



Hansard

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

60th Parliament

Thursday 31 October 2024

Office-holders of the Legislative Assembly

60th Parliament

Speaker

Maree Edwards

Deputy Speaker

Matt Fregon

Acting Speakers

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

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier

Jacinta Allan

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier

Ben Carroll

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition

John Pesutto

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

David Southwick

Leader of the Nationals

Danny O’Brien (from 26 November 2024)

Peter Walsh (to 26 November 2024)

Deputy Leader of the Nationals

Emma Kealy

Leader of the House

Mary-Anne Thomas

Manager of Opposition Business

James Newbury

Members of the Legislative Assembly
60th Parliament

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Addison, Juliana	Wendouree	ALP	Lambert, Nathan	Preston	ALP
Allan, Jacinta	Bendigo East	ALP	Maas, Gary	Narre Warren South	ALP
Andrews, Daniel ¹	Mulgrave	ALP	McCurdy, Tim	Ovens Valley	Nat
Battin, Brad	Berwick	Lib	McGhie, Steve	Melton	ALP
Benham, Jade	Mildura	Nat	McLeish, Cindy	Eildon	Lib
Britnell, Roma	South-West Coast	Lib	Marchant, Alison	Bellarine	ALP
Brooks, Colin	Bundoora	ALP	Matthews-Ward, Kathleen	Broadmeadows	ALP
Bull, Josh	Sunbury	ALP	Mercurio, Paul	Hastings	ALP
Bull, Tim	Gippsland East	Nat	Mullahy, John	Glen Waverley	ALP
Cameron, Martin	Morwell	Nat	Newbury, James	Brighton	Lib
Carbines, Anthony	Ivanhoe	ALP	O'Brien, Danny	Gippsland South	Nat
Carroll, Ben	Niddrie	ALP	O'Brien, Michael	Malvern	Lib
Cheeseman, Darren ²	South Barwon	Ind	O'Keefe, 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 ⁷	Warrandyte	Lib
Edwards, Maree	Bendigo West	ALP	Southwick, David	Caulfield	Lib
Farnham, Wayne	Narracan	Lib	Spence, Ros	Kalkallo	ALP
Foster, Eden ³	Mulgrave	ALP	Staikos, Nick	Bentleigh	ALP
Fowles, Will ⁴	Ringwood	Ind	Suleyman, Natalie	St Albans	ALP
Fregon, Matt	Ashwood	ALP	Tak, Meng Heang	Clarinda	ALP
George, Ella	Lara	ALP	Taylor, Jackson	Bayswater	ALP
Grigorovitch, Luba	Kororoit	ALP	Taylor, Nina	Albert Park	ALP
Groth, Sam	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 ^{5,6}	Prahran	Ind	Walters, Iwan	Greenvale	ALP
Hilakari, Mathew	Point Cook	ALP	Ward, Vicki	Eltham	ALP
Hodgett, David	Croydon	Lib	Wells, Kim	Rowville	Lib
Horne, Melissa	Williamstown	ALP	Werner, Nicole ⁸	Warrandyte	Lib
Hutchins, Natalie	Sydenham	ALP	Wight, Dylan	Tarneit	ALP
Kathage, Lauren	Yan Yean	ALP	Williams, Gabrielle	Dandenong	ALP
Kealy, Emma	Lowan	Nat	Wilson, Belinda	Narre Warren North	ALP
Kilkenny, Sonya	Carrum	ALP	Wilson, Jess	Kew	Lib

¹ Resigned 27 September 2023

² ALP until 29 April 2024

³ Sworn in 6 February 2024

⁴ ALP until 5 August 2023

⁵ Greens until 1 November 2024

⁶ Resigned 23 November 2024

⁷ Resigned 7 July 2023

⁸ 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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Thursday 31 October 2024

The SPEAKER (Maree Edwards) took the chair at 9:32 am, read the prayer and made an acknowledgement of country.

Business of the house**Notices of motion**

The SPEAKER (09:33): General business, notice of motion 3, will be removed from the notice paper unless the member wishing their matter to remain advises the Clerk in writing before 2 pm today.

Petitions**Glen Huntly train station**

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) presented a petition bearing 893 signatures:

Issue:

The Glen Huntly traders have suffered considerable impact from the rebuild of Glen Huntly station, with both continued road closures and footpath closures, off the back of Covid19 pandemic. The closure of both the train station and adjacent road, by LXRP, coupled with the displacement of most residents along the affected strip due to noise disturbances, has had a profound economic impact on Glen Huntly Village. Sadly, there has just not been a resurgence of the same level of foot traffic after the rebuild. The traders would like to hold a fortnightly/monthly Farmers Market to better community spirit and engagement with the local store holders. To do this, the traders have submitted applications to Metro to access the northern station car park to host the market. The northern car park is ideal as it is large enough to accommodate Farmers Market Vendors, with their vehicle and it is right in the heart of Glen Huntly. Metro has repeatedly rejected the traders' applications and the responsible State Minister for Transport Infrastructure has failed to assist with the traders' concerns. The Minister for Transport Infrastructure stated in his response to correspondence sent by the Member for Caulfield and Glen Huntly Traders that "under terms of MTM's franchise agreement with Victorian Government, station car parks are intended for the sole use of metropolitan rail commuters." This directly contradicts Metro's website that welcomes applications from stakeholders wishing to lease the car park space. The community is desperate to hold this Farmers Market and requires the support of the government to negotiate the traders' proposal with Metro. This intervention is essential to support the traders in their bid to boost foot traffic and support local business.

Action:

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to work with Metro in providing Glen Huntly Traders access to the station car park to perform their Farmers Market.

Ordered that petition be considered tomorrow.

Pascoe Vale South Primary School

Anthony CIANFLONE (Pascoe Vale) presented a petition bearing 1517 signatures:

Issue:

This petition of residents in Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Assembly to the urgent funding required to upgrade Pascoe Vale South Primary School's 70 year old administration building and new Covered Outdoor Learning Area. The original 1954 admin building is outdated and limits the staff's ability to meet legal and financial obligations. The admin building has several steps halfway through the building. This makes the building inaccessible for students, families and staff with disability. There are no separate meeting rooms for parent-teacher conferences, training or learning interventions. The first aid room cannot be easily monitored by staff. Our Principals are forced to share an office. Growing student enrolments means the admin building no longer meets capacity and needs of the students, staff and school community. Families deserve a safe, inclusive and collaborative space for the growing learning and mental health and wellbeing needs of students. The school also has less than 10% permanent shade structure which means our students miss out on the benefits of outside learning including open ventilation, physical activity and improved mental health. Pascoe Vale South Primary School Council has done its part and raised \$60,000 to the COLA.

Action:

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to commit \$4.7 million in funding to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes, promote inclusion and improve accessibility at Pascoe Vale South Primary School in the 2024–25 Budget, including: 1. \$4 million to upgrade the 70 year old admin building to meet accessibility, OHS and legal requirements and reflect the school's inclusive and collaborative culture. 2. \$700,000 for a new Covered Outdoor Learning Area.

Ordered that petition be considered tomorrow.

*Documents***Department of Families, Fairness and Housing***Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund: Final Report*

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Ambulance Services) (09:35): I table, by leave, the final report of the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Appeal Fund.

Judicial College of Victoria*Report 2023–24*

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (09:35): I table, by leave, the Judicial College of Victoria report 2023–24.

Victoria Law Foundation*Report 2023–24*

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (09:35): I table, by leave, the Victoria Law Foundation report 2023–24.

Victorian Law Reform Commission*Report 2023–24*

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (09:35): I table, by leave, the Victorian Law Reform Commission report 2023–24.

Ordered that report be published.

Victorian Veterans Council*Report 2023–24*

Natalie SULEYMAN (St Albans – Minister for Veterans, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Youth) (09:36): I table, by leave, the Victorian Veterans Council report 2023–24.

*Committees***Public Accounts and Estimates Committee***Report on the 2024–25 Budget Estimates*

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (09:36): I have the honour to present to the house a report from the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee inquiry into the 2024–25 budget estimates, together with an appendix, minority report and transcripts of evidence.

Ordered that report, appendix and minority report be published.

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

- Adult, Community and Further Education Board – Report 2023–24
- Adult Parole Board Victoria – Report 2023–24
- Agriculture Victoria Services Pty Ltd – 2023–24
- AMES Australia – Report 2023–24
- Asset Confiscation Operations – Report 2023–24
- Australian Centre for the Moving Image – Report 2023–24
- Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission:
 - Report 2023–24 under s 31 of the *Crimes (Assumed Identities) Act 2004*
 - Report 2023–24 under s 42BI of the *Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958*
 - Report 2023–24 under s 30L of the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999*
- Ballarat General Cemeteries Trust – Report 2023–24
- Barwon Region Water Corporation – Report 2023–24
- Breakthrough Victoria Pty Ltd – Report 2023–24
- Central Gippsland Region Water Corporation – Report 2023–24
- Central Highlands Region Water Corporation – Report 2023–24
- Cladding Safety Victoria – Report 2023–24
- Coliban Region Water Corporation – Report 2023–24
- Commission for Children and Young People – Report 2023–24 – Ordered to be published
- Coroners Court of Victoria – Report 2023–24
- Coronial Council of Victoria – Report 2023–24
- Dairy Food Safety Victoria – Report 2023–24
- Dental Health Services Victoria – Report 2023–24
- Development Victoria – Report 2023–24
- Disability Services Commissioner – Report 2023–24
- Docklands Studio Melbourne Pty Ltd – 2023–24
- East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority – Report 2023–24
- Education, Department of – Report 2023–24
- Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme (ESSSuper) – Report 2023–24
- Energy, Environment and Climate Action, Department of:
 - Report 2023–24
 - Report 2023–24 under s 30L of the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999*
- Energy Safe Victoria – Report 2023–24
- Essential Services Commission – Report 2023–24
- Families, Fairness and Housing, Department of – Report 2023–24
- Film Victoria – Report 2023–24
- Financial Management Act 1994*:
 - Explanation from the Assistant Treasurer for the delay of the reports 2023–24 of the:
 - Albury Wodonga Health
 - Alexandra District Hospital
 - Alfred Health

