenham and Box Hill, and SRL Airport, between Melbourne Airport and Sunshine. Planning is underway for SRL North, between Box Hill and the airport, and SRL West, between Sunshine and Werribee. The Commonwealth government is on board with an initial contribution of \$2.2 billion.

Victorians have clearly endorsed the SRL. We will build it. We are already cracking into it, let me tell you. And we know we were very up-front at the election about this. Nobody held back, nobody concealed it, and yes, it was endorsed by the electorate overwhelmingly. You might say, ‘Well, you live in the seat of Albert Park. Do people really care about this?’ Well actually they do, because even people in the seat of Albert Park have to travel to other parts of Melbourne as well. Let me tell you, I know the member for Caulfield raised the issue of level crossings. He was whingeing about them, and I was thinking, ‘But hang on a minute – there are level crossing removals at Glen Huntly and Neerim roads that directly benefit his electorate, so what is he complaining about?’ I do not get it because where those level crossing removals have taken place, nobody is complaining. Nobody, not one single person, has complained about the level crossings being removed, because on the one hand it is reducing the dangerous elements of travel, but it is also helping with flow. It is helping reduce congestion. And there are also the add-on benefits, which I wanted to say, because we know that the Suburban Rail Loop will deliver \$58.7 billion in economic, social and – get this – environmental benefits to the state, because with these new precincts it opens up so many terrific opportunities for new bike paths and new walking paths. So we are looking at low-carbon transport – fantastic – and it is also great for health.

There is so much more to this Suburban Rail Loop project. It is not just about building the tunnels – which are obviously vital, because obviously the trains have to go somewhere. They have to get people to and from these critical destinations – universities, hospitals and employment centres. But it is also about facilitating and creating great opportunities for people to travel around our great state in a way that is so much healthier – and maybe they can do it as a family too, a family bike ride. Why not? It is all because of the Suburban Rail Loop. Who knew? Who knew of the wonderful opportunities that can come? You know, there are so many benefits.

There is another thing I was going to say, because I think those opposite sort of query our form in terms of delivering. Well, let me tell you – you opened that door; you want us to talk about delivering – there is no end. I mean, we could be here for hours – literally we will – because we have delivered so much, and we will continue to do so. Look at Metro Tunnel. Oh my God, that is on track; that is bowling along.

A member: Case in point: it’s not delivered. It’s not finished.

Nina TAYLOR: It is on track. Look at the St Kilda Road bike lanes. People are already riding on those bike lanes. They are absolutely fantastic. People are loving them. People are absolutely loving them; they are raving. If you talk to the cyclists, they think they are absolutely fantastic.

A member interjected.

Nina TAYLOR: Well, you should ride on them. I mean, take the opportunity.

A member interjected.

Nina TAYLOR: Good. I am glad to hear it. See? People are loving it. You can see it.

And what about all those level crossings removed – removed, removed, removed. Is that not fantastic? People love them, and we will talk about them any day of the week. In fact I do not know why the member for Caulfield raised them – but thank you so much, because we love the opportunity to talk about fantastic projects that have delivered so much for our wonderful Victorian community.

A member: They paid for it.

Nina TAYLOR: Yes, they paid for it, but it delivers in spades, doesn't it? Not one person, on that note, has complained. Has anyone complained about a level crossing being removed? Anyone? Anywhere? Can you find them? You would have to work really, really hard. You could go high and low, you could send out hundreds of surveys, and I guarantee you would not get one complaint – I guarantee you would not. No, no, no, no. They love them. They love them. I myself – you know, when you go through Carnegie or you go through Murrumbeena – you just go through. It is so smooth. It is fantastic. You do not get held up.

You know when I was doorknocking during the election in Albert Park, I had tradies say to me it is so fantastic those level crossings have been removed. I can get from here to the other side of the city so smoothly because of the level crossing removals. Who knew? That was in Albert Park.

James Newbury: What about the Sandringham line?

Nina TAYLOR: Mentone and Cheltenham – level crossing removals.

James Newbury: The Sandringham line.

Nina TAYLOR: The level crossing removals – didn't you see the level crossing removals at Mentone and Cheltenham?

James Newbury interjected.

Nina TAYLOR: You should go down there. It is darn fantastic. I am happy to show you.

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (17:06): I am pleased to rise to speak on this motion, and I support the amendment to the motion put forward by the member for Caulfield. I want to begin by tackling the issue that Victorians resoundingly supported for a second time the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL), because it reminds me of various governments taking a mandate on particular issues. The one that I would like to mention is the east–west link, which this government constantly says Victorians have twice rejected but fails to mention that the federal coalition government twice went to an election promising to fund an east–west link. Well, apparently that was not a mandate. So it is a mandate when it is for us, but it is not a mandate when it is for someone else. This can be very easily manipulated by anyone.

It is true, it is a fact, that the government has been elected twice now with a Suburban Rail Loop idea put forward. I use the term idea loosely, because the first term in 2018 it was not much more than a back of an envelope drawing that said we think there should be a loop. And certainly the second time around we were many millions of dollars further in and little bit more detail was provided through an alleged business case, but that does not mean that it has been supported resoundingly, particularly in

places like my electorate of Gippsland South. The government has had so many positions and so many issues with this Suburban Rail Loop it is not funny.

I want to place on record what I have said in here a number of times, including on the legislation for the Suburban Rail Loop: I actually support the concept of a Suburban Rail Loop. I actually think it is a good idea. If you travel to just about any of the big major cities of the world, you will see there is an orbital link, there are cross-city links, there is not the hub and spoke model that we have here in Melbourne. And you can look at the tube in London – which everyone in London loves to bag and to complain about, but it actually works pretty well – the Metro in Paris, the subway in New York and many other cities right around the world, they do not just run hub and spoke to a city centre. Equally, they are transport infrastructure services that have evolved over, in some cases, more than a century. The tube, I think, was pre-1900, the first line, so to think that we going to build this in the next 20 or 30 years is optimistic.

So I do acknowledge that it is a good idea. I also think it is a good idea that I go and buy an island in the Caribbean. I think it is an excellent idea that I have my own private island in the Caribbean. What is consistent with both of these is that we cannot afford that. I cannot afford to buy a Caribbean island, and this state cannot afford this Suburban Rail Loop as proposed by the government. It is a little bit of a contradiction in terms to even say that we cannot afford it, because we still do not know how much it is actually going to cost. We have had estimates from the government. The Premier started with, ‘Oh, it might be about \$50 billion.’ Well, as it turns out, the best they can do is just the first stage is going to be \$34.5 billion. We have had the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer, cost the project at \$125 billion – billion dollars that is, b, billion dollars. Despite the fact we have been to two elections and despite the fact they were repeatedly questioned about this at the election in November last year, this government will not tell the Victorians how much this project will cost. I suspect it is partly that they do not know, it is partly that they have got no idea what the whole project actually involves and it is partly because they continue to make it up on the run.

We saw that last year with the absolutely farcical decision by the government during the election campaign to refer to SRL Airport, as though somehow the airport rail link had always been part of this brilliant idea that the Premier had had about a suburban rail loop, and ‘Yes, we were always going to make it part of the project to go to the airport.’ I mean, the airport rail link has been around since time immemorial and was funded by the former coalition government long before the idea of the Suburban Rail Loop came along, and for the government to be now trying to claim the airport rail link has always been part of this SRL project is complete bunkum.

Michael O’Brien: You may as well call it broccoli ice cream.

Danny O’Brien: Yeah, it is broccoli ice cream.

We have seen significant criticism of the process and the lack of transparency around the funding of this project. We saw the Auditor-General make commentary about the Suburban Rail Loop last year that it does not:

- clearly identify how the proposed benefits flow from the problems identified
- adequately demonstrate how some of the benefits are a direct consequence of the SRL project
- immediately point to the need for a transport-related intervention ...

He also went on to say that:

The BCR for the project –
the benefit–cost ratio –

is 0.51 when calculated in line with DTF’s guidance ...

Now, that is the Department of Treasury and Finance. The Department of Treasury and Finance has guidance on how to establish a –

Michael O'Brien interjected.

Danny O'BRIEN: No, 0.51.

Michael O'Brien: Under 1.

Danny O'BRIEN: Under 1.

Michael O'Brien: Oh, my goodness me!

Danny O'BRIEN: And what does 'under 1' mean, member for Malvern?

Michael O'Brien: It means it's underwater. It's in the red.

Danny O'BRIEN: It's in the red, absolutely. It means it is a dud. It means it does not stack up. We have been told that before by this government on a different project, one they might have mentioned a bit earlier. For the government to say it stacks up is just ridiculous. In that same report the Auditor-General noted that the government:

... did not demonstrate the economic rationale for the entire project, and they have told us that they have no plans to do so.

It is not just the independent Auditor-General or the Parliamentary Budget Office that have said these sorts of things, it is some of the experts in this field, some of the academics. Urban policy professor Jago Dodson said:

It looks almost like a complete failure in metropolitan planning that a project of this financial magnitude could be decided to proceed with almost no [wider strategic] planning whatsoever ...

Grattan Institute cities program director Marion Terrill said:

... the project needs a rethink – not just stations, but lock, stock and barrel.

And there are many others. The reason that I have always had a concern about this project, and I put my concerns on the record during debate on the legislation on it in 2021, is that as a country member of Parliament and as a rural and regional person, I can see exactly what will happen here. We have already seen under this government that the massive bulk of infrastructure spending goes to the city. You can tally that up from just four projects: the level crossing removals, the West Gate Tunnel, the North East Link and the Metro Tunnel. We have not had an update for a long time, but a year ago we were at \$54 billion in total. Now let us throw on \$125 billion over the coming decades for the Suburban Rail Loop, and how do you reckon we are going to go getting our potholes fixed, member for South-West Coast? We just cannot get a single decent single-lane road in most of regional Victoria under this government, which I might add cut \$215 million from the road maintenance budget over the last two years. To think that we are going to be able to get the capital investment that we need in regional and rural Victoria to keep pace with a modern economy and to keep pace with what is going on in Melbourne if this Suburban Rail Loop goes ahead – I think you would be naive to think that that would be the case. We have multiple projects right throughout regional Victoria, in my own electorate or in Gippsland generally – things like the Traralgon bypass and things like the dedicated line for Gippsland trains.

I caught the train yesterday actually. In fact I was thinking of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure as I came in, because she repeatedly tells us what the benefits of the Suburban Rail Loop will be for Gippslanders. For example, she says, 'You know, if you've gotta go to Box Hill, it will be only one change, and you'll be able to go around on the Suburban Rail Loop if you're coming in on the Gippsland line.' Well, minister, I have got a bit of advice for you: it is only one change now. You go all the way into Flinders Street or Spencer Street and you go back out again. I am not sure that they are worth \$125 billion, the benefits of just that one change. But yes, I was on the train – there is still no dedicated line for Gippsland – and I had a good run in yesterday to Pakenham. Guess what – when you get to Pakenham, you get stuck behind a Metro train and you get slowed down because there is no dedicated line for Gippsland.

Our roads more broadly, I mentioned, are right across the place, whether it is the South Gipps highway, whether it is the Prom road, whether it is the Hyland Highway, whether it is the Strzelecki Highway – throughout my electorate these are all important things – or whether it is the Leongatha heavy vehicle alternative route to address what is known as ‘kamikaze corner’ in my electorate of Gippsland South. These are all things that we cannot get enough funding for now; I do not believe for a moment that if the SRL goes ahead, as the Labor government intends, we will have any chance of actually getting decent infrastructure spending in rural and regional Victoria. That is why I oppose the motion, and that is why I support the amendment moved by the member for Caulfield.

Tim RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (17:16): This coalition crew just do not know whether they are opposed to or whether they support this Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) project. We have just heard from the member for Gippsland South – total opposition to it. We saw the Victoria community vote resoundingly in support of this project. If you wind back six months, these were the kinds of debates that were had in the chamber – the undermining of this project despite its endorsement in 2018 – and now we are here again denying such a major infrastructure project. It was the same thing that we saw with the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel – it took an Andrews Labor government to take the Brumby Labor government’s policy of building that vital tunnel for Melbourne, and for all our communities that will take substantial pressure off local roads and get more people onto our public transport network. It will make a substantial difference to the Frankston and Dandenong lines, which I have the honour of representing. The coalition were opposed to that – did not want to see that project, said that it would never happen, talked it down, undermined its value – and now we see that that project is a couple of years away from its completion and an amazing transformation that is happening 30 metres below ground. It is good to know that the coalition once again have told my community that with this project, which they resoundingly endorsed and which they want to see delivered as we plan for more Melburnians and more Victorians and how we get them to where they need to be safer and sooner, they once again reject their voice and reject their decision and their endorsement of this vital project.