Alpine Health
Ambulance Victoria
Austin Health
Australian Grand Prix Corporation
Bairnsdale Regional Health Service
Barwon Health
Bass Coast Regional Health
Beaufort and Skipton Health Service
Beechworth Health Service
Benalla Health
Bendigo Health Care Group
Boort District Health
Calvary Health Care Bethlehem Limited
Casterton Memorial Hospital
Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust
Cenitex
Central Gippsland Health Service
Central Highlands Rural Health
Children's Court of Victoria
Cohuna District Hospital
Colac Area Health
Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability
Consumer Affairs Victoria
Corangamite Catchment Management Authority
Corryong Health
Country Fire Authority
County Court Victoria
Court Services Victoria
Crown Prosecutors
Dhelkaya Health
Dhelkunya Dja Traditional Owner Land Management Board
East Gippsland Water
East Grampians Health Service
East Wimmera Health Service
Eastern Health
Echuca Regional Health
Environment Protection Authority
Fire Rescue Victoria
Fire Services Implementation Monitor
Forensic Leave Panel
Gippsland Southern Health Service
Goulburn Valley Health
Grampians Health
Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority
Great Ocean Road Health

Gunaikurnai Traditional Owner Land Management Board
Harness Racing Victoria
Heathcote Health Service
Hesse Rural Health Service
Heywood Rural Health
Inglewood and Districts Health Service
Kerang District Health
Kilmore District Health
Kooweerup Regional Health Service
Kyabram and District Health Services
Latrobe Regional Health
Local Jobs First
Magistrates Court of Victoria
Mallee Track Health and Community Service
Mansfield District Hospital
Marine and Coastal Council
Maryborough District Health Service
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust
Melbourne Health
Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission
Mercy Hospitals Victoria Limited
Mildura Base Hospital
Monash Health
Moynes Health Services
NCN Health
Northeast Health Wangaratta
Northern Health
Omeo District Health
Orbost Regional Health
Peninsula Health
Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute
Phillip Island Nature Park Board
Portland District Health
Public Prosecutions, Director of
Public Prosecutions, Office of
Puffing Billy Railway Board
Recreational Fishing License Trust Account
Remembrance Parks Central Victoria
Residential Tenancies Bond Authority
Robinvale District Health Services
Rochester and Elmore District Health Service
Rural Northwest Health
Safe Transport Victoria
Sentencing Advisory Council
Seymour Health

South Gippsland Hospital
South West Healthcare
St Vincent's Hospital (Melbourne) Limited
Supreme Court of Victoria
Surveyors Registration Board of Victoria
Sustainability Victoria
Swan Hill District Health
Tallangatta Health Service
Terang and Mortlake Health Service
The Queen Elizabeth Centre
The Royal Children's Hospital
The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital
The Royal Women's Hospital
Timboon and District Healthcare Service
Treaty Authority
Triple Zero Victoria
Trust for Nature
Tweddle Child and Family Health Service
Vic Forests
Victims of Crime Commissioner
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
Victorian Fisheries Authority
Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine
Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health
Victorian Planning Authority
Victorian Professional Standards Council
Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation
Visit Victoria
West Gippsland Healthcare Group
West Wimmera Health Service
Western District Health Service
Western Health
Yarram and District Health
Yarrawonga Health
Yea and District Memorial Hospital
Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Land Management Board

Reports from the Minister for Agriculture that she had received the reports 2023–24 of the:

Murray Valley Wine Grape Industry Development Committee
Phytogene Pty Ltd
Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria
Victorian Strawberry Industry Development Committee

Report from the Attorney-General that she had received the report 2023–24 of the Victorian Law Reform Commission

Reports from the Minister for Health that she had received the reports 2023–24 of the:

Mildura Cemeteries Trust

Victorian Pharmacy Authority

Report from the Minister for Planning that she had received the report 2023–24 of the Architects Registration Board of Victoria

Report from the Minister for Veterans that she had received the report 2023–24 of the Victorian Veterans Council

Report from the Minister for Women that she had received the report 2023–24 of the Queen Victoria Women's Centre

Firefighters Registration Board – Report 17 October 2023 to 30 June 2024

Game Management Authority – Report 2023–24

Geelong Cemeteries Trust – Report 2023–24

Geelong Performing Arts Centre Trust – Report 2023–24

Geoffrey Gardiner Dairy Foundation – Report 2023–24

Gippsland and Southern Rural Water Corporation – Report 2023–24

Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority 2023–24

Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority – Report 2023–24

Goulburn-Murray Rural Water Corporation – Report 2023–24

Goulburn Valley Region Water Corporation – Report 2023–24

Government Services, Department of – Report 2023–24

Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Corporation – Report 2023–24

Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust – Report 2023–24

Greater Western Water Corporation – Report 2023–24

Greyhound Racing Victoria – Report 2023–24

Health, Department of – Report 2023–24

Health Purchasing Victoria (HealthShare) – Report 2023–24

Infrastructure Victoria – Report 2023–24

Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, Department of – Report 2023–24

Judicial Commission of Victoria – Report 2023–24

Justice and Community Safety, Department of – Report 2023–24

Kardinia Park Stadium Trust – Report 2023–24

Labour Hire Licensing Authority – Report 2023–24

LanguageLoop – Report 2023–24

Legal Practitioners' Liability Committee – Report 2023–24

Legal Services Council and Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation – Report 2023–24

Library Board of Victoria – Report 2023–24

Lower Murray Urban and Rural Water Corporation – Report 2023–24

Mallee Catchment Management Authority – Report 2023–24

Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust – Report 2023–24

Melbourne Arts Precinct Corporation – Report 2023–24

Melbourne Market Authority – Report 2023–24

Melbourne Port Lessor Pty Ltd – Report 2023–24

Melbourne Recital Centre – Report 2023–24

Melbourne Water Corporation – Report 2023–24

Mental Health Tribunal – 2023–24

Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority – Report 2023–24

Museums Board of Victoria – Report 2023–24
National Gallery of Victoria – 2023–24
National Parks Advisory Council – 2023–24
National Rail Safety Regulator, Office of – Report 2023–24
North Central Catchment Management Authority – Report 2023–24
North East Catchment Management Authority – Report 2023–24
North East Link State Tolling Corporation – Report 2022–23
North East Region Water Corporation – Report 2023–24
Ombudsman – Report 2023–24 – Ordered to be published
Parks Victoria – Report 2023–24
Planning and Environment Act 1987 – Notice of approval of amendment to the Moonee Valley Planning Scheme – C238
Police Registration and Services Board – Report 2023–24
Port of Hastings Corporation – Report 2023–24
Portable Long Service Benefits Authority – Report 2023–24
Ports Victoria – Report 2023–24
Post Sentence Authority – Report 2023–24
Premier and Cabinet, Department of – Report 2023–24
PrimeSafe – Report 2023–24
Public Advocate, Office of – Report 2023–24 – Ordered to be published
Public Interest Monitor – Report 2023–24
Public Records Office Victoria – Report 2023–24
Recycling Victoria – Report 2023–24
Regional Development Victoria – Report 2023–24
Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017 – Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET) – 2023–24 Progress Report
Respect Victoria – Report 2023–24
Rolling Stock Holdings (Victoria) Pty Limited – Report 2023–24
Rolling Stock (Victoria-VL) Pty Ltd – Report 2023–24
Rolling Stock (VL-1) Pty Ltd – Report 2023–24
Rolling Stock (VL-2) Pty Ltd – Report 2023–24
Rolling Stock (VL-3) Pty Ltd – Report 2023–24
Royal Botanic Gardens Board – Report 2023–24
Shrine of Remembrance Trustees – Report 2023–24
South East Water Corporation – Report 2023–24
South Gippsland Region Water Corporation – Report 2023–24
Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust – Report 2023–24
State Sport Centres Trust – Report 2023–24
State Trustees Limited – Report 2023–24
Statutory Rules under the following Acts:
Bail Act 1977 – SR 117
Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011 – SR118
Public Interest Monitor Act 2011 – SR 119
Terrorism (Community Protection) Act 2003 – SR 120
Victorian Energy Efficiency Target Act 2007 – SR 122

DOCUMENTS

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Legislative Assembly

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Victorian Inspectorate Act 2011 – SR 121

Wildlife Act 1975 – SR 123

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 – Documents under s 15 in relation to Statutory Rule 122

Suburban Rail Loop Authority – Report 2023–24

Surveyor-General – Report 2023–24 on the administration of the *Survey Co-ordination Act 1958*

Transport Accident Commission (TAC) – Report 2023–24

Transport and Planning, Department of – Report 2023–24

Treasury and Finance, Department of – Report 2023–24

Treasury Corporation of Victoria – Report 2023–24

Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal – Report 2023–24

Victoria Legal Aid – Report 2023–24

Victoria Police:

Report 2023–24

Report 2023–24 under s 139A of the *Confiscation Act 1997*

Report 2023–24 under s 133 of the *Criminal Organisations Control Act 2012*

Report 2023–24 under s 42BI of the *Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1958*

Report 2023–24 under s 30L of the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999*

Report 2023–24 under s 20R of the *Witness Protection Act 1991*

Victoria State Emergency Service Authority (SES) – Report 2023–24

Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership – Report 2023–24

Victorian Arts Centre Trust – 2023–24

Victorian Assisted Reproductive Treatment Authority (VARTA) – Report 2023–24

Victorian Building Authority – Report 2023–24

Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing – Report 2023–24

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority – Report 2023–24

Victorian Disability Worker Commission and Disability Registration Board of Victoria – Report 2023–24

Victorian Electoral Commission – Report 2023–24

Victorian Environmental Water Holder – Report 2023–24

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission – Report 2023–24 – Ordered to be published

Victorian Fisheries Authority – Report 2023–24 under s 30L of the *Surveillance Devices Act 1999*

Victorian Funds Management Corporation – Report 2023–24

Victorian Government Purchasing Board – Report 2023–24

Victorian Information Commissioner, Office of (OVIC) – Report 2023–24

Victorian Institute of Sport Trust – Report 2023–24 (two documents)

Victorian Institute of Teaching – Report 2023–24

Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner – Report 2023–24 – Ordered to be published

Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA) – Report 2023–24

Victorian Plantations Corporation – Report 2023–24

Victorian Public Sector Commission – Report 2023–24

Victorian Racing Integrity Board – Report 2023–24

Victorian Rail Track (VicTrack) – Report 2023–24

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority – Report 2023–24

Victorian Small Business Commission – Report 2023–24 – Ordered to be published

Victorian WorkCover Authority (WorkSafe) – Report 2023–24

V/Line Corporation – Report 2023–24

Wannon Region Water Corporation – Report 2023–24
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority – Report 2023–24
Westernport Region Water Corporation – Report 2023–24
Wimmera Catchment Management Authority – Report 2023–24
Workplace Incidents Consultative Committee – Report 2023–24
Workplace Injury Commission – Report 2023–24
Yarra Valley Water Corporation – Report 2023–24
Youth Parole Board – Report 2023–24
Zoological Parks and Gardens Board – Report 2023–24.

Committees

Economy and Infrastructure Committee

Membership

The SPEAKER (09:37): I have received the resignation of Jess Wilson from the Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee effective from 30 October 2024.

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Ambulance Services) (09:38): I move, by leave:

That Roma Britnell be a member of the Economy and Infrastructure Standing Committee.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

Dissent from Speaker's ruling

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:38): I move, by leave:

That this house dissents from the Speaker's ruling of 30 October 2024 which allowed the Labor government to attack the opposition so long as it is not current, overturning decades of rulings.

Leave refused.

James NEWBURY: I move, by leave:

That this house dissents from the Speaker's ruling of 30 October 2024 which ruled that once the Premier had immediately responded to a question she was exempt from standing orders and rulings from the Chair and then protected as she used the remainder of the question to sledge.

Leave refused.

Government performance

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (09:39): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Melton for failing to support the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Melton are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (09:39): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Ringwood for boasting that after 10 years of hard labour Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on businesses in the nation and causing small businesses in Ringwood to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (09:39): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Point Cook for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Point Cook are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (09:40): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Bass for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Wonthaggi are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Brad ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (09:40): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for St Albans for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Cairnlea are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:41): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Bayswater for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses in Bayswater to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

Jess WILSON (Kew) (09:41): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Niddrie for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses in Niddrie to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

Nicole WERNER (Warrandyte) (09:41): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Box Hill for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses in Box Hill to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

Nicole WERNER: I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the member for Bentleigh and Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for stating that female members of the opposition are suited to be in the kitchen making salads and sipping moselle – shameful gendered language.

Leave refused.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (09:43): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Carrum for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombing while tobacco shops in Patterson Lakes are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Michael O'BRIEN (Malvern) (09:43): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Cranbourne for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Cranbourne are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Matthew GUY (Bulleen) (09:43): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Eltham for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses across Were Street, Montmorency; Chute Street, Diamond Creek; Main Road, Lower Plenty; and right through Eltham's CBD to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

Chris CREWTHER (Mornington) (09:44): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Frankston for failing to support the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Frankston are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Sam GROTH (Nepean) (09:44): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Hastings for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses in Hastings to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

Sam Groth interjected.

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

Member for Nepean withdrew from chamber.

Bridget VALLENCE (Evelyn) (09:44): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Monbulk for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on businesses in the nation and causing small businesses right across the Dandenong Ranges to shut up shop or leave Victoria.

Leave refused.

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (09:45): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Mordialloc for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses in Mordialloc to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

Roma BRITNELL: I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on businesses in the nation and causing small businesses in South-West Coast to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

Brad BATTIN (Berwick) (09:46): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Narre Warren South for boasting after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses in Narre Warren South to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (09:46): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier for failing to support the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Pakenham are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Richard RIORDAN (Polwarth) (09:46): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the ever absent member for South Barwon for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses across South Barwon and the Surf Coast to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

Cindy McLEISH (Eildon) (09:47): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Yan Yean for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Whittlesea are being burnt to the ground, putting local businesses and locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (09:47): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Ripon for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Ararat are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (09:47): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and again the member for Glen Waverley for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses in the Glen Waverley area to shut up shop and leave the state.

Leave refused.

Martin CAMERON (Morwell) (09:48): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Ashwood for boasting that after 10 years of Labor Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses in Ashwood to shut up shop and leave the state.

Leave refused.

Kim O'KEEFFE (Shepparton) (09:48): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Greenvale for failing to support the Liberals' and the Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Meadow Heights are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Kim O'KEEFFE: I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Thornbury for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Thornbury are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Jade BENHAM (Mildura) (09:49): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Eureka for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Ballarat are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (09:49): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Bentleigh for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Bentleigh are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Tim McCURDY (Ovens Valley) (09:50): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Bellarine for failing to support the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Leopold are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Kim WELLS (Rowville) (09:50): I move, by leave:

That the house condemns the Premier and the member for Sunbury for blocking the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Sunbury are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

Chris CREWOTHER (Mornington) (09:50): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Lara for boasting that after 10 years of Labor, Victoria is finally open for business, despite imposing the highest taxes on business in the nation and causing small businesses in Lara to shut up shop or leave the state.

Leave refused.

Chris CREWOTHER: I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Premier and the member for Lara for failing to support the Liberals' and Nationals' plan to stamp out firebombings while tobacco shops in Lara are being burnt to the ground, putting locals at risk.

Leave refused.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (09:51): I move, by leave:

That this house condemns the Allan Labor government for failing to table over 130 annual reports by the end of October as required by law.

Leave refused.

*Business of the house***Adjournment**

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Ambulance Services) (09:52): I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourns until 12 November 2024.

Motion agreed to.

*Members statements***Government performance**

Brad BATTIN (Berwick) (09:52): I am speaking today in relation to the response that I have had via Instagram to a request I put out recently asking people in my local community for some of the issues that they think should be discussed here in Parliament. It has been quite an interesting response we have had from those out in the local community, who have raised issues around youth crime, why offenders continue to get let out so quickly and why the bail laws were weakened by the Labor government. They have got concerns about government care and children in government care, particularly around those young people who have been dying in government care, and the reports of prostitution happening in government care across the state. They raise the issues of day care fees and the cost-of-living crisis we are facing in this state. Many were concerned about government corruption and the Labor government continuously trying to ignore the issues around corruption under their own watch here in the state. They have asked about reports this week that magistrates are being given training to give lenient sentences so those people who have sentences who are at risk of deportation are treated differently in the eyes of the law. One of the good questions in there is ‘Why is Labor addicted to tax?’ They were questioning why this government continues to raise taxes on housing. As we know out in our area, we have got a housing crisis issue, with people trying to find rental properties. They have also asked why Victoria Police and the government have stopped negotiating and why the government has walked away from the negotiating table, and asked the government to respect Victoria Police and give them the pay they deserve.

Louise Beer

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Ambulance Services) (09:54): I rise to celebrate a true legend within my community in the electorate of Macedon. Louise Beer is approaching her 50th year in nursing, a milestone that reflects a lifetime of dedicated service and impact. Since beginning her career in 1974 at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Louise has been a force for compassionate, committed health care in the Macedon Ranges. After training as a midwife, she served at Gisborne Bush Nursing Hospital until its closure in 1997. She then transitioned to Macedon Ranges Health, where she continues to care for our community. Her additional role at Macedon Ranges Shire Council as an immunisation nurse has given many the privilege of working alongside her, learning from her and witnessing her remarkable contributions firsthand. Throughout her career, Louise has passionately championed women’s health, cardiac rehab, immunisation and youth health and mental health. Her commitment to caring for all generations in our community is unique and profound. I have been told that Louise is often seen immunising the babies of women she once delivered. In 2017 Louise was recognised as a finalist for the HESTA Nurse of the Year award. She is not only an exceptional nurse and health practitioner but a mentor, guide and friend to her colleagues, advocating for safe and supportive workplaces and inspiring all those around her. Fifty years is an incredible achievement. Louise, the people of the Macedon Ranges truly honour you.

Drought relief

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (09:55): I raise a matter for the Minister for Agriculture, and I ask: when will the on-farm drought infrastructure grants be extended to other areas of the state impacted by

extremely low rainfall conditions, particularly the postcodes of 3312, 3317, 3318 and 3319 in the West Wimmera Shire Council? I have been contacted by councillor Tim Meyer, who is amazed to see that while the on-farm drought infrastructure grants were originally announced for the entire West Wimmera Shire Council, when they were published they were restricted to a limited number of postcodes. It is a postcode lottery for people in that area. He asks:

How can the northern portion of our Shire not receive the same consideration when facing equally low levels of rainfall is absolutely impossible to understand. In the Kaniva district, the amount of rain received during the growing season so far is 190mm, putting it in the lowest 10% of seasons ever recorded – when the long-term average is almost double of 327mm.

I therefore ask the minister to review the criteria for eligibility for that grant.

Glenelg Highway, Muntham

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (09:56): I would like to raise a matter with the Minister for Roads and Road Safety regarding the Glenelg Highway. Yesterday there was a crew on the Glenelg Highway on the Coleraine side of Muntham between Casterton and Coleraine, and they were shovelling in loads of hot mix. Trucks had blown out those hot-mix-filled potholes by the end of the day. We need to make sure that funding is provided to fix our roads properly, because the short-term shovelling of hot mix simply does not work. Also of course the roadworks finished metres before the potholes ended.

Charlie Gurry

Danny PEARSON (Essendon – Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC) (09:57): Sadly, we lost beautiful nine-year-old terrier Charlie Gurry, who was part of team Essendon, this week. Charlie was Rod's best mate for the past seven years. Taken far too soon, he had so much to offer, and the house is so empty. From Rod: 'Love you, little man. RIP. See you in the next world.'

Housing

Danny PEARSON (Essendon – Minister for Transport Infrastructure, Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC) (09:57): I want to make a contribution about the appalling behaviour of the Greens political party with their campaign of misinformation and lies against community housing. This notion that community housing is somehow an inferior product is deeply offensive to me. The reality is that community housing provides an opportunity to provide better services to local communities. The reality is that when you look at the work that the former Minister for Housing did it was in relation to providing homes to Aboriginal Victorians to be in charge of their own destiny, rather than this colonialist view from the Greens political party that only unelected, unaccountable, white public servants know what is better for Indigenous people. It is deeply offensive to me. The lies and misinformation from the Greens political party, trying to undermine the way in which housing tenants in my community are being treated, are deeply offensive. The reality is that we are providing more housing and better housing than anything the Greens have offered. The laziness and indolence from the Greens political party, who only use public housing tenants as props for campaigning material, is deeply offensive. Only Labor is going to build the public housing, the social housing, that the community needs.

Willsmere Station Community Garden

Jess WILSON (Kew) (09:58): It was fantastic to celebrate the five-year anniversary of the Willsmere Station Community Garden in Kew East last weekend. The garden is such a great example of people voluntarily coming together to nurture something wonderful for the benefit of the whole community. The garden has 50 plots, a communal food forest for harvest sharing, wheelchair-accessible raised plots and a children's area. The whole community is welcome to enter and enjoy the garden, and often veggies and seedlings are left on the abundance shelf for residents to help themselves to. Thank you to the wonderful Willsmere gardeners for nurturing the garden on behalf of our community, and a special shout-out to Allan Davey for organising the celebration.