I am really fascinated in the jobs that they would cut from this project – tens of thousands of workers in direct construction jobs and those ancillary industries. When we hear the opposition oppose this project, they are cutting those jobs and cutting the investment and the transformation that will come into the future, and that is a big, big hit for my community, who will be part of that jobs and investment journey. Starting from William Fry Reserve on the Frankston train line and running through to Box Hill, it is connecting train lines in the south-eastern suburbs and the really important Monash education and employment cluster precinct. That Monash employment cluster is one of the biggest in Australia. It means you can turn up some of these stations, catch a connecting service and you are at your place of employment or can get directly to this wonderful precinct. So they would cut those jobs, they would condemn us to hundreds of thousands of daily trips on our roads on the completion of this project and they would stifle an ambitious infrastructure agenda that has underpinned so many jobs in our local communities.

It goes to the point of some of the things that have been said, particularly by those opposite, around how they view how you do major infrastructure projects. A decade ago they were struggling to knock one infrastructure project out – the notion that you can only do one at a time, from some of the things that the member for Gippsland South said. I mean, remember when they went to Southern Cross with a sticker set and the big media op was: ‘The train station is coming very soon for the airport rail loop.’ Literally, tourists were going out of Southern Cross, looking at the stickers, walking to the end of a platform and going, ‘Where do I catch a train to the airport?’ That was the level of detail in their policy. That was the credibility that they brought as a government in the 57th Parliament. I mean, seriously – to be lectured about that is extraordinary.

They might talk down projects and they might talk down this vital infrastructure project, but the Victorian community has supported it resoundingly. We have seen that in the results at the election and the seats that resoundingly endorsed these community upgrades and projects. And what does it mean for our economy and our community? It means 24,000 jobs across the Victorian economy. Eight

thousand direct jobs will be created just on SRL East, and more than 5000 additional direct jobs will be created as part of delivering SRL North, from Box Hill to Melbourne Airport. That is really exciting stuff for our community.

As our population goes towards 9 million by 2050, we need to be forward thinking in the infrastructure projects of tomorrow and setting up those communities for the future. It is particularly the travel savings that will be delivered as part of this project I am really excited about. As the cities of Kingston and Greater Dandenong grow, we need to get more cars off the roads. It is an environmental outcome, it is reducing our emissions and getting onto that heavy rail.

It is really exciting to think that the travel savings from Cheltenham to Box Hill will be 22 minutes. So someone in my constituency who is working in Box Hill or going across to Box Hill for Deakin University or for employment there knows that they can have that travel saving as well. Commuters from Cheltenham will save up to 40 minutes to an hour when travelling through Monash, Glen Waverley or Burwood.

Anyone looking at the growth in our outer suburbs and communities now will know, taking on the Mordialloc Freeway and taking on the Monash Freeway as well – the Mordy freeway of course delivered by an Andrews Labor government, an amazing contribution – that it is not just about roads, it is about rail and it is about public transport into the future. So this is –

Michael O'Brien interjected.

Tim RICHARDSON: The member for Malvern is up and about. He is loving this week, isn't he? Hopefully he gets up and speaks on this motion. He is seeing the ruin that he left before, when he was tracking with a decent primary, and just saying, 'What on earth has gone on?' But he is interjecting and he is having a good go. Good luck to him.

So when we look at the transformations that will happen across Clayton and Cheltenham in particular, they will be substantial changes into the future. I think of the level crossing removals in the precinct that is Cheltenham now – level crossing removals at Park Road and Charman Road. Then up the road in Highett we are removing those two level crossings at Highett Road and Wickham Road as well. The Suburban Rail Loop in connection with Southland train station will be a phenomenal precinct into the future.

We are going to make sure that we get the open space outcomes right and support community in that space. That was a key determinant in the environment effects statement – input from a range of different stakeholders. Kingston council really led the way as well. We really acknowledge and thank them for their contributions. This is generational. In the business government program debate you saw the Manager of Opposition Business really say that this was a sledge at the opposition. This is not a sledge at the opposition. This is about the values that you put forward for intergenerational planning into the future. It is not just looking at political cycles and going, 'What's convenient in the short term?', but going, 'Well, someone else will open Suburban Rail Loop East in 2035, but you need to make big decisions now and bold decisions that you might not be cutting the ribbon on.' That goes to the politics of those opposite. It is not about the photo op that you want to get, it is about making the hard decisions on how you transform for the future.

It is not smashing people into Fishermans Bend and then rezoning land and then thinking about the consequences of another government or just randomly changing planning outcomes to suit people that might lobby you or put forward their individual stakeholder views. It is about a coordinated and supported view into the future that transforms communities. This is what the Suburban Rail Loop will do. It will connect employment precincts, it will take pressure off local roads and it will give people and communities that we have not even seen come online yet so much more opportunity.

So we are really excited about this aspiration and the support of the Suburban Rail Loop from our community. Is an exciting time to think of where Melbourne has got to. We have got proof of concept

of how heavy rail and those big projects transform local communities and areas. We see that with the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel. Anyone that has had the opportunity to visit some of the stations that are coming out of the ground, the tunnelling work that has gone on – this is just a marvellous project. Then there is the tunnel-boring work that is being done, and the tunnel-boring institute that is just off the road at Warrigal Road and the Monash Freeway. I think it might be in the electorate of the member for Oakleigh, the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, who is at the table. That is a pipeline of jobs and investment for the future.

We can do a number of things, and we have shown that with jobs, investment and aspiration the Andrews Labor government is delivering for all communities. We have seen that transform the Mordialloc electorate and our surrounding communities – level crossing removals on the Frankston train line, which will be level crossing free by 2029. When the Melbourne Metro rail tunnel comes online in 2025 we will need more capacity down the Frankston train line, but removing those level crossings is part of that broader vision. That will give us a chop-out for a period of years, and then we will need to look at what the next alternative is. We cannot keep sticking lanes on major arterials and roads – we are running out of space on that front – so we need to have that orbital rail loop, and this is the visionary, game-changing policy that sets my community and the broader south-east up for the future.

It is exciting to be in this Parliament and in this government at a really pivotal time when we are planning and delivering for our communities. I just wish this was a bipartisan approach. It was not for Melbourne Metro rail tunnel. That project was substantially needed, and it did not matter about the merits of the argument or the merits of the project – those opposite canned it and then put all their eggs in stickers on rail stations at Southern Cross. That is the level of detail. We are delivering major infrastructure and roads for our communities for the future.

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (17:26): I rise to oppose the motion put forward by the government:

That this house notes that Victorians resoundingly supported, for a second time, the state-shaping Suburban Rail Loop, including SRL Airport, described by the Shadow Minister for Education on social media as ‘a mangy dog’ of a project.

I support the alternative motion put forward by the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, which acknowledges that Victorians expect integrity, transparency and good governance and calls on the government to release the full business case. As we can see from the Auditor-General’s report, the Auditor-General’s analysis of the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) business case found that its content did not fully meet a single one of the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office’s (VAGO) five benchmarks for expected process and relevant guidance:

In summary:

- the high-level problems and benefits articulated in the SRL business case lacked necessary and sufficient supporting evidence
- a narrow set of options were considered and analysed both before and as part of the business case development
- the economic analysis does not cover the entire SRL program and lacks consistency ...

which is what we saw when Minister Jacinta Allan announced the project. It was going to cost \$50 billion, and not long after that it was evidenced that it was going to be over \$200 billion. What we see is a government that tells us the expected benefit of the SRL is \$1.70 for every dollar spent, but when calculated using the objective guidelines laid down by the Department of Treasury and Finance the benefit–cost ratio is just 0.51. Far from profit, the SRL will lose 49 cents in every dollar. Integrity, honesty, trust – the community expect to have information that is reasonable, and the information they got was far from honest, far from integral, as has been proven with the VAGO report and the Parliamentary Budget Office information that I have quoted here.

We have got a government that does not know how to manage money proposing to spend \$50 billion on a project that then blows out before it even starts to \$200 billion. That just sits in line with all the

other poor project results we get from this government that does not know how to manage money. The North East Link is another example. That was costed at \$10 billion; it has blown out to \$15 billion. There are so many examples. The 55 crossings that are only in the city have blown out from \$5 billion to \$8 billion. And we have the Murray Basin rail project, which the country desperately needs – \$480 million was put aside, and some of the trains are going slower than before the government started the project. The grain train from Mildura is now going slower than it was before the government started the project.

You have all this spending in the city and it does not matter how much, but you ask for a country investment like the Murray Basin rail project and they have got their eyes so far off the ball the project is completely and utterly botched. The Maroona to Portland line is desperately needed to make sure our Port of Portland is as competitive as the Geelong port and the Melbourne port, but there is no way this government has even got it front of mind because they have botched the Murray Basin project so badly, affected the profitability of grain farmers right across our country and made our ports, particularly Portland, not as competitive as Geelong and Melbourne, which their own report, written some seven or eight years ago, says they were trying to achieve.

But why would I be shocked, given that seven or eight years ago we were promised new VLocity trains. The Premier flew in – and I repeat, flew in – to Warrnambool to promise that we would have VLocity trains. This was 2017. He then said they would be delivered in 2019. Well, we heard today that they are in the making, 23 of them. We do not know whether they are actually for the South-West Coast line, so maybe they will be ready in 2024 – seven years later. So we still have trains rattling on our lines from the 1980s. That is 30 to 40 years old. Now, my colleague in the upper house the Shadow Minister for Education referred to this project as a mangy dog. What does ‘mangy dog’ mean? It means having many worn or bare spots, seedy, shabby, bad condition, and the slang definition is ‘old and dirty’. Pretty much, I reckon, what those rattlers that we have got on the line that we have not had updated since the 1980s look like, so that description I think is rather fitting because that is how the government treats the regions.

I look at the state of our rail and the promises and the mistruths that are not delivered even slightly on time, let alone on a reasonable time line, and I see that they make promises like the Suburban Rail Loop, the Commonwealth Games for the regions and the SEC that we cannot even know a date on. They make these promises but then have not actually got the money, and then they go to the federal government cap in hand and say, ‘We’ve made these promises, can you give us some money to deliver on them?’ I mean, what sort of government cannot manage money? A Labor government, over and over and over again. We have seen it right throughout history. I am not surprised. If you drive in South-West Coast, you will see the respect or lack thereof that this government shows the South-West Coast and regional Victoria. I have already talked about the Murray Basin rail project and the botched effort that Labor Minister Allan has made of that.

I am really opposed to the government’s motion. I totally support the opposition’s motion, and I would like to see a proper business case so that we can get a return on investment for taxpayer money instead of this extraordinary waste that the government oversees, with project after project that they do not deliver on time and that they blow out the cost of, which is at a total of now \$28 billion. That is taxpayer money that we will not ever see responsibly used by this current Labor government.

Vicki WARD (Eltham) (17:32): I reckon I might actually be able to fill in my 10 minutes talking about such an important project, something that is exciting for pretty much everyone in this state, as we saw with the last election result in November. My colleagues I know will correct me, but I reckon we must be up to 3030 days, or something like that, in government. We are in government because of the plans we have got for this state, the things that we do and the things that we are building, and as the Premier often says, because we say that we are going to do something and then we go and do it.

We were elected to continue our work in helping Victorians live better lives. We are here looking after Victorians. We are not in the business of vilifying them. We are not in the business of not standing up

for them, and we are not in the business of hurting people and not moving away from Nazis. Those opposite are so out of touch if they think that these projects that connect people to where they need to go are something that they do not want. They are so out of touch if they do not think that this state and this city want these projects to go ahead. They want building, they want job opportunities and they want to be able to move around.