Father Brendan Reed

Jess WILSON (Kew) (09:59): Last Sunday marked the end of Father Brendan Reed's farewell tour, with mass at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Deepdene. Father Brendan was initially appointed parish priest of OLG in 2006. Over the next 18 years he gained additional responsibilities for All Hallows in Balwyn, Our Lady of Victories basilica in Camberwell, Our Holy Redeemer in Surrey Hills and Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Wattle Park. Priests administer support to our community in times of great joy and happiness and in times of struggle, sickness and sorrow. In Father Brendan our community has been blessed to have such a faithful, forward-looking and dedicated leader serving our parishes and schools. We will miss him. We wish him all the very best for his next appointment, and we look forward to seeing him back in the parish soon. God bless him.

Williamstown electorate community infrastructure

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) (10:00): Last week I had the joy of visiting St Mary's Primary School for the unveiling of their new tram, which was made possible thanks to the West Gate Neighbourhood Fund and all the money that had been raised by the local community. The \$10,000 grant has been put towards an inclusive learning and play area and the revamped Melbourne tram. A real shout-out to school principal Sonia Riccardi for being the vision behind this.

Whilst talking about other people in my community, Marilyn Olliff, who has been the driving force behind the Hobsons Bay Wetland Centre, really needs to be commended. This not-for-profit community group is dedicated to connecting people with nature and preserving our natural wetlands within the Hobsons Bay area. The centre is supported by Victoria's Port Phillip Bay Fund, which has contributed over \$17.25 million in grants and keeps our iconic bay healthy.

In addition, I was out having a look at the new 1-kilometre walking and cycling path along Kororoit Creek, which stretches from Grieve Parade to Geelong Road, and that is now open. Geoff Mitchelmore is absolutely delighted to be able to see this.

Finally, I was down at Williamstown morgue, which has a long-running legacy in Hobsons Bay as the oldest surviving morgue in Melbourne. It too received a \$150,000 grant from the West Gate Neighbourhood Fund, and Glenn Jones took me through to see this iconic part of Williamstown's historic past.

Finn Mackay

Chris CREWTER (Mornington) (10:01): I would like to firstly give my thanks today to Finn Mackay. He is a year 12 student from Balcombe Grammar School in my electorate in Mount Martha, who approached me about doing work experience in my office. He has been doing a terrific job doing that work experience now for many months. He is a very intelligent young man. I would like to wish him all the best for his year 12 exams right now and also all the other year 12s across my electorate, whether they are at Mount Eliza Secondary College, Mornington Secondary College, Padua, Balcombe, Toorak, Peninsula, Woodleigh or indeed close by schools like Flinders Christian Community College, Bayside, Dromana College and others.

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month

Chris CREWTER (Mornington) (10:02): Secondly, I would like to speak on the last day of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month, where we are raising awareness for those who are grieving after having suffered a miscarriage or pregnancy loss. The yellow ribbon I am wearing is a symbol of remembrance for those who have experienced a miscarriage or early pregnancy loss. My own wife, as I have mentioned before, had a miscarriage with what would have been our second child, and then we later of course had our son. I know the personal experience of people who go through miscarriages and their partners and families, so I would like to acknowledge all of the people – which

is one-quarter of all pregnancies – who go through miscarriages in this Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month.

Republic of Türkiye anniversary

Natalie SULEYMAN (St Albans – Minister for Veterans, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Youth) (10:03): Happy 101st anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye. Each year on 29 October the Turkish community globally reflect and celebrate the founder of the Republic of Türkiye Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his principles of reform, progress and unity. Victoria is home to the largest Turkish community in Australia, and they have contributed in all aspects of society. The strong bond between Australia and Türkiye began on the battlefields of Gallipoli. As Mustafa Kemal Atatürk said to the mothers of Australia at the time:

There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us where they lie side by side in this country of ours. You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears. Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well.

This legacy of respect and our special bond continues to this day. Thank you to Victoria's vibrant Turkish community. Know that you will always have a place in Victoria and in particular in the tapestry of multicultural Victoria. Cumhuriyet Bayraminiz kutlu olsun.

Gippsland East electorate caravan parks

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (10:04): I wish to raise a concern on behalf of caravan park operators in my electorate and I am sure in other areas around the state, and that is the impact that free camping will have on their businesses. They are not opposed to the incentive to have people spending more time in the outdoors, but a number of caravan parks in my area are located near campgrounds, and to provide free camping basically adjacent to them will significantly impact their bottom line and their viability. Just five years ago my area lost a full summer through the bushfires and then it was straight into COVID, so they are still very much in a recovery phase, those businesses. And now we have no recompense or communications with that sector in relation to this decision. In addition, I have got one caravan park operator whose land tax bill has gone from under \$500 to over \$2500 in the last 12 months. With free camping and the loss of business he will incur there, he is considering shutting up shop.

Bairnsdale road maintenance

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (10:05): I also quickly want to raise the community angst at VicRoads' decision to complete roadworks concurrently on the two entries into Bairnsdale. Incredibly this was federal money that was provided in 2019, and we have waited five years for these roadworks to take place. They could have been done non-concurrently so drivers could use the other access point into Bairnsdale. But they are now being done concurrently in the lead-up to Christmas, and it is going to be a disaster.

Diwali

Ros SPENCE (Kalkallo – Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Community Sport, Minister for Carers and Volunteers) (10:06): I would like to take this opportunity to wish a happy Diwali to all those celebrating in the Kalkallo electorate. The Festival of Lights, Diwali symbolises the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. Diwali is celebrated by the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Jain communities across Kalkallo. They are strong, vibrant and engaged communities, and with such a diverse and growing electorate, there have been many Diwali celebrations this year, in families, in community settings, in schools and in temples.

I particularly want to mention the Hume Diwali Mela, which took place on Saturday 19 October in Anzac Park in Craigieburn. Thousands of people came together to celebrate and to enjoy the food, the music and dance performances, the camel and carnival rides and of course the fireworks. It was a

terrific event, a great showcasing of the range of local businesses and a terrific opportunity for people to come together and celebrate. Thank you to Raj Mann, Nikki Jain and the team for arranging this great event.

Thank you also to Shanthi Antony and the multicultural playgroup teams at Beveridge Primary School and Kilmore Primary for the Diwali celebration at the Greater Beveridge Community Centre last Friday, with many cultural performances, food and even a Bollywood workshop. And on Friday thousands of locals will head to the Kali Mata Mandir temple from 7 am to 11 pm for this most significant day of devotion, blessings and celebrations with Bhawna and the team. Diwali is one of the biggest celebrations in the Kalkallo electorate, and I am very pleased to see this continue to grow year after year.

Baw Baw Big Blokes BBQ

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (10:07): I rise today to talk about our Big Blokes BBQ last week. It is in its 11th year, and this year they raised \$208,000 – slightly down on last year, but a great achievement by a community that has been going strong on this. In the 11 years they have raised a total of \$1.9 million for men's prostate cancer. I just want to give a quick shout-out to the organisers Andrew Schreyer, who is the president; Jamie Power, the vice-president; and the committee Craig Debnam, Daniel Cook, David Wouters, Luke Patterson, Michael Blackwood – brother of the former member for Narracan – Michael Grogan, Rob Hutchison, Dean Addison and Jamie Purcell. It was a fantastic day. And who would have thought a comedian, being Des Dowling, would have actually picked on the local MP, but he did apparently fat-shame me. Disgraceful! But I lived.

The Makeup Hub

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (10:08): Another one: it was the fifth anniversary of a local business The Makeup Hub. Young Jess had a bit of rough time at the start of life but has pulled herself through. It is the fifth anniversary of her local business, and it was a great event. I got done up as – what was I? It was a Halloween costume done by the Mad Hatters Emporium. Frankenstein, they did me up as. It was a great night.

Ivanhoe electorate schools

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (10:09): I was pleased to join the Deputy Premier with the principal of Viewbank Primary School Bill Kersing, and I give a shout-out to the school captains Jeremy, Heidi, Harrison and Abbey for the opening of the \$6.9 million modernisation upgrade at Viewbank Primary School. That funding delivered the new administration building and demolished the old facilities. It also funded three relocatable buildings and moved five new relocatable buildings that were installed at Viewbank Primary School. There are 650 students there at Viewbank. There is a new staffroom for teachers and the support staff. It is a fantastic outcome, and that builds of course on an earlier project that we concluded at Viewbank Primary School, which was \$3.8 million. So we have actually invested some \$10.7 million on some great projects there to conclude significant works at Viewbank Primary School. I look forward to welcoming the Deputy Premier for the opening of the \$12.3 million Banyule Primary School modernisation project just up the road, and we will be doing that very soon.

John Dowdle

Anthony CARBINES (Ivanhoe – Minister for Police, Minister for Crime Prevention, Minister for Racing) (10:10): I also want to give a shout-out to John Dowdle, who for over 55 years has served the local community of Banyule. He is a former councillor of the City of Heidelberg and mayor, but he has also been involved in Neighbourhood Watch for some 35 years and received the Victoria Senior Achiever Award from the Council on the Ageing at Government House recently. I was pleased to join him to give out the long service awards for the Banyule Neighbourhood Watch community, including to Joan Reid, who has been involved for 40 years at Banyule Neighbourhood Watch. A big shout-out to her, and we thank her for her work.

Treaty

Ellen SANDELL (Melbourne) (10:10): Victoria is about to embark on historic treaty negotiations. This is a monumental and long-overdue step towards justice and recognition for Victoria's First Nations peoples. The Greens stand in awe of all of those First Nations people who have fought for decades and who continue to fight for their true history to be told and for their right to justice, freedom and self-determination. In particular I would like to thank the Yoorrook Justice Commission, who have been doing incredibly powerful work hearing from people about the true history of Victoria and telling that history; and the First Peoples' Assembly, the democratically elected voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria, who are about to embark on the treaty process with the help of the Treaty Authority, Victoria's independent umpire, which will help navigate these upcoming negotiations.

We know this process may not be an easy one. This week in the Victorian Parliament, Liberal and One Nation MPs joined together to host their first Parliamentary Friends for Constitutional Monarchy meeting, with royal-themed refreshments. Needless to say, I did not attend. There are people who continue to deny the true history of colonisation in this country, but I know that there are so many more people out there that want a better future for us walking together, and that is what treaty is all about. We are being invited in – invited in to share in and be proud of the incredible culture and history of our country, to be a part of it, to listen, to learn and to embrace it.

Sydenham electorate multicultural events

Natalie HUTCHINS (Sydenham – Minister for Jobs and Industry, Minister for Treaty and First Peoples, Minister for Women) (10:12): October is an amazing month to celebrate for Hindus and Indians across my electorate and across the state, beginning with Navaratri, which is a nine-day festival, which blends into Dandiya and then of course many other events, including the fantastic celebrations around Diwali. I attended two weeks ago the Dandiya event hosted by the Multicultural Association of Community Empowerment in my electorate. The founder Deepti coordinated a team of women who put this amazing event on. I want to do a shout-out to Smita, Kylie, Meenakshi, Ranu and Dawn Gurpreet, who all put on an amazing event with over 1000 people attending. The RMG live orchestra played. Thanks to Manish Patel and Sunny Louis. They played at six different Dandiya events across the state – all sold out. Can I acknowledge the small businesses that were at the event: the Alamanda Cafe & Bistro, the Mana Godavari Ruchulu, Frozio Pty Ltd, Friends Tapri, Mumbai Cutting, Wanderlust Scarves, Soyscense Candles and Legal Wings Migration. Thank you all for your stalls. Also I have been in attendance at a number of Diwali events over the weekend – one huge one at Marvel Stadium.

Bowl Parkinson's Over

Will FOWLES (Ringwood) (10:13): I rise today to share my experience at the recent Bowl Parkinson's Over charity lawn bowls event hosted by the mighty Heathmont Bowls Club. Fortunately the early rain did not dampen our spirits as 42 teams of 126 competitors came from over 20 clubs to join in this very worthy cause. Parkinson's is a truly devastating disease that has touched too many people. Fifty Australians are diagnosed with the disease every single day, and that is why the work of the Shake It Up foundation is so important. It was truly inspiring to witness such community solidarity dedicated to raising vital funds for those affected by Parkinson's disease. A special thankyou to Rob Ruffle for organising the day on behalf of the Shake It Up foundation, which has raised over \$30 million for Parkinson's research. Thanks to everyone's generosity the event raised over \$15,000 for this fantastic research.

Hungry 4 Success Cafe and Catering

Will FOWLES (Ringwood) (10:14): I also want to highlight the incredible work being done at the Hungry 4 Success Cafe and Catering in Eastland shopping centre. Recently I met with Heidi and Naomi to learn about their social enterprise model. Not only do they serve delicious food and coffee,

but they also provide hands-on training for individuals in our community facing various levels of disadvantage. Their training programs have supported 177 people in building the skills and confidence needed for sustainable employment. By focusing on hospitality and catering, they are transforming lives and helping locals break the cycle of unemployment. So next time you are at Eastland, especially as we approach Christmas, I encourage you to pop in, enjoy a coffee and say hello to their friendly staff.

Brandon Park Primary School

Eden FOSTER (Mulgrave) (10:15): Last week I had the pleasure of visiting Brandon Park Primary School in the Mulgrave electorate to attend their annual literacy open morning. This event draws educators from across the state, and in some years it has even drawn participants from other parts of the country and overseas. It is no wonder, as Brandon Park Primary has an outstanding literacy program called PhOrMeS, which has led to great academic achievements for its students. PhOrMeS, developed by the school's speech pathologist Shane Pearson, is a structured phonics-based approach that is making a real impact. I would like to extend my appreciation to Shane, principal Kate Buck and the incredible teachers at Brandon Park Primary School for their commitment to this program.

As a former school psychologist, I know the importance of evidence-based practice, and I know that phonics-based teaching works. That is why the Allan Labor government's new Phonics Plus program, a comprehensive evidence-based approach for teaching reading in the early years, not only supports teachers by reducing their planning workload but also improves students' reading skills and overall learning outcomes, just as we have seen at Brandon Park Primary School – and a big shout-out to all the students at Brandon Park Primary School for welcoming me to their school last week.

Ballarat Life Activities Club

Juliana ADDISON (Wendouree) (10:16): A warm welcome to Ballarat Grammar, who have just entered the chamber today. Congratulations to the Ballarat Life Activities Club on their world record attempt for the largest exercise class of people aged over 60. On a sunny morning on Tuesday 22 October at Lake Wendouree nearly 100 seniors from across Ballarat and beyond took up the challenge to get themselves into the Guinness book of world records. Impressively the oldest participant was 91 years old. Well done to club secretary Geraldine Lynch for coming up with the idea to bring older community members together for the world record attempt. It is unclear how many people needed to participate in the class to feature in the Guinness book of world records, because the record does not yet exist. Whilst getting into the record books will be an amazing achievement, the participants are already winners as they build social connections and improve their health and wellbeing. I wish Geraldine and the Ballarat Life Activities Club all the best for the record and look forward to it becoming an annual event that gets bigger every year.

Diwali

Juliana ADDISON (Wendouree) (10:17): Happy Diwali. Diwali is one of the most beloved Indian festivals, celebrated with glowing lights, colourful decorations and a spirit of joy. Symbolising the spiritual victory of light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance, it is a time for love, light and family. Let Diwali remind us all of the strength within to overcome any darkness. To my many friends and members of the Ballarat Indian community, happy Diwali.

Diwali

Bronwyn HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (10:18): I would like to also wish the Indian Australian community a very happy Diwali. The Festival of Lights is a time of festivity, celebration and family. Diwali at its roots is a Hindu religious celebration symbolising the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance and good over evil. However, at all the Diwali events that I have the pleasure of attending, I see very multifaith and multicultural participation. While having deep cultural and religious meaning, it is a festival that is shared generously with all.

The northern suburbs, I am bold enough to say, holds one of the largest and most impressive Diwali events in the state of Victoria, and it is organised by Nista and Sunil Gol and the many, many volunteers of Mission Smile events. We celebrated Diwali in the north last Sunday; however, yesterday, 30 October, was the first day of the five-day celebration. It was also exciting to attend the Premier's Diwali gala on Saturday night and join with many friends and colleagues of the Indian Australian community. Joining me on my table were good friends Satnam and Deepika, Vishal and Shinderpal, Chaman, Amar, Johnson and Tijo, representing the Sikh, Hindu and Syro-Malabar Catholic faiths.

Republic of Türkiye anniversary

Bronwyn HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (10:19): I also extend my best wishes to the Turkish Australian community on the 101st anniversary of the creation of the Republic of Türkiye.

Yan Yean electorate bus services

Lauren KATHAGE (Yan Yean) (10:19): I was so pleased to hear that another \$150 million is coming to growth areas through the growth area infrastructure contribution fund. We love seeing that money roll into the outer suburbs. In the last round we received news of a new bus for Donnybrook, the 524, and we were very excited, but the community raised up their voice because there was an issue with the route that was proposed. It did not include Peppercorn estate, the estate furthest from the train station. I was proud to add my voice to the community's voice, and I am even prouder to announce that the bus route has been changed to include Peppercorn estate. Now all estates will have access to the train station. Congratulations to the community for working so effectively and in such a united way to get this much needed resource.

Donnybrook telecommunication services

Lauren KATHAGE (Yan Yean) (10:20): We are so happy that we have two new Telstra structures coming to Donnybrook. Phone reception has been an issue there for people, so I am really glad that we are going to have one on Eucalyptus Parade and one on Langley Park Drive. Both of these will make a big difference to our community

Murnong Community Centre

Lauren KATHAGE (Yan Yean) (10:20): Our community in Donnybrook will be benefiting from the Murnong Community Centre, which is well underway. We are going to have kindergarten rooms, space for playgroups, community meetings, community events and all sorts of things which we will benefit from, including maternal and child health. I look forward to seeing it open.

Concord School

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Minister for Development Victoria, Minister for Precincts, Minister for Creative Industries) (10:21): In 1973 Helen Reddy and Suzi Quatro were on the radio, Gough Whitlam was Prime Minister and the suburb of Bundoora was on the urban fringe of Melbourne, and Concord School, a fantastic specialist school in my electorate, opened its doors. Recently I had the pleasure of visiting Concord School on their special open day to celebrate more than half a century providing education to students with additional learning needs. It was a day filled with lots of fun activities for local families. It was way for the community to reflect on the incredible journey the school has been on. I was also able to see the great new facilities completed after a \$10 million investment from the Allan Labor government, which included a wonderful new two-storey classroom building. I want to say congratulations to Concord School.

Bundoora Secondary College

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Minister for Development Victoria, Minister for Precincts, Minister for Creative Industries) (10:21): Last Friday I was welcomed to Bundoora Secondary College by principal Anesti Anestis and year 9 captains Neeve and Aaliya. We were able to see the outstanding

progress that has been made on the redevelopments that are currently underway. The first parts of the \$10 million investment made by the Allan Labor government are already open and they look fantastic. In addition to the new administration building, which provides Bundoora Secondary staff with modern workspaces, Bundoora Secondary will also have an entirely new multi-use science building, complementing the urban agriculture and conservation program that exists at Bundoora and for which it is very well renowned. Thanks again to the hardworking principal Anesti and to Neeve and Aaliya for showing me around.

VCE exams

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Minister for Development Victoria, Minister for Precincts, Minister for Creative Industries) (10:22): I would also like to wish all VCE students across my electorate the very best of luck in exams. Thank you to all the families, carers and teachers who provide support during these final years at school.

Harkaway Hills College

Belinda WILSON (Narre Warren North) (10:22): A shout-out to the girls that are doing a tour here from Harkaway Hills College.

Business of the house

Notices of motion

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Minister for Development Victoria, Minister for Precincts, Minister for Creative Industries) (10:23): I wish to advise that the government does not wish to proceed today with the notices of motion, government business, listed on the notice paper, but we do ask that they remain on the notice paper.

Bills

Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Danny Pearson:

That this bill be now read a second time.

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (10:23): I rise to kick off our contribution from the opposition side on the Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Can I say at the outset we have seen a number of major projects in this state, and we certainly support the need for major projects – doing them properly, doing them so it benefits the whole state and ultimately doing them in such a way where we do not have the kinds of blowouts we have been experiencing. So when the government are proposing the kind of legislation that we are seeing today it did prompt my attention to think that maybe after 10 years of financial incompetence when it comes to these major projects we will finally see some efficiency, some ways of being able to deliver these projects better. We have seen \$40 billion worth of blowouts on these major projects under Premier Allan, because we know that Premier Allan in addition to being the Premier for the last 12 months was a major projects minister for the nine years prior. We have a Premier that has been responsible for the Big Build that has left Victorians with a big bill that we are all still paying for and we will be paying for decades to come. But on top of that we have been calling for better ways to do things, so it did spark my attention in terms of this Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill.

Initially it is about looking at the different agencies – how we consolidate the agencies, how we fast-track the ability to look at major infrastructure through transport corridors – because at the moment we have different agencies that are responsible for it. We have got the Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009, we have got the Suburban Rail Loop Act 2021 and we have got the Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986. There are a number of agencies and people that are

responsible for ensuring that there is transport infrastructure when you are building new infrastructure throughout the state. This was sold to us about how we can do this in a better way, in a more timely way, so we do not see the kind of time blowouts that we have seen for the last 10 years under the Allan Labor government.