You need a government that has actually got a vision for this state. You need a government that actually wants to see things happen and wants to see things move, and this is exactly what we are achieving with the level crossings that we have removed, with the roads that we have built, with the things that we are repairing. What we are getting down to do is business. Those opposite would not know how to work in a paper bag. They would not be able to organise a so-called drink in a brewery. There are so many things that those opposite struggle to achieve. They struggle to achieve fairness. They struggle to embrace democracy. They also struggle to actually get anything done for this state. They fail to imagine how wonderful this state can continue to be, how we can strengthen this state, how we can make it easy for people to move around – and that is exactly what the Suburban Rail Loop does. It has an imagination. It has a capacity to transform our city, to change the way that we move around. I find it quite amazing that an earlier speaker spoke about, ‘Well, I would love to buy an island in the Caribbean.’ I am sorry, but a rail project is not a luxury island. I know the former Prime Minister liked to hang around with his lei in Hawaii while the rest of the country was burning. Those opposite might want to hang out in their boardies and their bathers and not get anything done. On this side of the house we are all about getting things done. This is not a luxury; this is a necessity. Building transport infrastructure in this state is an absolute necessity. Helping people move around is an absolute necessity. On this side of the house we care about working people. That is why we are in the Labor Party. That is why we are creating jobs with our Suburban Rail Loop. That is why we are creating it, making it easier for people to get to work, to get to the hospital appointments they need, to get to universities to get the education they need and to get to the TAFEs where they need to get training.

I will digress for a second. Of course we have got free TAFE. And why have we got free TAFE? Because we want things to be better in this state. We want to create opportunities. We want to create equality of opportunity. This is exactly what we do. So for those opposite to bellyache about this project and what this project can or cannot deliver illustrates so clearly why they were not elected last year, why they were not elected in 2018 and why they were not re-elected in 2014, because they do not have the capacity to imagine what this state can be. They do not have the respect for the people in this state to imagine what they can be, how good they can be, all of the things they can achieve. We do, because on this side of the chamber we actually care about their outcomes. We actually care about how we can make things better.

Regional Victorians know the Liberal and National parties’ record of closing regional rail lines, cutting V/Line and scrapping jobs. I love how they all come in here and they say, ‘Oh, you don’t invest anything in regional Victoria.’ I think we have actually got more regional MPs than they have got. We know what happens in regional Victoria. They only make regional rail promises in election years and promises that still leave regional Victorians behind. This time they offered up flat \$2 metro fares and belatedly offered only to halve V/Line fares. But regional Victorians were not fooled. They knew they should not be singled out by having to pay more to access services and see friends and families than those in the city.

I had a great chat with my mum in the car on the way in today, and I have spoken about my mum in this place before. Of course there has been a stacks on from the National Party because my mother dared to tell me about a great regional road she had driven on. Mum was actually pretty happy about the idea that she can go and visit my aunt in Albury for \$5. How good will that be? Regional rail that is working, that is helping mum get from Traralgon to Albury for five bucks. That is a pretty good deal, she reckons. She is pretty happy with that.

Those opposite are so out of touch. You are supposed to say, ‘How out of touch are they?’

Members interjecting.

Vicki WARD: They are so out of touch. I do not think there is anybody in this place that could be more out of touch than the coalition – more out of touch with what Victorians need, but most importantly, more out of touch with what Victorians actually want. They want a modern city. They want a modern state. They also want a progressive state, because that is what they have voted for time and time again. And with a progressive state you get change, because change can be good. Change can make things better. We are not afraid of change on this side of the house. We are not afraid of improving things. We are not afraid of making things better. And do you know what we are also not afraid of? We are not afraid of difference. We are not afraid to stand up for people who need it. We are not afraid to stand up for working Victorians who want a job, who want to get around better, who want an education – free education at TAFE, for example. We are also not afraid to stand up for diverse people in our community. We will stand up for every single Victorian, and we will stand up against discrimination. We will stand up against bigotry, and we will stand up against those who do not want to build a better future for this state, because this is what those opposite are offering. They are offering us as a state the chance to go backwards, like we did under their government between 2010 and 2014. They want us to go backwards again. They do not want us to build things. ‘We can’t afford it,’ they say. Do you know what? You cannot afford not to do it. You cannot afford not to build important infrastructure in this state that helps us get around.

I find it ironic that they want to bang on about the business case, which actually does stack up, unlike the east–west link, which did not stack up. It did not stack up 1 cent. Those opposite who signed dodgy side letters at the last minute to actually damage this state, rather than look after this state, should be ashamed. It is an absolute joke when those opposite try that tired old trope of economic management when it comes to the Labor Party. Economic management is an absolute joke when it is in the hands of the Liberal Party, and we have seen it with the last federal government, which actually wasted so much money – so much money. Those opposite could not even manage this state in just four years. In just four years the previous Treasurer of the coalition wasted opportunity after opportunity after opportunity. He did nothing for this state but did something as disadvantageous as signing a side letter that actually cost this state money, and it lands at his feet. That money lands at his feet.

If you want to talk about economic management, it is absolutely shameful that those opposite are prepared to rant and rave about money but not people. They are not prepared to stand up and protect vulnerable Victorians. They are not prepared to stand up and stare down bigots. They are not prepared to stand down Nazis but they are prepared to yell at me in this place about economic management, for which they have got no record in the last 25, 30 years other than four disastrous years. It is absolutely shameful – absolutely shameful – that they think they can yell down people in this place but they will not yell down bigots and they will not stand up to people in their own party who are out there vilifying young vulnerable people who deserve better. They are prepared to yell in this echo chamber but they are not prepared to be out there standing up for people. Those opposite want to talk about talking points. Where are their talking points when it comes to standing up for vulnerable, disadvantaged people – absolutely shameful. They do not have any talking points because they do not actually care, and it is an absolute disgrace that they do not care. That is why they are not in government – because the people in this state saw them for what they were: a bunch of phonies and fakes who care nothing about people. They care about themselves, and that is it, and it is a disgrace.

Annabelle CLEELAND (Euroa) (17:42): Wow! Let us take it down a notch, and I will have my right of reply. It is my great pleasure to rise to speak on this motion moved by the Leader of the House and give a right of reply to the member for the backbench. I know the Leader of the House is elected to represent the people of Macedon, and I am sure, like my constituents in Euroa, the good people of Macedon electorate would rather see greater investment in regional services than the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) money pit at a time when families are struggling with the cost of living. It is actually worth touching on some of the words of the Auditor-General, who said:

... the high-level problems and benefits articulated in the SRL business case lacked necessary and sufficient supporting evidence ...

This quote, to me, is a red flag warning of cost blowouts, something this government has become all too comfortable with. The Department of Treasury and Finance, using their objective guidelines, found the project had a benefit–cost ratio of 51 cents to every \$1 invested. This is significantly less than the pie in the sky \$1.70 quoted by the government.

We know numbers are not their strong point, though. What we do know is that this government has serious issues when it comes to accepting unbiased advice, as an investigation by the Ombudsman into the politicisation of the public service would suggest, as well as their continual efforts to dodge scrutiny. Not only are there serious issues with transparency and accountability across the government but also a strong record of cost blowouts and economic mismanagement, as we heard earlier. Victoria's projected debt is set to total more than New South Wales, Tasmania and Queensland combined, and yet we are being sold the virtues of a project that is projected by the impartial Department of Treasury and Finance to lose 49 cents in every \$1. Let us not talk about money without talking about the impact that has on our Victorian lives. What we were told in 2018 was this whole project would cost up to \$50 billion. Now the Parliamentary Budget Office, where these sorts of projects should be costed, something which this government may have forgotten, has put the cost at \$200 billion, a quadrupling of what was originally promised, and it has not even commenced.

This motion states that Victorians resoundingly supported for the second time the Suburban Rail Loop, but I beg to differ with a little thing called facts. This might come as a shock to those opposite, but not all Victorians – I am shocked myself; I cannot speak – are Melburnians. And regional Victorians certainly could not be described as resoundingly supporting the SRL. This is a great opportunity for me to talk about newly elected members in this chamber – the member for Shepparton and the member for Mildura. Across northern Victoria the vote for the coalition increased by nearly 4 per cent while shrinking by 3 per cent for the Labor Party. We have added the wonderful Gaelle Broad as a member for Northern Victoria in the upper house thanks to this strong result. In Eastern Victoria, where we have the member for Gippsland South, the member for Morwell and the member for Gippsland East as well as Melina Bath in the upper house, the change is even more stark, with the Labor Party losing 7 per cent of their vote. Not once have I been contacted by anyone in my electorate asking me to throw my support behind this project that the government does not want to admit the full costs of – or the complete lack of return on investment that will come from it. But what people in my electorate have contacted me about is the dire state of the health system, run down by the government with \$2 billion cut from Department of Health outputs in the last budget. These included cuts to emergency services, aged support services, drug treatment and rehabilitation services and mental health support services. It is an incredible slap in the face to our region when \$200 billion is being set aside for a rail loop regional Victorians may never use.

Right across our region we have elective surgery waitlists through the roof, remaining stubbornly high, and the Australian Medical Association doubting the accuracy of the total waitlists. For people in my region their elective surgeries are usually completed at the Northern Hospital, Goulburn Valley Health, Bendigo Health and Northeast Health. The Northern Hospital's category 1 waitlist is now nearly double what it was a year ago, and GV Health's waitlist has increased by 166 individuals over the last quarter. You want to talk about caring for people; this is caring for people. We have seen the amount of people waiting over a year for essential surgery blow out, and the percentage of people not being treated within clinically recommended times is concerning. Rather than making Victorian health care the number one priority of the government, they have sent \$30 billion down the drain on city infrastructure cost blowouts and will continue to lose vital taxpayer money because of this government's incompetency to accurately estimate a project. We have a 000 system where ambulances are now arriving on average more than 3 minutes later in a code 1 emergency than in 2014.

This is people's lives. We talk about you caring for individuals; manage your money so that you can care for individuals and address the health system crisis. Fixing these issues should be the absolute

number one priority of the government, and yet they continually fail to understand that people in regional Victoria just want them to get back to basics. Back to basics means caring for all Victorians, making sure our communities can get the health care they need when they need it and making sure an ambulance actually arrives and, even better, arrives on time. These are bread-and-butter issues for state governments, fundamental KPIs that this government repeatedly fails to deliver.

We have got a community-owned hospital in Euroa Health that is fighting tooth and nail to secure its future. They are asking for an incredibly small sum of public recurrent funding to secure their long-term future, keep serving the people of the Euroa region and keep taking strain off GV Health, yet rather than getting a drop in the ocean in budgetary terms the people of Euroa are expected to be content with a rail project they will unlikely ever need. But safe and adequate health services are unquestionably something we all need.

In terms of rail infrastructure, what I have been regularly contacted about is the overcrowding of trains on the Seymour and north-east lines. With changes to the V/Line fare structure I hope the Victorian government has completed some modelling on the projected patronage increase that may occur as a result of reduced fares. Given recent budget outcomes and the lack of economic credibility this government has, I hope they are able to come to terms with supply and demand and that quality of service is not sacrificed, crowding is alleviated and investment in rolling stock is made to support growth in demand.

What I will outline is some essential regional infrastructure my electorate did vote for, because this motion is about election outcomes and the important issues that drove those votes. First and foremost in the southern end of the Euroa electorate is the Kilmore bypass. This project has stalled for eight years. Only two plots of land have been acquired, no full costings have been completed and no business case has been undertaken. Yet in that same period this government has planned and has begun the West Gate Tunnel – not without significant difficulties, mind you, and poor budgeting again – and dreamed up the Suburban Rail Loop project, with farcical costings during a cost-of-living crisis for Victorians. The Kilmore bypass is essential to the future of the town, and the government have sat on their hands purely through a complete lack of willpower. The people of Kilmore are absolutely not stopping me in the street asking for an update on a Metro rail loop, they are asking me for the bare minimum in regional infrastructure to protect the livability of the town. They are asking about removing B-double trucks from the main street of their town and improving the health and safety of the community.

We have schools in our region like Broadford Secondary and Seymour College that need funding to increase capacity or finish work that should have been done years ago. In Kilmore we have one of the largest towns in the state without a public secondary school, and I note that Mooroopna in the neighbouring electorate of Shepparton is probably another one of those towns. However, the government decided to shut their secondary school as well.

The last two years have seen cuts to road asset management in the state budget. While those opposite would talk about their post-floods roads investment, this is not betterment money, this is just funding to return the network to a below-average condition. In a future where all budget considerations need to bow before the Suburban Rail Loop, there is concern our road network will continue to fail country Victorians.