The problem with this bill is it fails one key thing, which is the most important of all: it fails to consult with the public. It actually cuts Victorians out of the equation, and if you did not have to worry about voters and you just had a state and that is all you had to do, then this would be great. And if you just said, 'We're just going to build infrastructure, and we don't care about where people live, we don't care about what we do to people's backyards, we don't care about their sporting fields and we don't care about their community facilities, their hospitals or their schools. We just want to build infrastructure,' this would be great. But it is not, and unfortunately this bill should be renamed the 'Local Voices Ignored Bill', because local voices have been ignored. Third-party rights have been ignored. The ability for community, for councils, to raise issues when it comes to land acquisition, when it comes to various agencies coming onto their land and when it comes to easements and the acquisition of easements is ignored. Local voices have been ignored again.

The other really important thing about this bill, which leaves locals and residents and Victorians out in the cold, is that this really is not a transport infrastructure planning bill, but this is all about housing, a housing bill, and building sky towers throughout many of the suburbs and the precincts. And so the government needs to call this what it is, because what it is giving for the first time is unfettered powers to the Premier, to the minister, to literally declare any precinct they like, and no matter where you might live, you can wake up tomorrow and all of a sudden you have got a whole lot of issues dealing with where you live and what you live and how you live because your backyard has become part of a precinct. So that is concerning, and we know that the government had eight initial priority precincts – and the Minister for Precincts is at the table at the moment – and many of those eight precincts are absolutely prime for development, prime for high-rise, great opportunities, but have been missing in action for quite some time. That was one of the key things with Arden, with the hospital: now the hospital is gone, how do we fill the housing in with it?

So these particular existing precincts that have been there for a long while were a great opportunity for the government to put housing into them, but they have failed, and now all of a sudden after 10 years we are meant to believe that we are going to have a magic pudding and all of these 80,000 homes that the government has promised – 800,000 homes over 10 years – are going to happen. We know they are not going to happen, because the government themselves have readjusted that figure. That initial press release has vanished into thin air, and now we have a different set of numbers in terms of what the government wants to deliver on housing.

No-one believes that they are going to actually deliver the housing that they promised, but on top of the eight precincts we have now got seven Suburban Rail Loop precincts. Within those SRL precincts, we know that the government has said that as part of the \$34.5 billion – hang on a minute – \$40 billion, because the Premier herself has said that all the major projects since 2021 have gone up by over 20 per cent except the Suburban Rail Loop. No-one believes that the Suburban Rail Loop will be delivered for \$34.5 billion. I am willing to bet whatever you like on it. If anyone from the government wants to have a bet with me that SRL East will be delivered for \$34.5 billion, I am happy to give you good odds. That will not be delivered for that money, like every single major project – \$40 billion worth of blowouts. No-one believes this government could deliver anything on time or on budget.

The West Gate Tunnel has had over \$4.7 billion worth of blowouts and is three years late. We are told today that they are putting a whole lot more staff on to try and get that thing finished. Of course that is going to cost more. No-one believes, and yet the Minister for Transport Infrastructure came out today and said, 'No, it's not going to cost anyone any more money.' Less than a month ago, on grand final eve, we were told that the Metro Tunnel has to be rescoped with more money – \$800 million. The reason why? It is the Ukraine war and Gaza. That is what has caused those blowouts. No-one

believes a thing this government says when it comes to these major projects. We know that because Labor cannot manage money, and Victorians again pay for it on absolutely everything.

Those SRL precincts, which I will call at \$40 billion for argument's sake – there is meant to be a third of that money in value capture. What does that mean for the listeners out there or those that live around those precincts? What that means for the areas of Cheltenham, Clayton, Monash, Glen Waverley, Burwood and Box Hill is that somehow \$11.5 billion-plus needs to come from those that live within those precincts in some kind of tax. Call it what you like, someone has got to pay for this. We know that a third of it from the federal government – \$11.5 billion or thereabouts – has not been committed for that project yet either. But we do know, because the government have said so and the Premier said in question time a few question times ago, that they will be following a similar model to Sydney when it comes to value capture. These high-rises – as part of this bill making way for the high-rises in these areas – will come with a tax bill. It will come with a tax bill and Victorians will pay for it.

Do not believe for one minute that this is affordable housing – not for one minute. Just talk to Michael Buxton and other key people who know about this stuff and who deal with this stuff. They will tell you that any of these apartments you will not get for under \$1 million.

Members interjecting.

David SOUTHWICK: It is clear. The government are very keen to interject and carry on when you have got these experts that are telling you that this is wrong. We have had it from a whole range of experts that have said that this project does not stand up.

When it comes to the Suburban Rail Loop, it is underfunded, it is undercosted and ultimately Victorian taxpayers will pay for it as part of the third that they need to get the project on the ground. On top of that there are 25 station activity centres which have also been committed to, with another 25 to come. We have seen that. We have had a number of these announced already, and we have seen the Premier announcing some of these activity centres, including making an announcement in Brighton. Now, Brighton is a neighbouring electorate to mine – great. But who believes for one minute that you stick a sky tower up in Brighton and that is going to be affordable housing? Because the whole idea is to get young people into homes. So why would you put that in places like Brighton when we know the land already –

A member interjected.

David SOUTHWICK: The land you can find, if you can find it. The cost of that will mean that these projects do not stack up, and the ones that are going to be living in them will have paid well and truly \$1 million, \$2 million or \$3 million-plus. We have seen that in some of the stamp duty stuff. We have seen some of the apartments in terms of benefiting from stamp duty will be worth several million dollars. So the government has no idea in terms of affordability and homes. They are lacking in the growth corridors; they are lacking in terms of getting these projects off the ground.

I know because in Caulfield we have had our fair share in places like Elsternwick, which has had some significant towers, and in Caulfield East. There have been significant towers with Caulfield train station. Many of those projects – including Caulfield East's Caulfield station, a project of about 16 storeys – were ready to go even before the government green-lit this new project plan that they have. It is ready to go, and it is not being built. It is not being built, even though the plan is ready to go. The question is: why? It is a very, very simple answer. They just do not add up at the moment because the cost of construction – the cost to build it – and the cost of taxation in our state are too high to get some of these projects over the line.

This is the irony of this bill. This bill is meant to be about ensuring that transport infrastructure planning is ready to go to make it more efficient to be able to do this, but really what it is doing is it is making an opportunity for the housing plan that this government has, not understanding that the one magic thing that the government could do is better plan their transport. If you had a situation where you did

not have the Melbourne Metro Tunnel, which has blown out by at least \$4.7 billion; the West Gate Tunnel, which has blown out by over \$4 billion dollars and is three years behind schedule; the North East Link, which has blown out by \$16.2 billion and is 1½ to two years late; our level crossing removals, which are another story in terms of the \$3.3 billion, which I will come to in a minute; and the Suburban Rail Loop – who knows what that is going to blow out to. All of these projects I have just mentioned – Metro Tunnel, West Gate Tunnel, North East Link, the level crossings and Suburban Rail Loop – are all projects happening right now.

The government will turn around and say, ‘Isn’t that great? That’s fantastic.’ But why do you think that housing affordability is out of the reach of most Victorians? You cannot get a tradesman and you cannot get materials because they are all working on these projects. We have been told this by so many carpenters, by so many builders and by so many in the industry who say, ‘I can’t get a carpenter on a house and land for \$70,000 because they’re being paid \$180,000 on the Big Build.’ We have even had family businesses that say to their son that has done the apprenticeship to be a carpenter – their mum and dad have had to say, ‘Goodbye. Go off and work on the Big Build because you are going to get paid 2½ times as much.’ That family business is struggling to survive because they cannot get labour. Is it any wonder why the government had to rip up their press release to say they were going to build 80,000 homes a year. It just cannot happen, and it cannot happen because you cannot get the labour.

The story today on the West Gate Tunnel is exactly that. They are trying to recruit whoever they can: ‘Come and work on this project, because it’s already three years late. Come and work on it so we can cut the ribbon by next year. We don’t care what it costs; just come and work.’ I tell you what, I would love to be in the situation that I had so much money that I could say to people, ‘How much do you want? Here’s a cheque. Go for your life and build it. I don’t care. Just get it built quickly.’ That is what the Allan Labor government have done: no care and no responsibility. That is what they have done: absolutely zero. They are spending money like there is no tomorrow. We know the debt crisis they have had, and we know what the implication is for each and every Victorian that has been signed up to a lifetime of debt thanks to this incompetent Labor government. We see it on every major project.

The Premier should not be patting herself on the back. It should be little wonder that in question time we ask financial questions of the Premier and the Premier is completely out of her depth. The Premier needs a calculator. The Premier needs the Treasurer’s help – heaven forbid. The Premier needs whatever help she can get. But I tell you what, when it comes to managing money, this Premier has no idea about managing money because unfortunately the Premier has never had to. That is symbolic of this government, and that is a problem every single time under Labor. It is really sad that the Liberals and Nationals have to always come in and fix up the mess of Labor because Labor are reckless when it comes to managing money. I know they do not like to hear it, but I tell you what: every time I go out not just in my electorate but across the state, I keep hearing time and time again, ‘Why are we broke? Why are we financially bankrupt? Why is this government continuing to mismanage money? Why do we keep having to pay so much money for these projects?’ And there is one common denominator: Premier Allan and the Allan Labor government. That is what is common to all of this. That is the problem with this particular government.

So these precincts, as good as they might be, will not be delivered in terms of what the government is aiming for until they actually take their foot off the accelerator and start to plan these projects better. The problem with all of that is what money we will have left over when it comes to doing this, because a lot of people have left the state and a lot of trades have left the state. And I can tell you a lot of the industry bodies – and I spoke to Consult Australia the other day – and a lot of the big contractors and the engineering firms working on these projects are saying, ‘You know what, we’re worried about how this is all being managed as well. We’re looking to other places as well. We’re looking to new energy because we don’t believe there is a future in all of this in Victoria because Victoria have run out of money.’

The level crossings are a classic example, and I will say that in terms of the level crossings they were a good idea. I support them and I have supported them. This government likes to rewrite history, but

going into the 2014 election, I remind the government that we went for initially 40 level crossings being done properly and undergrounded, and the government went for 50. So they had more, but theirs were actually going to cost less because many of them were done above ground. That is fine, because some of the sky rail stuff has worked well in some areas, but some of it has not, and I draw the house to a couple of examples, Brunswick being one:

Brunswick sky rail plans put station metres from apartment windows

Residents in a Brunswick development celebrated for its livability say they are “astonished” by plans to build an elevated train station just metres from some of their bedroom windows.