What continually frustrates people in regional communities is the complete failure of this government to do the simple things. People across the regions voted for policies like the Nationals regional infrastructure guarantee, which would have doubled new capital funding in regional Victoria thanks to a 25 per cent cut of all new capital funding. If members of the government think in the current climate people are desperate for a railway line that is decades in the future rather than receiving the bare minimum to improve the lives of Victorians, they are incredibly out of touch. The government's priorities are clear. Funding the Suburban Rail Loop means either less money for health, education and basic state services or more record debt that will burden future generations of Victorians. The

Andrews government does not govern for all Victorians. Rather than building these poorly costed projects, we need to see this government leave the metro boundaries and invest money in our regions and make decisions based on logic and need. This is what people want in country Victoria. This government believes its legacy will be the Big Build, but we can see that this government's legacy will be its severe neglect of regional Victoria.

Josh BULL (Sunbury) (17:52): I am delighted to have the opportunity to speak in support of the critically important Suburban Rail Loop (SRL). I do so as a member of a proud Andrews Labor government with a strong, bold and visionary agenda for this great state, a commitment to get on and get things done and a commitment to delivering those transformative projects that we know this state needs and deserves. There is limited time this evening for this contribution, but I do want to take the opportunity to point out just how critically important the Suburban Rail Loop is to our great state with that connection of all of the metropolitan train lines and the importance of growth as we move forward as the great state of Victoria.

We have all heard it, whether it is from a friend, whether it is from a neighbour or whether it is from a colleague or a brother or a sister, in conversations about government often people within our community say to us, 'We really want governments that think long term,' and there is no greater example than this project that is before the house this afternoon. It is an example of long-term thinking, a visionary project, a project that will certainly take quite some time to deliver but a critically important project to the Victorian community. We have all heard that, but we know and understand as members of the Andrews Labor government how important the Suburban Rail Loop is, and that is exactly the sort of project those people are referring to when they make that statement.

We are of course a government that builds projects for today, for tomorrow but critically importantly for our future, and that is how we know and understand that this is an incredibly important project that forms part of our Big Build agenda. Whether it is level crossing removals, whether it is the West Gate Tunnel or whether it is the North East Link, so many important projects are being delivered by this government and do require a huge amount of planning and a huge workforce, but also the creation of jobs and economic activity that comes with that are critically important.

Those opposite seem to waste their miserable days in this place tearing projects apart, and of course the thousands of workers who deliver them, but what we know is that this project has been comprehensively endorsed by the people of Victoria in not one but in two elections. Those over on the other side, rather arrogantly I must say, failed to listen to Victorians and their wish to get this project done. It is indeed the biggest infrastructure project in Victoria's history. It is city shaping and will transform the way that people move around our growing city: a radial train line that will slash travel times from key destinations, including universities, hospitals and key employment centres, with 8000 construction jobs and more than 24,000 jobs across the economy. It will take more than 600,000 daily car trips off our roads and deliver nearly \$60 billion in economic, social and environmental benefits to our state.

The business and investment case is complete, the legislation has passed, the environment effects statement hearings have been completed and of course construction is underway. Construction is underway on SRL East between Cheltenham and Box Hill and on SRL Airport between Melbourne Airport and Sunshine, and the Commonwealth government has committed to this project, with an initial contribution of \$2.2 billion. This forms, as I mentioned earlier in my contribution, that massive pipeline of projects, whether it is level crossing removals, whether it is major road upgrades, whether it is Melbourne airport rail, the Metro Tunnel, the North East Link Program, the Regional Rail Revival or the West Gate Tunnel Project. This is about delivering those projects that are important for our communities going forward in a growing state.

Leadership is about doing what is right. It is about delivering what matters. It is about making the hard decisions today that benefit us tomorrow and of course beyond. If we could just imagine the future of our state with a Suburban Rail Loop that connects every metro train line and enables us to get where

we need to go safer, faster and sooner, this is exactly what SRL will deliver. It is about big picture thinking from a big picture Andrews Labor government. It is a massively exciting project. Those over the other side seem to spend all of their time in here tearing these projects apart. What we know and understand is that the people of Victoria need this project. They want this project; they have endorsed this project at two elections. This is a hugely exciting project, one that is only made possible by an Andrews Labor government that will get on and deliver this project.

In the very little time that I have got remaining, I just ask members to cast their minds forward to the decades to come – to know and understand that rather than commuting from our suburbs, from places like where I live in Sunbury, into the CBD and then back out again on another metro line, we will be able to move in an east–west direction across those lines. I think that this will be a transformative project. Like the city loop, like many other projects within our community – the West Gate Bridge – that we now in many ways take for granted, this will be a project that will be looked on for generations to come. People in our future will look back and say it was the thinking, it was the planning and it was the investment of the Suburban Rail Loop that was critically important for our state. That is why this project needs to be delivered, that is why this government supports this project, that is why we took it to two elections and that is why the people of Victoria voted comprehensively in support of this project – and it is only being made possible by an Andrews Labor government.

Steve DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh – Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Creative Industries) (17:59): I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

Bills

Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023

Council's amendments

Message from Council relating to following amendments considered:

1. Clause 4, page 4, after line 26 insert –

“Privacy Management Framework means the Privacy Management Framework established under section 134ZT;”.
2. Clause 4, page 14, line 17, omit “1982.” and insert “1982.”.
3. Clause 4, page 14, after line 17 insert –

“Division 6 – Privacy Management Framework

134ZT Minister must establish Privacy Management Framework

- (1) The Minister, by order published in the Government Gazette, must establish a Privacy Management Framework for the Electronic Patient Health Information Sharing System as soon as practicable after the day on which this Part comes into operation.
- (2) In establishing the Privacy Management Framework, the Minister must consult with the following persons and bodies in relation to whether certain health information or classes of health information should require additional levels of protection under the Privacy Management Framework –
 - (a) relevant groups and organisations that represent the interests of patients, carers or health care workers;
 - (b) any relevant public sector body within the meaning of the **Public Administration Act 2004**;
 - (c) participating health services.

- (3) The Privacy Management Framework must –
 - (a) specify categories of health information that are sensitive in nature and include a process to safeguard that information; and
 - (b) include a process to safeguard the identity of patients who may be at risk of harm, including patients who identify as being at risk of family violence; and
 - (c) include a process to facilitate patients accessing reports that specify who has accessed their health information through the Electronic Patient Health Information Sharing System; and
 - (d) include a process for regular audits and compliance checks of the Electronic Patient Health Information Sharing System.
- (4) The Privacy Management Framework takes effect on –
 - (a) the day on which it is published in the Government Gazette; or
 - (b) a later day as specified in the order.

Note

Section 41A of the **Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984** provides that the power to make an instrument includes the power to repeal, revoke, rescind, amend, alter or vary the instrument in the exercise of that power.

134ZU Compliance with Privacy Management Framework

Any person who is authorised or permitted under this Part to access the Electronic Patient Health Information Sharing System must comply with the Privacy Management Framework to the extent reasonably practicable.

Division 7 – Independent review of this Part

134ZV Independent review by expert panel

- (1) The Minister must cause an independent review of the operation of this Part, including the Privacy Management Framework, to be conducted by an expert panel after the second anniversary of the day on which this Part comes into operation.
- (2) The independent review must examine and make recommendations in relation to the following –
 - (a) whether health information is sufficiently protected;
 - (b) which health services should be participating health services for the purposes of this Part;
 - (c) the misuse of specified patient health information;
 - (d) the costs of compliance and the administrative burden imposed on participating health services by this Part;
 - (e) whether the Electronic Patient Health Information Sharing System is operating as intended.
- (3) The independent review may examine and make recommendations in relation to the following –
 - (a) current issues and trends relating to health information systems;
 - (b) data management;
 - (c) information technology security;
 - (d) patient privacy;
 - (e) any other relevant matter.
- (4) The independent review must be completed no later than the third anniversary of the day on which this Part comes into operation.
- (5) The Minister must cause a copy of a report of the independent review to be laid before each House of Parliament no later than 3 sitting days after the day on which the final report of the independent review is given to the Minister.
- (6) The Minister must consider any recommendations made by the independent review, including any recommendations to amend this Act, and within 18 months of receiving the final report –
 - (a) implement the recommendations made by the independent review; or

- (b) advise Parliament why the recommendations have not been implemented.

134ZW Appointment of expert panel

- (1) For the purposes of section 134ZV, the Minister must appoint 3 persons to form the expert panel.
- (2) The Minister must ensure that each person appointed to the expert panel has experience in one or more of the following –
 - (a) human rights and privacy matters;
 - (b) legal and regulatory compliance;
 - (c) health information systems;
 - (d) clinical care;
 - (e) health care quality and patient safety;
 - (f) consumer or patient advocacy.
- (3) The Minister must not appoint a person to the expert panel if the person is –
 - (a) a current employee or executive officer of a registered political party within the meaning of the **Electoral Act 2002**; or
 - (b) a current or former member of Parliament.’.”.

Steve DIMOPOULOS (Oakleigh – Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, Minister for Creative Industries) (18:01): I move:

That these amendments be agreed to.

We are thankful for the work of the Council, and we look forward to the adoption of these amendments.

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (18:01): It is always good when we have legislation which comes through the Legislative Assembly, where amendments are put in this house, that we go through to the Council, there are amendments put there and then there are some amendments to the bill where we have an opportunity in this place again to review those amendments and to ascertain whether what we sought to achieve was actually delivered in the legislation that we see before us today. The amendments that have been accepted by the Legislative Council are around improving some of the aspects and dealing to a level around concerns that there was never an opportunity for patients to opt out of the health information sharing system, but further there was not an opportunity to FOI the people who have access to that information and get an understanding of how that information may have been used. While the amendments put forward today outline a privacy management framework and also the establishment of an independent review by an expert panel, there is certainly the feeling amongst colleagues and also with serious organisations who understand privacy, the legalities of privacy and the importance of retaining patient privacy also that they still retain significant concerns the amendments put forward in this house today simply do not go far enough when it comes to protecting patient choice around their own health records and even about their own right to choice within the health system.

The primacy of Victoria’s healthcare system – and we have always been a leader in this – is to ensure that the patient has rights and that we have patient choice. This legislation and the amendment that we are looking at today simply do not protect that longstanding, decades-long understanding and practice around patient choice, because there is no patient choice when it comes to what information will be uploaded into a generic whole-of-Victoria public health data information system. This is of significant concern for so many people across the state, and there is a good reason why this is so. This morning ABC news reported that private health records of some Canberra Health Services patients were deliberately sent to an industrial partner, and this sort of scenario could absolutely happen in Victoria in very similar circumstances under the legislative framework that we are looking at today. I will summarise the ABC report and make this report available to the house also, but it is deeply concerning, because whole mental health clinical records of 13 patients had been deliberately emailed to individuals outside the organisation over a period of years. This goes to the concerns that many in the community have that by having a whole-of-public-health-accessible medical record which is now

available to the hundreds of thousands of people who work within the health system, what you are actually doing is taking away the patient's right and the patient's choice to selectively keep that information to themselves.

We see in Canberra that this exact scenario has played out today and been reported on today, where information – mental health records, no less – has been sent to an industry partner. It was not a health fund, it is an industry partner – I think we can join the dots in working out where this information has been sent to. It has been leaked. There has always been deep concern that a blanket patient information sharing scheme would make people who are some of the most vulnerable people in our community less interested and less empowered to make that choice to engage with the public health system. When we think about people who are survivors of sexual violence, they do not want to have that information shared amongst their work colleagues in an environment where family members or friends might work, where, really, on the basis of it, we are actually relying on a high degree of trust that people will not be tempted to just have a peek to have a look at somebody's sexual history, to have a look to see if a woman has ever had an abortion or any other sexual health service in the past, to look at somebody and before you employ them look at their mental health records, when we are looking at people who are victims of family violence where their partner is still an aggressor and looking at court cases for custody of their children and seeking information to use against their partner that they are able to access that information. When we look at mental health providers, we know we have to break the stigma of mental health and encourage Victorians wherever possible that when they are not feeling 100 per cent, when they know they need support, they do not have this additional concern and they are not going to enter into the public mental health system because they think that their information may be accessed and may be made public in the future, as has now happened in Canberra Health Services.