This is not the first time this has happened, but it is just a classic case of zero planning and ultimately Victorians being left in the dark in terms of having to deal with it.

That is not the only one. We have another situation where in Keon Parade we had a former Darebin councillor who was part of a group of owners who expressed their frustration with their unexpectedly intrusive neighbour, the rebuilt Keon Park train station, which opened in June. Again, in Reservoir the station has been demolished and rebuilt, with elevated tracks 100 metres closer. In both of these situations –

Members interjecting.

David SOUTHWICK: It might be funny for the government, but I tell you what, it is not funny for those residents that have to wear earplugs and noise-cancelling headphones because of the trains coming by. The government’s solution is, ‘You know what, we’ll give you the noise-cancelling headphones and we’ll pay for those.’ In one instance they wanted some double-glazed windows and the government said, ‘Well, we won’t pay for those.’ I mean, this is appalling. It is just bad planning. So when you have got situations like those proposed by this bill, which are intrusively coming into people’s properties and into their neighbourhoods, there is a real concern.

I finally want to get to this because the bill ultimately needs improvement, and the only way to fix this bill is to ensure that there is transparency and that ultimately Victorians get a say. So I move:

That all the words after ‘That’ be omitted and replaced with the words ‘this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the government commits to conducting community consultation on each major precinct project declaration enabled by this bill.’

This is really important, and I would hope that the government support what we are putting forward today in this reasoned amendment, because this is about each and every one of your constituencies and ensuring that locals get a fair say. I know that the member for Box Hill would be very, very supportive of this, because in his situation with the Suburban Rail Loop we had a number of businesses in Box Hill that were meant to be evicted, and all of a sudden they got a stay of execution just last week to say, ‘You know what, you can stay for another nine months.’ Many of these businesses are up in the air in terms of what this actually means for them.

We also have a family who have got 13 townhouses which are meant to be demolished, nearby in Burwood. He is still waiting to understand what is going to happen with that as well. Michael Yu is trying to find a location for his restaurant, and he is up in the air in that he does not have a new restaurant in terms of where he is going to be, but he has been given the letter in terms of his Qipo Skewer Bar on Whitehorse Road and was informed that he has been given another nine months.

Well, that might be great, but the devil is in the detail – what does this mean? We do know that as part of this bill the government can come into certain properties, into yards, and look at easements. They may not necessarily purchase the whole lot as part of the acquisition; they may only need a certain part of it. This could leave people like Michael and the others with those townhouses with only a partial acquisition of their property, and that is a question we have put forward to the government: what does that mean in terms of the acquisition piece? What does that mean in terms of some of these easements? What does that mean in terms of coming into businesses and coming onto premises?

A number of the suggested parts of this bill look at things like timing as to when people come onto the premises. We will be putting forward a whole lot of changes to that, because we do not feel that it is right to give people seven days notice and 30 days notice before literally coming onto someone's property, coming into someone's house and starting to look around and determine what they are going to do with your backyard, what they are going to do with a council hall, what they are going to do with all of this. We have heard already from a number of people that have concerns with this.

I want to point out a couple of stakeholders particularly. I know the government take issue with Professor Michael Buxton, who is a great authority on this stuff, but he has consulted with colleagues on this. He did say that a lot of other people in the urban statutory planning sector, a lot of experts in this sector, were not even consulted on this bill and had no idea that the bill was actually coming. He did express concern at the role that legislation could play in allowing unfettered ministerial authority and approval of buildings, which would shut down community voices. Professor Michael Buxton said this would shut down community voices. He said the legislation gives additional direct powers to the government to approve the construction of non-transport-related structures in the SRL precincts and activity precincts. The intention of the legislation does not make this clear, and the government may not intend to use it or approve a private sector development in precincts. However, the legislation seems to apply in principle to the approval of other developments or works apart from the SRL infrastructure – that is, to residential or commercial buildings in declared precincts. He went on to say the new legislation gives the Premier and the project minister broad powers for development approval for an as-of-right or permitted application. There are few prohibitions to commercial zones, usually no mandatory height controls and the six-storey control would need to be mandatory for higher developments to be prohibited.

Also, talking to the Municipal Association of Victoria, clause 22 makes changes to activities that are typically managed under the Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986. The clause appears to provide the government or those authorised – get this – to occupy and carry out works on private land in declared precincts by giving them 30 days notice. The MAV questions why such a short notice period is given for landowners and why the government should not follow through with transparent compulsory acquisition processes to ensure procedural fairness and to not pre-empt outcomes of that process. That is what we call fairness – local voices, transparency – which this government seems to know nothing about.

Clause 45 provides seven days notice to enter private and council land to undertake, amongst other things, soil boring, geotechnical and site survey works, ecological and archaeological surveys and utilities and contamination surveys. The MAV questions the tight timeframes of this and why the government has not provided any information on what rights of review a person or council might have. Again, what ability do councils or locals have in terms of appeal? Under this bill: zero. That is why we are suggesting the amendment that we are. In addition, obviously this will cause disruption to business operations on private and council land. The MAV also notes that this is not the first time the Victorian government has sought to expand its approval powers through an expedited omnibus approval process. For example, the Victorian government has expedited precinct planning processes in the Suburban Rail Loop Act 2021. These changes sidelined local government and community oversight for the strategic project of the SRL.

This is really important because the actual consultation was open during the time of council elections, so you could not even have councils appeal a lot of this stuff. Councils had no ability to contribute to the SRL precincts, and this will happen again; the government has not learned from its mistakes. So we will be suggesting to extend some of those consultation periods, which we will look at possibly and debate in the upper house after this, should this bill go forward.

But I just say this in conclusion: this is a poorly thought-out bill. It really does not take into any consideration local voices. We have just seen so many times Victorians being absolutely silenced, sidelined – on many, many occasions. I have seen it in Elsternwick, I have seen it in Glen Huntly and I have seen it on just about every level crossing – Progress Street, Surrey Hills, Ringwood East – there

are so many situations with level crossings where people have not been consulted properly. Small businesses are still not recovering. Glen Huntly Road, Glen Huntly – still not recovering. Why? Because this government does not listen. They just want to do their own thing.

I will finish where I started: this would be a good bill if there were no Victorians living in Victoria. It would be a good bill if no Victorians were living here, because then you could just do what you like, and it would not impact anybody. But the unfortunate – or actually, on our side of politics, the fortunate thing is that we are all about people. We are all about caring and listening to people. The Allan Labor government could not give a toss about people, and this bill absolutely shows that. They could not give a brass razoo about Victorians. They do not care. They do not care about the money that they waste, they do not care about the blowouts and they do not care about giving locals the opportunity to have a say. Victorians are being silenced by this bill, and that is why, unless this reasoned amendment is supported, we will oppose it.

Josh BULL (Sunbury) (10:53): I am pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to debate on the Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, a bill that is about both communities and major projects – a bill that is not about Professor Michael Buxton, member for Footscray. It is always interesting to follow on from the member for Caulfield, who sort of parks himself there at the front table and tries in every single way to block, stop and oppose the major projects that Victorians voted for and of course this Allan Labor government is delivering. We know and understand that these major projects support local communities, help people get to where they need to go and, on the journey, create thousands of jobs in the process. We know that when those opposite had four years to be on this side of the house, to be in government, what we saw was of course very little. Dithering, incompetence, inertia – a whole range of adjectives could describe what we saw in this state. There are of course more. I was reminded as the member for Caulfield was on his feet about the printing of the airport rail tickets for Melbourne Airport rail and of platform 9¾ out of *Harry Potter*, member for Footscray, where the trolleys are pushed through the wall and, mythically, you end up at Hogwarts.

What we have seen from those opposite and what we saw for those four years, not just from a local perspective as a local member but right across the state, was of course a policy vacuum and a major transport project vacuum. There was nothing in the cabinet. There were no major projects that were delivered. The member for Caulfield maybe half believed he could come into this place and perhaps point to some of those projects that had been started – maybe Metro Tunnel. As I was travelling from Sunbury this morning on a very fine train service, I thought maybe I would have been going through the Metro Tunnel already if those opposite had got their house in order and perhaps started a major project in our state.

Fast forward to November 2014, when we were fortunate enough and thankful to win the election. From day one we set about a strong, bold, ambitious plan to get on and deliver not just Metro but level crossing removals right across the state, the delivery of the North East Link and the delivery of the West Gate Tunnel, which are transformative projects that have set us up to do exactly what has been done in the last week by the Premier. And what, Deputy Speaker, I hear you ask, is that? They are the announcements around housing and transformative announcements around activity centres, making sure that we can provide homes and opportunities for so many people around our major transport projects. This of course could not have happened had it not been for the strong and sustained investment in these major projects. We know and understand that next year when Metro opens and when the West Gate Tunnel opens these will be opportunities that will help every single Victorian get to where they need to go and provide skills and opportunities for so many.

Just on Friday night I had the opportunity as the parliamentary secretary to attend the National Association of Women in Construction Awards ceremony, and what particularly stood out for me were the training opportunities, the new skills and all of the things that were provided through working on many of the transport projects that those opposite oppose, knowing and understanding that these

are new skills and an ability to work on what are incredible projects across our state. There is a really long shopping list.

Why would we possibly as a government want to connect transport, planning and housing? Why would you want to do that? Well, it ensures that you get to live in a place where you can access transport to see family, to see friends, to go and study – to do all of the things that you need to do. What we see time and time again from those opposite is they come into this place and they rant and they rave about housing and they carry on like I have never seen. The Premier goes out and makes terrific announcements around housing, and they are all terrible. They rant and they rave about major transport projects, and they come in here and it is not good enough. It is astounding.

Anyway, put all that aside, member for Frankston. We are focused on delivering the Metro Tunnel and delivering the West Gate Tunnel. I think we are up to 84 level crossings removed as we march towards 110 by 2030. Knowing and understanding that we are making these decisions each and every day is an important part of delivering for Victorians, and that, of course, ties in with livability. Speaking to local members and speaking to ministers – we have the very fine Minister for Development Victoria at the table, very hardworking – knowing and understanding the importance of those major projects is something that I am particularly proud of, and this government will continue to deliver. Making sure that the legislation and the framework are in place for us to be able to do that is indeed something that we remain focused on.

This piece of legislation amends the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009, the Transport Integration Act 2010, the Suburban Rail Loop Act 2021 and the Road Management Act 2004. All of these changes go to many of those propositions that I spoke about earlier in terms of declaration of particular parcels both within the transport grid and wider to build upon what is a really important network to provide opportunities and options and build upon the housing announcements that are being made this week.