Of course we look at it as well in the alcohol and other drugs sector, where there are so many barriers already in place for people to reach out and seek support for treatment. Or perhaps even going to the North Richmond injecting room, this information now will be brought in as part of the statewide public health record. There is great concern that has been raised with me by Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association, the peak body for alcohol and other drugs in this state, about having a whole-of-health information record where every single person across the health network, right up to the Minister for Health, has the opportunity to be able to access your record to see whether you have attended the injecting room, how often you have been there, the frequency, the time frames that you have been there and whether it coincides with perhaps other things that you have been undertaking, including working somewhere or whether there is other treatment at that time. These are things that VAADA are very, very concerned may actually be a disincentive to engage with a service like the injecting room, because in that particular community, where they are extraordinarily vulnerable and where they feel that there may be additional ramifications if they are seen to be an illicit drug user, this is a massive disincentive, and these individuals, who are so vulnerable, will not utilise the injecting room into the future.

While these amendments go some way towards improving legislation which I believe is heavily flawed, they simply do not go far enough until there are amendments in place that strengthen the right of every single patient over what information is shared across the health network and what health information is put in an environment where hundreds of thousands of people have opportunity to access your health record. We are talking about the day-to-day regularity of what information is included in your health record, and it is not just about the patient that comes on a gurney unconscious where you do not know what their history is and you cannot communicate them, which is such a small segment of the health system in its entirety. This is what we need to see addressed in this legislation. I hope that the instances that we have seen from Canberra Health Services today are not soon replicated across the state of Victoria, because I cannot see, to be quite honest, that it will not be a scenario that we see in Victoria. That is why I do not believe that the health amendments go nearly far enough.

While there is an attempt within the amendments put to us today to establish a privacy management framework, which will involve looking at safeguards around whether certain health information or classes of information should require additional levels of protection under the privacy management

framework, we have to also accept that an individual absolutely has an opportunity to have their right to say, 'This is my information. I do not consent for it to be shared amongst the statewide health information network. I do not want that to be there, and I have my own individual reasons for and concerns about that.' While I think that the vast majority of people in Victoria will subscribe to the system if they have the opportunity to do so, there will be a small group of people who will not want all of their health information shared, and for the most part this will be due to an extraordinarily reasonable position and circumstance in their own life. We cannot accept or presume that everybody will automatically be happy for their information to be shared. Having a privacy management framework and a periodic review by an expert panel simply does not go far enough for people to have that embedded trust in the system, so that is why I do not think that these amendments go far enough.

We need to ensure that there is a level of public reporting when it comes to breaches of expected access to health information records. There should be an obligation upon the government to disclose to individuals when suspicious access has been detected, so they have full understanding of who has accessed their information and then of course they may have an understanding over how that information could be utilised. Further, there should be fines or some other protections in place for a loss of private information when it is shared and when trust has been breached because the health information system does not have the effective security measures in place to protect people's private information. This is not something that is unusual. We have heard it not just with health records and the Medibank campaign. We have heard so many times, particularly in recent months, that hackers are looking to target very sensitive personal information on a more frequent basis and to utilise this information against individuals but also to look at gain for themselves, and when that temptation is in there for financial gain and benefit, simply having a privacy management framework is not something they are going to attend to or to pay attention to in any great detail. So that is also of key concern. In the past we have not had a system created in Victoria which has been robust enough to withstand external hackers, and having a single data information system means that everybody's information in the state of Victoria is available as a one-stop shop for these hackers. There is no doubt in my mind it will be a future target for hacking activity, and given we have not got a fabulous record when it comes to the establishment of health information systems in the state of Victoria and there have been issues around maintaining the security of those health information systems, I simply do not have confidence that the Victorian government has the ability to deliver on this to keep Victorians' health data safe.

This is already playing out in the community, and I have been very surprised that in my local community I have had a number of people come to my office with concerns about this who have now said, 'Emma, I'm not going to go to the public hospital anymore. I'm not going to utilise public health services anymore, because I do not want my information to be shared in the future.' This is quite legitimate, and while you might laugh it off and think this is quite hilarious from the government benches, these are serious concerns that are held by individuals about how their health information will be used. This is not just a one-off. There are a number of people who are very, very concerned around this. They are the most disengaged and vulnerable people in our community. They are people who have suffered from family violence or sexual violence or who are seeking drug and alcohol treatment. They are people who are seeking mental health support. They are people who should be protected at every single step, and this legislation and the amendments simply do not go far enough to protect the individual's right to maintain their own information.

There is a saying that we often utilise within the health system, which is 'Nothing about me without me', and generally it is embedded that there should always, at every step, be informed patient choice. I believe that that patient choice should extend to the sharing of records. There was always an opportunity to have an opt-out element in relation to either an entire record or specific elements of a record that people would like to have withheld from the whole-of-health information system. This amendment does not go far enough to protect that.

I would like to place on record some of the comments from the Law Institute of Victoria, who have been fierce advocates when it comes to protecting the rights of individuals and Victorians to have

autonomy when it comes to sharing of their health information. A media release issued on 10 March this year from the Law Institute of Victoria explicitly outlines their concerns around the amendments that this chamber is reviewing today. I quote this from LIV president Tania Wolff:

‘The LIV has been unequivocal on the need for an opt-out provision within this legislation’ ...

‘We are not opposed to the creation of this system, we simply believe that Victorians deserve a choice in how their sensitive health information is used and disclosed.’

...

‘While we appreciate these amendments aim to strengthen privacy protections for Victorian patients, the reality is it still falls short of what is required.’

‘This framework does little to strengthen patients’ rights to autonomy which should be an embedded principle with this Bill, as it has been for a raft of health legislation over the past decade.’

There are also concerns around the opportunity for an opt-out system to be included by fierce advocates Liberty Victoria and also Digital Rights Watch. These are key groups within our community who understand the right to privacy and particularly patient privacy, perhaps having more expertise than any of us will ever have. I think it is important that we do listen to them, that we listen to organisations of mental health providers and also alcohol and other drugs, family violence and sexual violence – people who give some of the most vulnerable people a voice. They are all expressing concern that these amendments do not go far enough, and for that reason I do ask that the government reconsider this legislation.

The amendments do take a very, very small step towards what we need to see in Victoria, but there are simply far too many risks when you are talking about a system which has not yet been established, whose security has not yet been built and when we have so many people across Victoria who are already loath to get public health treatment simply because they do not want their information to be shared. Again, I will always stand up for the individuals. Being a former shadow minister for family violence and women, I will certainly always endeavour to give those survivors of family violence a choice. I will always endeavour to give women a strong voice in this place – the women who have sought family health services in the past and women who have been victims of sexual violence; I strongly support their choice around that. I strongly support the view that any Victorian should be able to receive drug and alcohol treatment without considering that that information may be shared with their employer, with their union, with an insurer, with somebody that they work with or with their partner who is abusive towards them.

There are so many risks around that when we have people involved, and while certainly as a whole we have fabulous people involved in the public health system, we also have examples where data has been accessed inappropriately under our current system. Again I point to the news today from the ABC around Canberra Health Services patients having mental health clinical records deliberately sent to an external body, an industry relations partner. I am just so sorry for those individuals, because not only does this do so much damage to those 13 people who have had their mental health records made public without their consent but also it has a massive impact on other people who are considering accessing public mental health support.

Having a system which is weak, which does not allow patient choice and which has insufficient securities, no matter what the review panels are, no matter what framework you have in place, will deter people from accessing support when they need it the most. Again, I urge the government to reconsider the inclusion of an opt-out provision. While these amendments are supported and are a step towards a better system, I certainly do not believe that they go far enough. An opt-out provision should be included as soon as possible.

Dylan WIGHT (Tarneit) (18:20): It is a pleasure to rise and speak on this bill, the Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023. Just before I do, I would like to acknowledge all of the health workers – nurses, doctors, allied health workers and paramedics – in my

community of Tarneit and indeed around Victoria as well as recognise the hospital in my community, the Werribee Mercy Hospital, a hospital that is undertaking currently a \$109 million upgrade of its emergency department thanks to the Andrews Labor government.

The Victorian government is of course committed to patient safety, and that is what this bill is all about. A core aspect of that is ensuring that through our health records our healthcare providers have access to necessary information so that they have the tools to care for their patients in the most appropriate manner. It would be no surprise to anybody in this place that most Victorians will visit a number of different healthcare providers and professionals over their lifetime. I have said before in this place that it is particularly pertinent for my community of Tarneit, an incredibly mobile community and a community that did so much to keep this state running during the pandemic.

Making sure that critical information can be securely passed between health services is important in ensuring patients receive the best possible care. It is crucial that our healthcare providers have access to information, including medications that may interact, drug allergies, alerts of severe asthma, past biopsy results, diagnoses that may have taken months and months to make and, of course, results of tests and expensive scans that may have potentially cost either the individual or the healthcare system thousands of dollars when they were made. All of this information at the moment is scattered across individual recording systems both online and, in some cases, on paper – an archaic system, to be quite frank. This ends up forcing medical practitioners to spend precious time manually gathering patient information, time that could be far better spent attending to people that are presenting in our healthcare system. Fax machines and phone calls needlessly delay medical professionals, who should be spending their time, as I said, caring for patients, not chasing up information that could be easily accessible under the changes that we propose to make through this bill.

This becomes even more of an issue, as we can imagine, in emergency departments, where every second counts and patients may be unable to express the details of their previous medical history. Every person's medical history is different, and in stressful situations remembering every single relevant detail is nearly impossible. One of the incredibly important aspects of this bill is taking the responsibility and taking the onus off the patient, off the person presenting in our healthcare system, to remember the finer details of their medical history. As we can imagine – and I used the example of presenting to an emergency department previously – with a patient potentially presenting to an emergency department, it is near on impossible for that person in different circumstances to remember what can at times be an incredibly complex medical history. Taking that responsibility off the patient is incredibly important and is one of the incredibly important aspects of this bill.

This bill will allow us to modernise the systems we use for information sharing in health care and to follow the approach taken by other jurisdictions. When I spoke on this bill in this place previously, only a few weeks ago, I spoke about the fact that this legislation brings us into line with other jurisdictions that have already done this, such as New South Wales, Queensland, the ACT and South Australia, and have successfully implemented health information sharing at the point of care.

This bill is not about whether public health services should share information. Indeed that is already happening; we are already seeing that happen. The problem is that the way it is happening at the moment is archaic, as I suggested. The use of fax machines, the use of phone calls and the delaying of the treatment of patients that are presenting at times as critically ill – that is already happening. All we are doing is establishing a secure and more efficient platform for clinicians to access that relevant clinical information to treat patients safely.

The proposed amendments from the other place give us an interesting framework with which to tackle some of these issues raised in favour of an opt-out clause. This legislation comes before us after extensive consultation throughout the health industry. Indeed there is incredibly strong support not just from the industry – not just from our doctors, not just from our nurses, not just from our health professionals – but also from people accessing health services. Indeed there is incredibly strong support from my constituents in the suburbs of Tarneit, Mount Cottrell and Hoppers Crossing, because

as I said, my community is one of the most mobile communities in Victoria and people in my community would like to know, if they are out for work or if they are out enjoying everything that Victoria has to offer and a health emergency was to occur, that whichever health professional they present to will have the relevant information to treat them adequately.

What this bill does not do is change a patient's right to access their full medical records from a health service provider under FOI and privacy legislation. Fundamentally what that would mean is that patients would still absolutely have ownership and access to their own health records – a function of this legislation that is still incredibly important. To ensure efficiency and timely care, the information that will be included on the proposed platform is only the most relevant clinical data for the purposes of treatment, not the full medical history of the person. I think that is an incredibly important point, given the contribution that was made previously to mine. This includes allergies to medications, hospital treatment summaries and diagnosis reports. This bill does not enable FOI requests on the health information sharing system. This is because it would require the department to access clinical information to respond to questions, which would be inappropriate and counteractive to the strict protections and access controls the bill seeks to establish.

I think it is also incredibly important to touch on the security and protections of the data that will be on this system. The government is obviously committed to ensuring that patients' data is stored securely and stringent protections are in place. It is a really important aspect of this bill. When we speak about how this information is being shared at the moment, we are talking about some of this information being shared on a fax machine.

I am not quite sure how it could possibly be more secure for a patient's medical records to be sent via a fax machine and for a piece of paper to be perhaps sitting in a dusty old fax machine that rarely gets used in some room for people to pick up that maybe should not have access to that. I am not quite sure how that could possibly be more secure than what the government is proposing.

The bill will introduce strict controls, and these include frequent auditing to make sure authorised people are accessing health information. The bill specifies that only healthcare providers who are directly involved in a person's care and treatment can access medical information and only for the purpose of providing care. I commend this bill to the house.

Tim READ (Brunswick) (18:30): It is a pleasure to speak on this Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023, which has changed a little since it last appeared in this place. It is particularly important to comment that the Greens recognise how critical it is for our public health system that this bill pass the Parliament, particularly after a similar bill failed to pass the Parliament about a year ago. We were very worried that a similar situation could arise again.

Ask any doctor, indeed most health workers, and they will tell you that they are accustomed to spending time trying to track down health records that are in another institution or another clinic. Doctors will just roll their eyes and talk about the many hours of their lives wasted trying to get vital pieces of information. This is information that patients often do not realise is important, or they do not know or they cannot remember the details. But then there is the other kind of information that the doctors do not even know exists because the patients are not aware of it or have forgotten or are unconscious. In any case enormous amounts of time are wasted. While we can all tell you stories of missed diagnoses, catastrophes and so on, those are probably less common and maybe even less important than the sheer cost of person hours to the public health system and the dollars.

Medication reactions are responsible for a significant proportion of medical accidents in hospitals. Inappropriate treatment when patients are allergic or known to be allergic to medications is also a problem, and other warnings or alerts in people's medical records that are missed are also problems, whether they are about the severity of someone's asthma or their tendency towards violence or whatever. Delayed diagnoses are not uncommon, but repeat investigations are very common, and I would warrant that every minute of every day blood tests and other pathology investigations are

needlessly repeated at enormous cost to the public purse. While this bill will not stop all of that, it will prevent some of it because if clinicians can see that tests were ordered last week or yesterday and that those results are to hand, they will not need to spend those hundreds of dollars. Before we even think about the consequences to individuals, if we just think about the use of resources and think about the resulting improvement in the productivity of our healthcare system, which right now cannot find enough staff, then it is clear that this bill needs to pass.

I want to turn briefly to the notion that people should be able to opt out of this. Obviously there were concerns expressed by the Department of Health that this might follow the pattern of My Health Record, which is currently unusable because there is insufficient information uploaded but also because too many people have opted out of it. Even if that did not happen, it is important to understand that opting out of participation in this does not just affect the health of the individual who opts out. Okay, so you opt out, and next week you are carried unconscious into an emergency department where you have got no record – it is clearly going to affect your health, but it is also going to affect the health of the other patients in the unit because the staff are wasting hours chasing your information because you have opted out. This is above all about a collective responsibility to participate in making our public health system as efficient and as effective as we possibly can so that it will help everybody. It is not just about the health of individuals here. We were also concerned, though, that people need to be able to trust the system. Opting out does not mean you trust the system; opting out means you do not trust the system. But we wanted to strengthen the privacy protections in this system so that everybody could trust it.

I particularly want to acknowledge the efforts of my upper house Greens colleague in the other place, Dr Sarah Mansfield, who spent with me considerable time probing the capability of the system proposed by the government. I want to acknowledge the chief digital health officer and others from the department, who through repeated briefings gave us a lot of their time answering our questions. Through that process we were able to seek and obtain these amendments from the government plus additional assurances on the record in the committee stage of the bill in the other place.

Just briefly, the review clause is timed to require an external independent review after the system has been operating for a couple of years to see what problems have arisen rather than to try and address theoretical problems. The other important amendment is that the privacy management framework is codified in the legislation. That should be established in a way that consults with groups representing patients and health workers on what extra health information needs extra levels of protection. According to this privacy management framework, there should be a process to safeguard that information and there should be a process to safeguard the identity of patients at risk of harm, particularly those at risk of family violence. There needs to be a process so that patients can learn who has access to their health information, and the amendment requires regular audits and compliance checks so that we can see if there are episodes of inappropriate access. That privacy management framework, as written into the legislation, now adds an additional layer of protection around people's health information in a way that I believe means Victorians will be able to trust the integrity of the system and use it with confidence.

Reflecting on the process of working with the government to get these amendments, perhaps we should have asked more about why our public hospitals are not actually using the same electronic medical records, which is what occurs in many jurisdictions around the world – in fact it happens in Parkville. There are four hospitals in Parkville, the royals, which all use the same electronic medical records. They do not need a separate platform to share information. If you type a comma in one hospital, you can read it minutes later in another hospital, and that is proposed soon for multiple hospitals in the Latrobe Valley. The three Alfred hospitals also have shared medical records; the problem is they are different shared medical records. It may well be better to have all of Victoria's public health institutions on the one system, but I guess that is a challenge for another day. But it is worth addressing because it could well bring further efficiencies to our stressed health system.

Regardless, I will be very glad to see this bill pass. Perhaps the Greens could have jumped up and down more, demanding an opt-out clause and the removal of the FOI exemption, but fearing that the bill may not proceed or work as intended and knowing how valuable the bill will be to the public health system, we opted instead to negotiate with the government and push for the improvements that we and the government achieved. This bill is not as glamorous as a promised new hospital – it does not have the photo opportunities and ribbon-cutting potential – but I believe it will contribute a lot more to the health system, and I look forward to seeing how this information sharing system is developed and how it is used.

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (18:39): I rise to speak on the Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023 and the amendments that have been made by the Legislative Council. I spoke on this bill when it was here in the lower house, and I am pleased to see that when we do bring up important changes that do need to be considered, sometimes they are taken into consideration. I commend the hard work of my colleague in the other place the Shadow Minister for Health Georgie Crozier, who worked incredibly hard. Georgie, like me, has a long history of working in the health sector and understands the complexity of the issues around the health information system and the challenges that we have probably both seen, and I certainly have seen, over the years.

I concur with what I just heard from the Greens representative in that it would be ideal. Certainly working in accident and emergency I thought many, many times how crazy it was that I could not just pull up electronically the patient's blood group when we had someone come in. But that is actually not that often, and the onus on the patient is something that I think, yes, is a focus. The challenge really for me around this bill is that I am not convinced that the government is ready to take this responsibility. We have already seen examples of hacking in our state alone into our medical systems. There was an example in South-West Coast. Barwon's South West Alliance of Rural Health (SWARH) was hacked a short time ago, and that resulted in six months of people running around the hospital with USBs trying to cope. We had a real example here in Victoria after the Auditor-General put it clearly on the table for the government to see. He had identified the risk in the system – that it was not robust and it was absolutely open to be hacked. I think he hacked it himself or had one of his team hack it to demonstrate how easy it was. But despite that the government did not do their role and actually strengthen the system.

We have also recently seen Medibank Private and some big companies being hacked. This sort of health information of very vulnerable people is a real target for hackers. If we have got a government that is not listening to the Auditor-General around processes that they can do better – we see that in many other examples, but I will stay focused on health and will not head down other roads at this point in time – then how can we say to patients that they can go into the health system and be comfortable that their very private information will not get into the wrong hands? Just today, which is incredibly relevant – this could not be more time relevant – we saw that a Canberra health service had a serious breach of privacy, with 13 records of patients gone to an industrial partner over a period of years – mental health records, nonetheless.

This is why I have major issues with this. Patient-centred care is what we talk about in health – making sure the patient is at the centre of their care. The patient having a right to opt out of a system seems a fairly basic right. We cannot say that we focus on patient-centred care when we ignore their right to their privacy and to have their data kept secret and not shared on a centralised platform. They have every right to be nervous of a centralised platform, given the examples I have already raised. I am going to repeat it: just today in Canberra we saw health data of mental health clients going to an industrial partner, deliberately. I do understand it would be ideal to be able to trust. But I am not convinced that I can trust a government which has already demonstrated failures in its technological capability in many, many areas where it has tried to implement systems – be it ambulance, be it the CFA, be it births, deaths and marriages or be it in its own health system with the example I have already put up with SWARH in Barwon south-west.

People might have sexual health issues that they do not want anyone else to know about. They might have had very private surgeries or may have an HIV status that they are very protective of. They might have been victims of family violence and want to move on with their life and do not want to have that risk exposed. They might be worried about future employment issues. They might be worried about their children and protecting them. I am worried about these vulnerable individuals who would perhaps avoid seeking help. And I know – as a community nurse who worked in health promotion for many years – it is very, very hard to get people to prioritise their health and seek health prophylactically. This will be a setback if those people who are anxious about their health information being shared cannot trust the system.

So these amendments do not go far enough. I mean, the opt-out opportunity is in the federal arena; 10 per cent of our community have decided to do just that, opt out, and I feel there is a real imposition on people's rights to their own private information by not allowing in this bill for them to have their information kept private. I will quote from the organisations who spend a lot of time looking at privacy issues and probably are the experts on the importance of privacy and understanding privacy, organisations like the Law Institute of Victoria, Liberty Victoria and Digital Rights Watch. I quote the president of the Law Institute of Victoria, Tania Wolff. She said that this public health system change 'must not come at the cost of patient autonomy'. This is what came out 10 days ago. They were unhappy with the original piece of legislation, but they are still uncomfortable with the amendments. The LIV has repeatedly called for amendments to be made to the legislation to provide for an opt-out – which is the part I am very bitterly disappointed has not been included in these amendments – for Victorians who do not wish to have their records shared. The Law Institute of Victoria still feels this legislation is inadequate and still falls short of what is required.

It is very disappointing when we see that the government has recognised that it did need to strengthen the legislation. I see that the privacy management framework that they have put in place, which these amendments actually bring forward, is actually not strong enough, and that is what the Law Institute of Victoria have identified. I think it is good that there will be a review process, but a couple of years is a fairly long time. We are seeing a lot of hacking going on and, as I say, vulnerable Victorians and their health data seem to be a focus for what people are searching for in that horrible world of hacking, where they are looking for personal data and taking advantage of vulnerable people's situations.

I think an opt-out clause is just simply reasonable. I do not think it is a lot to ask. It is reasonable in any circumstance, but we have got a government who have had so many failures in their technological adoptions into different systems, into different departments, and we have got an Auditor-General who warned the government that their health system was fragile and could easily be hacked and actually demonstrated that, but that was not taken on board by the current government and was ignored by the Labor government, and as a result we saw a hacking which put major, major disruption for a very long time into the systems of Warrnambool South West Healthcare, Camperdown, Colac, Geelong – right through the South-West Coast area.

Whilst I would love when I am working in accident and emergency to have a system I could trust that was able to give me the information quickly that I wanted, and I would love to not see the anaphylaxis that occurs from an allergic reaction that the patient was not aware of or forgot about, I do not think it is too much to ask, for those who want the opt-out clause, to have it put in to protect those people. In that case, I am disappointed that it has not gone far enough as a bill. I look forward to the review process, and I think the government should strengthen it further.

Tim RICHARDSON (Mordialloc) (18:49): It is great to rise and speak on the amendments for the Health Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Bill 2023. At least the member for South-West Coast was a little more measured than the original discussion on this bill. I remember the member for Caulfield said lawyers were literally streaming up to the Magistrates Court, waiting for the next case that would happen on this bill, despite patients' information already being shared in Victoria across health services and that support and collaboration literally saving lives.

It also goes to the heart of the ridiculousness of the fear campaign that was brought in around this bill and the commentary that undermines the trust and confidence in this system. Of course during that contribution I talked about there not being a department breach in information, and that was a critical point that was to be raised, because this is a system that has been established within the department and the work that will underpin supporting the transfer of information of patient care. One thing that was absent in that bill speech a couple of weeks ago and is absent in this contribution now is a recognition of the risk to lives in not acting in this space. Will we front up to the families when information is not shared and tragic outcomes happen and we lose Victorians from not being able to share information between health services? Who is going to be there at the Coroners Court apologising because the Victorian Parliament did not pass that legislation? Luckily the 60th Parliament in all its forms in this chamber and in the Legislative Council saw reason in this bill. It did not go down a pathway of fear campaigns and talking about opt-outs, of unquantifiable things that are put forward and the suggestion that there would be a rush of legal services coming forward. That really is at the heart of that undermining of information, facts and reasonable debate – because that is already happening right now. That sharing of information has been so critical and important across health services, and we are enhancing that to make sure patient care and safety is at the heart of everything we do.

Antiquated systems that still rely on faxes, that have hard-copy paperwork, that could be accessed at any time by people passing through, seen by various different officials – this is modernising our health service and providing that support and care and comfort, and I think that is the work that should be put forward in this Parliament, and I am really appreciative that we have passed that bill through and it is going to support Victorians. I could not in all conscience as a member of this place be able to consider that by not doing this work, not bringing about these changes and these legislative reforms, could lead to poor patient outcomes or indeed risk the lives of Victorians. That is really at the heart of what this bill is all about and why those safeguards that were put forward in the original bill were really important as well – the work that is to be done by the Department of Health and the implementation of that work and the security and safeguards that are underway right now.

It is important to reflect that jurisdictions across Australia have moved in this space as well. We do not see those criticisms or a sudden uplift in Magistrates Court or Supreme Court presentations because New South Wales has brought in HealtheNet, which was implemented to establish a secure statewide clinical portal which shares summary-level patient and clinical information, or Queensland – the Queensland Premier has not come out to say that there has been a massive rush on the courts based on the changes that the government introduced. The government implemented the Viewer, which collates data from multiple Queensland health systems, enabling healthcare professionals to access patient information quickly without having to log into different systems. I mean, this is a pretty simple thing – but no, take it a little step further: in the ACT, the Digital Health Record was implemented, which stores health information for patients who use any of the ACT's public health services.

So what is this really about, then – those speeches that were put forward before around a rush of legal services, saying that there should be an opt-out based on unquantifiable metrics that are put forward, the lack of acknowledgement that health services in all of our communities collaborate, support and share information now and this is enhancing that process and support into the future? Well, I called it out then and I will call it out now – it was about the fear campaigning that we have seen in health policy and work over that period of time. The contributions again in the Legislative Council, if you followed that debate, gave a window into the soul of the coalition. It is not about patient outcomes; it is about political outcomes. They saw an opportunity to try to fear campaign once again on health policy, and we have seen absolute form in this space for the last few years undermining health information. We have seen other circumstances out on the steps of Parliament, but we all remember seeing people stand out there undermining the advice of our health officials, undermining the work of our nurses, our doctors and our paramedics who each day front up to support Victorians, making their job harder by talking down our health professionals and talking down the health sector. This was another chapter in that playbook. This was about undermining public confidence; it was unquantifiable

and not based in fact. That is the biggest challenge in those contributions. Reading through some of them, some of them were very much fear campaigning and not based in fact.

That is, I guess, where the coalition find themselves at the moment, particularly the Liberal Party in Victoria. They find themselves down a narrow path of fear, of division in community, which Victorians resoundingly rejected, and they have learned nothing. We are four months into the 60th Parliament. There are 1354 days to go, and still they are muddling around now with fear campaigns and preaching to undermine trust and confidence in science once again. It is a disappointing place we find them in. But that luckily was not the process that we went through the Assembly and in the Council, and thankfully this bill will be passed through.

I am really keen to see how this will support the people that are on the front line each and every day, from health services – our primary health services and our community health workers, who do such an incredible job in the preventative health space – all the way through to our emergency departments. We see the dedication and incredible work and interaction that they have with our community. They are some of the best people. We had an interaction with health services just a couple weeks ago, and the nursing staff and doctors at the health service we interacted with were just absolutely immense. It really gives you goosebumps to think that that is just one moment of interaction that brightens your day and makes you feel that comfort, care and support but that happens thousands of times across a health service each and every month. That is just going about daily business, doing the 10-, 12-hour shift and getting smashed all the way through and coming home and thinking, ‘Those are the lives that I improve each and every day.’

We want to be on the side of our health workers and our officials and make sure that we are not hampering the job that they do. We know the pressures that we have had on our health system, and we have made a record investment, with more than \$20 billion in health infrastructure investment coming. It is a substantial uplift, and when we see how much we have invested over our term, the health workers that we have supported – the more than 24,000 that we have brought in and tens of thousands more that are coming in; those are our values, and we are investing in the future as well – well, we do not want to make that job harder and to embed any more inefficiencies in systems, whether it is faxes or whether it is hard copy printouts. When seconds matter in patient safety outcomes and care, we need to make sure that we build a system that provides that support. That is how important these legislative reforms are.

I hope some of those members that contributed to the debate on the bill reflect on their contributions and maybe choose a different path in the future and maybe do not talk about random hypotheses underpinning their fear campaign that are not quantifiable at all. It was absolutely another fear campaign in community health messaging and safety. Get a brief. Listen to the advice. Come forward. Do the work. Speak a bit more on the bills and represent your communities and look at the evidence that is put forward and the safeguards that are put in and the fact that just up the road, literally a few hours to the border, we have got a similar system under Premier Perrottet in New South Wales. I mean, goodness me, you could not be any more out of touch on that side. New South Wales and Queensland have already put those systems forward. And we have already got patient information being shared today. It is not a new thing. Some of those opposite speaking on the amendment even seemed to suggest that patient information sharing is just a new 2023 thing. This is happening in community health services around Victoria now, but it is making it safer, more streamlined and more effective and efficient for the future.

I would like those opposite and anyone that opposed the bill to come forward, and I ask: would you front up to the Coroners Court? When they are talking about lawyers having a rush on a place, where there would be gaps, where people’s information not being shared would lead to poor outcomes and even costs lives, would they be willing, after the rhetoric that they have shared, to go and talk to those families? Because of the consequences, I could not live with myself, knowing that could have an impact, and that is why this bill is so very critical. That is why the Andrews Labor government has

been trusted by Victorians to get on with delivering, and this is just another element in the work that we are doing to keep patients safe.

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (18:59): The member for Mordialloc made a whole lot of assumptions there. If the bill was right, we would not be back here again talking about the amendments that were proposed. What we have seen is that the government could not get the bill right in the first place, and we are now talking about these amendments to protect Victorians and make sure we get information right.

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

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Adjournment

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Caulfield electorate schools

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (19:00): (101) My adjournment today is to the Minister for Education, and the action I seek is for the minister to meet with local schools in my electorate to discuss the importance of funding and development plans in a number of our key schools. We have some great schools in Caulfield. Many of those schools are over 100 years old and unfortunately have not had the funding and the support required to keep up with today's needs. The schools are in desperate need of funding to create learning environments that enable teachers and educators to perform to their best potential and also to support our kids and our families.

At the election the Liberal–Nationals committed to a range of different upgrades and plans to revitalise the great local schools in the Caulfield community, including \$11.3 million for Caulfield Junior College for the first-stage upgrades, which would include a brand new school gymnasium and performing arts and assembly area, four specialist classrooms, two outdoor hardcourts and a new play field. This is a great school and a great opportunity. I know at the moment they have got issues in terms of some of the classrooms are not fit for purpose. We are going through and trying to work out how to make good on the maintenance issues with that particular school, so it would be great to get the minister to come down and look at Caulfield Junior College. With Ripponlea Primary School, we promised \$5 million for refurbishment of classrooms for students as part of a stage 1 upgrade, a new STEM science centre and an upgrade of their Building the Education Revolution building to increase space as a multipurpose hall and a stage theatre for additional assemblies. At the moment Ripponlea Primary School are having their assemblies out in the playground area with no cover and are experiencing all kinds of weather conditions. They desperately need that support.

In addition to that, we have \$5 million to deliver much-needed upgrades at Caulfield Primary School and \$10 million for Caulfield South Primary School, which I know the government has committed to, but that includes things like proper disability access, a multipurpose gymnasium and a STEM centre. These are important upgrades. We need to ensure we get it right and we need to ensure that we have ample spaces for our kids, for our families and for our teachers to be able to work in, so I ask that the minister join with me to meet with these school communities in my electorate to see the important work that is needed to get our schools fit for purpose.

Railway House, Beaconsfield

Emma VULIN (Pakenham) (19:03): (102) I raise a matter for the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure regarding the former stationmaster's house at Beaconsfield station. The action I seek is for the minister to ensure the protection of the Beaconsfield stationmaster's house and the adjacent bunya-bunya pine tree while removing the dangerous and congested level crossing at Station Street in

Beaconsfield. The community is concerned that the project may require the demolition of the house, which could see the loss of a historic and beautiful house that is valued highly by the community.

The Beaconsfield stationmaster's house was built in 1888, and at that time a bunya-bunya pine tree was planted. The removal of the level crossing at Beaconsfield is an important part of making the Pakenham line level crossing free by 2025, making way for the opening of the Metro Tunnel. It is impressive that the entire line will be level crossing free and that as a result, communities will be safer and our roads and rail will be less congested and more efficient. I ask the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure to assist in preserving the Beaconsfield stationmaster's house while delivering improved rail services for my community and those surrounding it.

Fire Permits Victoria

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (19:04): (103) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Emergency Services, and the action I seek is for the minister to immediately allocate additional resources to correct the substantial delays and process issues plaguing the Fire Permits Victoria website. Applying for burn-off permits or fire permits is something that needs to be done in an extraordinarily timely way. My local farmers still burn off their stubble. In certain areas of my electorate that is necessary because the stubble is so dense and you can get infestations of slugs and snails, which then damage the subsequent crops that are planted in that area.

Simon Allen, who is a farmer in the Hexham area, has been trying to get a burning permit approved; however, it has now been over a week and he has not received that approval yet. Now, there are a lot of issues around this. It does create substantial stress within the farming community because there is a limited time frame that they have to be able to make sure the weather is right but also to ensure that the burn-off is done, the fire is put out appropriately and then we get to the next stage of the cycle, which is sowing. Simon has shared with me that there have been a lot of changes. Of course now we have gone on to Fire Permits Victoria. He has been trying to pursue every avenue through the CFA to fast-track the permit but has not had any progress other than their saying they are working on it. He has just been told that there is a huge new workload and they are working through all of the applications as quickly as possible, but obviously that is not sufficient. These fire permits need to be approved asap if we are to stay on track for our business of sowing crops in a timely window for production, which is now already behind due to what used to be a very straightforward job. Simon fears as a landholder that he is very stressed and will burn out without a fire permit within the restricted time frame. They will incur massive issues if they just go ahead and burn without a permit, with the police probably knocking on the door about that, and the penalties associated with it are quite hefty as well.

There is still a lot of confusion, but what is happening at the end of day is that we are not getting these fire permits approved through the Fire Permits Victoria website in an appropriate time frame. There are other issues plaguing the website: difficulties in uploading maps and other information as attachments to the application. It sounds to me like this needs a substantial amount of work to get it right and get it working, and so that is why I ask the minister to take immediate action to put those additional resources into Fire Permits Victoria so that we can get a quick response and Simon Allen can get his fire permit approved as soon as possible.

Wendouree electorate veterans

Juliana ADDISON (Wendouree) (19:07): (104) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Veterans, and the action that I seek is for the minister to visit Ballarat to meet with representatives of veterans organisations in my community and visit significant memorials to the fallen and to those who have served in my electorate of Wendouree. With Anzac Day approaching, it is timely to invite the Minister for Veterans to Ballarat. The region is home to 5000 veterans and a number of organisations who do great work supporting our veterans and their families, including the Ballarat RSL sub-branch, the Ballarat Veterans Assistance Centre, the Legacy club of Ballarat, the Arch of Victory/Avenue of Honour Committee, the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia Ballarat sub-branch, the Military Brotherhood Military Motorcycle Club, the Totally & Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Servicemen and

Women's Association of Victoria Ballarat branch, the trustees of the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial and others.

As a city, we are proud of our veterans and honour them with many memorials, statues and cenotaphs across our city and region. This is also evident in the large crowds that continue to grow at Anzac Day services each year. The Arch of Victory, situated in Alfredton, is a prominent landmark and is significant for many reasons. The arch stands more than 16 metres tall and nearly 20 metres wide. It was constructed with more than 70,000 bricks, which were laid by local bricklayer George Brookes and his team in just three months in 1920. The funds required to construct our grand archway did not come from a government, nor from a council, nor from a returned servicemen's organisation; the money was raised by more than 500 women workers at the Eleanor Lucas lingerie factory. They were affectionately known as the Lucas girls and are held in the highest esteem for the extraordinary legacy they have left.

Located at the Arch of Victory is the Garden of the Grieving Mother. It is a very special place that pays tribute to the mothers and families of all Australian servicemen and women in all wars. The Arch of Victory also marks the entrance to our 22-kilometre Avenue of Honour, which includes 3771 trees and a plaque recognising every Ballarat local who enlisted their services in World War I. Ballarat's Avenue of Honour is Australia's largest and longest avenue of honour.

I would also like to take the minister to the Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial. The national memorial recognises all Australian prisoners of war and acknowledges the hardship, the deprivation, the brutality, the starvation and the disease endured during capture and the scars many continued to endure upon their return to Australia. It also is a place to reflect on the 8600 prisoners of war who lost their lives. I look forward to welcoming the minister to Ballarat.

South-West Coast electorate child care

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (19:10): (105) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep. The action I seek is for the minister to detail what steps are being taken to rectify the childcare drought in South-West Coast.

South-West Coast is the best place in Victoria to live, work and raise a family. I know this because I do and I have. From Terang to Narrawong and Childers Cove to Budj Bim, there is something for everyone. South-West Coast is not just a place to holiday. There are employment opportunities with internationally recognised employers, higher education opportunities, amazing medical specialists and the ability to open your own business. South-West Coast is your oyster, except if you have small children and need child care.

There is a childcare drought in South-West Coast. You do not have to be an agricultural specialist to realise the seriousness of any kind of drought and the long-term, often irreversible consequences for communities. Populations shrink, businesses close, regions die. Not even this government could spin a drought into a positive for Victoria. I encourage the minister to check out *Deserts and Oases: How Accessible Is Childcare in Australia?*, a 2022 study from Victoria University. The minister will find the study enlightening and will be able to confirm that South-West Coast is one of the worst places in Australia for access to child care. Labor have been in government for 18 of the past 23 years, and look at their legacy. Last November the Premier announced that Portland would receive one additional early learning centre owned and operated by the state of Victoria, but the Premier did not say when the facility would be open and operational, and we all know about this government and their rubbery time lines for roads, hospitals, new VLocity trains, the Port Fairy SES and the Maroondah to Portland Murray Basin rail project upgrade, just to name a few examples in South-West Coast alone. I guess we will soon be adding early learning centres to that growing list of incomplete and overbudget fiascos.

Minister, one early learning centre for Portland, which will be opened on a yet-to-be-determined date, is like a teardrop in the ocean. It will make no difference. What about Heywood, Port Fairy, Koroit, Warrnambool or Terang. Minister, families across South-West Coast need access to child care now. Waiting lists at early learning centres throughout South-West Coast frequently exceed two years. Is

that acceptable? Some constituents have told me that they have been able to secure a spot for their child up to 100 kilometres away. That is a 200-kilometre round trip to access child care on dangerous and neglected regional roads. Minister, is that acceptable?

The consequences of this childcare drought are significant for South-West Coast. Businesses of all sizes and all sectors are being squeezed by the lack of available child care. Minister, you can fix this childcare mess, but will you?

Early childhood education

Daniela DE MARTINO (Monbulk) (19:13): (106) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep. The action I seek is that the minister join me in my electorate of Monbulk to visit some of our fabulous kindergartens, which are providing our youngest Victorians the very best start to their education.

I would like to acknowledge all the hardworking early childhood educators and staff and thank them for the amazing and important work they do in providing quality care and education for our youngest people. Ninety per cent of a child's brain development occurs before the age of five, making early childhood education absolutely vital. The Andrews Labor government initiatives, such as free kinder for three- and four-year-olds, relieve cost-of-living pressures on families. It is a winner. Accessing a kindergarten close to home and managing the double drop-off will be relieved now for parents as we establish 50 new government-owned and affordable early learning centres. The transitioning of four-year-old kinder to a 30-hour-a-week pre-prep program will set our children up for the best start in their best lives.

The kinder kit initiative, providing every Victorian child starting three-year-old kinder with a beautiful kit of books, toys and educational resources, mostly locally made and designed to support families to learn through play at home, is fabulous. All children deserve the best start to life, which is why I am proud to be part of a government that sees investment in early childhood education as an investment in the future of Victoria and Victorians. Our children deserve nothing less. I look forward to the minister's visit.

South Yarra train station

Sam HIBBINS (Pahran) (19:15): (107) My adjournment is for the Minister for Public Transport, and the action I seek is a further stage of upgrades to South Yarra station. South Yarra station is the second-busiest station outside the CBD. It is right next to the Forest Hill growth area, where significant development is still taking place. I have been a really strong advocate for upgrading South Yarra station since I was first elected, running surveys, petitions and campaigns and getting down there at the station on frosty winter mornings talking to commuters, and I was really pleased to see the first stage of upgrades being completed, with a wider front entrance and of course a tram super-stop, which has been really critical in reducing congestion around the station and improving safety, particularly for people getting on and off the tram. But there is more to be done, and the government knows that there is more to be done, because they have completed but not released a South Yarra station master plan.

I am seeking in the upcoming budget funding for two new ground-level entrances: one on Yarra Street to serve the residents of Forest Hill and students at Melbourne High, who still face significant challenges accessing the station – and this could go hand in hand as well with Stonnington council's proposed Claremont Street streetscape improvements – and one on Station Street, on the opposite side, which is currently a gated area used for bin storage. I think it would be much better if it was actually an access point for commuters.

Extra ground-level entrances would be a relatively low cost improvement to the station, but also, in addition to this, planning should take place to progress the construction of a platform overpass, which would be significant works to ensure the station is disability access compliant. South Yarra station is

one of our busiest stations. It is critical to the livability of South Yarra and Forest Hill, and so I urge the government to fund a further stage of upgrades in the upcoming state budget.

Preston Market

Nathan LAMBERT (Preston) (19:17): (108) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Planning, and the action I seek is that the minister protects the Preston Market. I know the minister has been reading through a great deal of material about the market, and I know she is a very regular visitor. She is often up our way, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for the diligent and thoughtful way in which she has approached this important issue for our community. I understand that the minister is now in a position where she is close to being able to make some decisions about the market, and in that respect I specifically ask that she protects the Centreway and its surrounding buildings and keeps them in their current location. We have knocked on hundreds of doors around the market, and that is what has clearly emerged from our community. What people want to be able to do is walk down the Centreway or walk through the deli or maybe the seafood section and experience the great, vibrant, multicultural, affordable market that they can experience today. I know that is important to me. I know it is also important to the member for Northcote and the member for Pascoe Vale – good Labor members who know their multicultural communities very well and of course know the market well through their own Greek and Italian families.

That is not the same, I should be clear, as saying that nothing can ever change at the market. We are not asking the minister to build a new Sovereign Hill of sorts where everything is just frozen in place for all time. There is a strong case for making the market more environmentally sensitive. There is a strong case for improving some aspects of its operations, its sewerage system and some of the other essential services upon which the traders rely, and there is a case for making better use of the whole site. The Save the Preston Market group have put forward a proposal where some of the current car parks are used for mid-rise buildings, and if that were done thoughtfully and incrementally, we could imagine that making the market an even better place. But most fundamentally, I am rising today to ask that any such upgrades keep the heart of the market as it currently is, so as people go there and they get their fresh pasta, their Asian groceries or whatever they might get on a Saturday morning, we would like to make sure that any upgrades enhance or support that part of the market rather than displacing or destroying it. I thank the minister for her consideration of this important issue for our community.

Mornington Peninsula Freeway

Sam GROTH (Nepean) (19:19): (109) My adjournment is for the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, and it is a matter of great importance to many residents in my constituency along the Mornington Peninsula Freeway, where unacceptable road noise in Dromana, McCrae and Rosebud is currently contributing to a deteriorating quality of life. The action I seek is for the minister to immediately commission the necessary works to address and solve this ongoing issue of traffic noise along the Mornington Peninsula Freeway.

Many Victorians choose to make the Mornington Peninsula home, often to enjoy a more peaceful and quieter pace of life than in urban areas. It is this peninsula lifestyle that I promised to protect when I was elected as the member for Nepean, a promise I have every intention of delivering. Constant road noise from Dromana to Rosebud has been an ongoing issue and has historically been so bad that residents have reported illness as a result. This is not acceptable in any community in Victoria, and we must ensure that infrastructure is delivered with an appropriate safeguard for all local residents.

Currently the threshold for the government to intervene and provide infrastructure investment to counteract noise pollution from roads is 68 decibels. VicRoads has confirmed that the stretch of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway between the Nepean Highway, Dromana, and Lonsdale Street, McCrae, has been professionally measured and exceeds this threshold. Despite VicRoads promising that these eligible sections of the Mornington Peninsula freeway will be prioritised for future noise attenuation consideration, my community has received no guarantees or time lines for when they will get the relief they need. Residents across the affected areas of Safety Beach, Dromana, McCrae and

Rosebud deserve action and investment from the government to remedy this ongoing and pervasive blight on their lifestyle.

All Victorians should be able to rely on peaceful enjoyment of their property, uninterrupted by the man-made landscape that invariably surrounds them. Infrastructure is arguably necessary to progress our state and improve our overall quality of life, but we must stop short of negatively impacting the surrounding residential areas. Indeed where this impact is unavoidable it is incumbent on any government to take the appropriate steps to reduce, mitigate or compensate for the impact. The peaceful lifestyle we enjoy on the Mornington Peninsula is part of what makes our region the premier lifestyle destination in Victoria. That lifestyle is worth protecting and preserving, and I am committed to that.

Port rail shuttle network

Iwan WALTERS (Greenvale) (19:22): (110) My adjournment matter this evening is for the Minister for Ports and Freight, and the action I seek is for the minister to visit my electorate of Greenvale and to update me on the Andrews Labor and federal governments' \$58 million port rail shuttle network. In January of this year I was delighted to hear Intermodal Terminal Company, or ITC, announce that it would soon be starting construction of a \$400 million intermodal freight terminal at the Austrak Business Park in Somerton, forming a key node of that port rail shuttle network. This substantial private sector investment, a real vote of confidence in our local economy and in the investment environment created by this government's economic policies, will benefit communities in my electorate by creating good, well-paid local jobs. Not only that, it will remove thousands of truck trips from our suburban roads, easing congestion and making journeys safer for Greenvale residents.

I love railways and the people who work on them – Rail, Tram and Bus Union members and others. Thanks to this strategically located intermodal terminal, close to the key national routes of the Hume Highway and the Melbourne to Sydney rail line, and the Albion–Jacana freight bypass line, trucks will be able to deliver or pick up containers from the terminal instead of driving all the way into the Port of Melbourne, Australia's busiest port but also at the metropolitan residential heart of Melbourne. More freight on rail, of course, also means lower carbon emissions and increased efficiency and safety for producers, farmers, freight operators and exporters. The port rail shuttle network will see benefits flow right across Melbourne by shifting containers that would otherwise reach their destination on the back of a truck onto rail, to the port, via suburban hubs like Somerton in my electorate of Greenvale. I look forward to seeing the minister there.

Responses

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (19:24): I am pleased to respond to adjournment matters for several members, including the member for Caulfield, who raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education to speak with local schools to discuss education funding and development plans for key schools across his electorate.

The member for Pakenham raised a matter for the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure that there be a meeting to save, protect and maintain the former stationmaster's house at Beaconsfield, the retention of that house and the historic values of that property, and she sought action in relation to those matters.

The member for Lowan, who is no longer with us, did raise a matter for the Minister for Emergency Services, and the action, of course, was to allocate additional resources to the Fire Permits Victoria website to process applications.

The member for Wendouree raised a matter for the Minister for Veterans, and the action she sought was for the minister to visit her electorate up there in Wendouree to meet with veterans organisations and also to visit several memorials in her area as we approach Anzac Day services.

The member for South-West Coast raised a matter for the Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep, and the action she sought was that the minister detail steps to address the childcare services drought in

her community. The member for Monbulk raised a matter also for the Minister for Early Childhood and Pre-Prep, and the action she sought was that the minister join the member for Monbulk in her electorate to visit several kindergartens across the electorate that are providing great services and support to local families.

The member for Prahran, who is no longer with us – he is perhaps getting the train back to South Yarra – has raised a matter for the Minister for Public Transport. The action that he sought was that there be action on a further stage of upgrades to the South Yarra station, including some new ground-level entrances.

The member for Preston raised a matter for the Minister for Planning, and the action that he sought is that the minister protect the Preston Market. As someone who grew up in West Preston – born at Preston and Northcote Community Hospital – I certainly support their great work and services. It is just a great place to visit, the Preston Market – duck over to the footy at Cramer Street.

The member for Nepean raised a matter for the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, and the action there was to seek some noise attenuation between Dromana and Rosebud, in particular to commit to those works on traffic noise along the Mornington Peninsula Freeway.

The member for Greenvale raised a matter for the Minister for Ports and Freight and sought action that the minister visit his electorate of Greenvale, particularly in relation to the significant investment and what that means for jobs across his electorate with the port rail shuttle network and associated works and investments that have been proposed there.

I will commend those matters and see that they are followed up by the respective ministers. I thank members for raising those matters tonight.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. The house now stands adjourned until tomorrow.

House adjourned 7:27 pm.