We know that the delivery of these major transport projects is of course going to be a game changer – 97 kilometres of direct connection between the Sunbury line and the Cranbourne and Pakenham lines and those amazing five new stations. We know that next year this is going to be a game changer for our state. When you remove a level crossing in a local community you not only make that community safer and less congested, you open that community up for many other options – perhaps, member for Footscray, local small businesses that now will want to come to the area because there is more open space, it is safer and it is less congested. But apparently it is not good enough; apparently we cannot have that –

Mathew Hilakari interjected.

Josh BULL: Well, not the people of Victoria, because they have voted for us three times now. Those opposite yet again feel that they are on the money – they are always on the money – to come into this place and absolutely go to town on not just our major transport projects but the thousands of people who do the wonderful work of delivering them. As parliamentary secretary, one of the most rewarding, if you like, elements of the role is meeting the workforce that delivers our major projects and any project right across the state.

We remain committed to delivery. We remain committed to certainty. We know that our population is growing, and that is why this team and every single member on this side of the house are committed to ensuring that we are delivering – in transport, in education and in health – new opportunities and new choices and making sure that as those challenges arise we are equipped, we are ready and we are passionate to take those on. We are more than happy for those opposite to pick apart all of these processes, but we are focused on delivery and we are focused on speaking to people who always need a Labor government to stand with them, to stand for them, each and every day. Those opposite can keep doing what they do, and we will focus on getting things done.

Peter WALSH (Murray Plains) (11:03): From listening to the member for Sunbury make his contribution, as others have, the member for Sunbury has lost sight of why he was elected to come to this place. He was elected to come here to be the voice for his community, and what I heard the member for Sunbury saying was, 'We don't care about people's voices; we don't care about people having a say. We are just going to get on and do what we want to do.' That is something that is coming through from those on the other side of the house all the time – that they actually want to strip away people's rights. This particular piece of legislation should be renamed the 'no voice, no choice' legislation, because this is about how you strip away people's rights. This is about how you effectively create a socialist dictatorship here in Victoria and no-one actually has a say about what goes on, because it is 'Get out of my way. We're going to build this no matter what your rights are. No matter what your community thinks about it, we're going to build it.' From a country member's point of view, we have already lived through this with VNI West, with some of the renewable infrastructure that is going into regional Victoria. Legislation has been passed that has stripped people of any rights they have to appeal against these processes, any rights they have to actually say anything about it.

I support the reasoned amendment by the member for Caulfield, but I suppose I would emphasise that conducting community consultation actually has to be about genuine consultation. I went to a meeting in Nanneella hall in my electorate recently, as there is a proposed wind farm. The proponent of that wind farm got up and gave the local community – a packed hall – who are very concerned about the lack of information around this particular project and what it may do to their community, a lecture: 'We need this built so Melbourne can have some power, and you guys can just suck it up.' That was basically what he said to this community. There was an audible groan out of that community about why someone should come along and say, 'We are going to force this on your community because it is good for the state.' Why should they have their community wrecked for someone else's benefit and be told, 'There is no genuine consultation involved here, and you have no right of appeal over these things'? That is what we are dealing with here with this legislation for the communities in Melbourne that are affected by this particular piece of legislation: 'We are going to do this to you irrespective of what you think about it and irrespective of how you want your community to look into the future. We are just going to do this to you.' That is the whole issue with the current attitude of the Allan Labor government to the community. It is 'Get out of our way. We are going to do this. It's good for you, supposedly. It's supposedly good for you.' Then the hook in it all is 'Once we actually do it to you, we're going to tax you more with the uplift in the value on your properties. So we're going to do you over, and then we're going to tax you more and do you over again.' This is a bizarre way to run government in this state.

I will remind the members on the other side of the house that democracy is actually hard work. It means you have to actually work with people. You actually have to talk to people. You actually have to genuinely listen to people, not lecture them and say, 'This is good for you and somehow you'll just have to accept it.' That is the whole thing that has been lost by those on the other side of the house. The arrogance of being in government for so long has taken over, and I would caution those on the other side to actually listen to their communities and let them genuinely be involved in the decision-making for their community, because they are the ones that live there. To give powers, total powers, to faceless bureaucrats in a high-rise office in Melbourne somewhere who do not live the issues in those communities is not going to wash over time. I caution those on the other side to question their leadership group and to question the decision-making process within the party. It seems that every time we have legislation come into this house around projects it is about how you take away the rights of Victorians, and I think you will find that Victorians have had enough.

If you have seen the recent media reports about VNI West – that powerline that is going to destroy communities across my electorate, across the member for Mildura's electorate, across Ripon and across some of the seat of Lowan – they have had enough. They have had enough of the fact that they are being told, 'This is going to happen to you no matter what.' There is a large cohort of people along that powerline who are refusing to let the planners come in and have a look and actually go onto their

property, because they just do not trust government. The trust in government has been destroyed by the way this government forces things on people. The word 'consultation' is about listening.

Jade Benham interjected.

Peter WALSH: The member for Mildura laughs because we sat through a meeting the other day where supposedly consultation was taking place, but it was actually lecturing. It was like you were in school and you were being lectured to by a teacher rather than having a conversation about what your community and you might want – in this case on your farm – and what the impacts will be if this project goes ahead. I have great sympathy for those communities who are going to be affected by this legislation, because we – the member for Mildura, the member for Lowan and me – are living this on behalf of our communities at the moment around VNI West. If it is a renewable energy project that is towers or solar, in some cases people have the right to say no. But for VNI West the right to say no and the right to appeal have been taken away, and what this legislation does is it does that for communities here in Melbourne.

That is why I would say that we need to rename this piece of legislation the 'no voice, no choice' legislation, because what this does is take away the community voice. People on the other side are shaking their heads. Actually read the legislation; listen to what the member for Sunbury said: 'We're going to get on with this no matter what people say.' People's voices are being taken away. This is no voice, no choice. Their voice is being taken away to have a say, and the choice of what their community will look like in the future is being taken away as well. So where you had a community with their shopping strips, with their social cohesion, this is going to be taken away by massive, big projects that they may not actually want in their community. They have spent their working lives saving up to get a deposit to buy a house, to live in the community they want to live in, and you guys on the other side are going to come in and you are going to destroy that community into the future. So I have great sympathy for our cousins in the city as to what is being done to them, because as I said, it is being done to us in country Victoria as well. That is why in November 2026 the arrogance of this government and the way they have lost touch with the people that they purport to represent in this state will be shown up by a change of government in Victoria, because people have had enough. Everywhere you go now, not only in your electorate but wherever you go in Melbourne, you talk to people and they say, 'What do you do for a living?' and you apprehensively might say you are a politician, because everyone has a low opinion of politicians. When you say you are actually a politician they say, 'When are you going to get rid of this rotten, corrupt government here in Victoria?' The first thing they always say is –

Members interjecting.

Peter WALSH: Yes, and you are not going to have them after November 2026, because you have lost touch with the people of Victoria. I remind the members on the other side of the house that they have lost touch with Victorians. They can sit there and arrogantly talk about the number of seats that the Labor Party has in Victoria, and they will not have that many after November 2026. I would make a bold prediction that those on this side of the house will be sitting on that side of the house after the next election because of the arrogance of the government and the way people speak about how they just take away their rights and say, 'Get out of my way. We're going to do this to you irrespective of what you think about it in your community.' The communities will rise up; the communities will exercise their vote in November 2026 to say, 'We are sick of being lectured to by an arrogant, out-of-touch Labor government, and we want to see change here in Victoria.' That is the message that is coming through loud and clear, and this legislation – no voice, no choice – is just a classic example of that.

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Minister for Development Victoria, Minister for Precincts, Minister for Creative Industries) (11:13): Today will be the day that the Leader of the National Party goes down in history as saying 'Mission accomplished'. The next election is already in the bag according to the Leader of the Nationals. This side of the house would not be so arrogant as to suggest the next election

is in the bag for anyone, Leader of the National Party, but if you take the Victorian people for granted I am pretty sure they will let you know how you are travelling and they will let you know how you are going in relation to the next election.

I do not think you could have anticipated a more insipid performance from those opposite when it comes to transport and housing planning. When you have a policy vacuum like we see on the other side of the house you get that sort of mishmash – I heard the member for Caulfield talk earlier on, the lead speaker from the other side, going through a whole range of issues except dealing with the bill and dealing with transport and housing policy. He stayed completely away from the bill. And I was really interested to hear the member for Sunbury's concise description of what this bill entails. If you look at the second-reading speech you will see the important work that this bill will do to ensure that we are able to deliver important transport infrastructure and in particular – surprise, surprise – deliver housing and transport near each other. It is an incredible thing to behold, but it seems to be a big problem for those opposite to actually comprehend the fact that the Victorian government would like to put housing and people near transport – it is an extraordinary concept. But that is exactly what this bill is about, and it is what a lot of the work that we have been doing in terms of solid policy work is all about, and when you hear those opposite talk on these sorts of pieces of legislation it is very clear that they have not got the policy work done. They are not engaging in the serious policy work – flipping through media clips and quoting so-called experts but no serious policy work actually done.

This is all about delivering transport infrastructure. It is all about delivering the housing and the planning approach that this government is setting forward. We make no apology for wanting to build more homes, more opportunity, so that people can live near transport and services and, importantly, near the people that they love and so that people are able to live in the areas that they have grown up in. Those opportunities are disappearing as our city and our state grows. It has become very clear over the last week and a half that this side of the house has got a plan to produce more housing and more opportunities for people and those on the other side of the house are going to block those opportunities and take those opportunities away from people.

The lead speaker for the opposition ran through the precincts that are either involved in the SRL project or come under my portfolio. I just thought I might touch on a few of those. I will not say that the member for Caulfield was deliberately misleading the house, but he was incorrect in a number of areas, so I just want to run through some of those. Let us start with Fishermans Bend. Fishermans Bend has a chequered history. Those on this side of the house might well remember the actions of a previous government. A current member of this house rezoned the whole of Fishermans Bend a capital city zone with one stroke of the pen without any concern for proper planning and provision of infrastructure. Schools? Do not worry about it. Footpaths and roads? Do not worry about it; the market will sort that out. Parks, open space, drainage infrastructure? No. It took the election of a Labor government to fix up Fishermans Bend.

And I should say it is interesting and worthy of note that that rezoning made the then treasurer of the Liberal Party very wealthy. That was an instant rezoning that was very attractive for the Mr Burnes who was then the treasurer of the Liberal Party, so one can only guess as to why those zoning decisions were made, because they made no policy sense at all. What we saw was the Labor government come in, take a step back and get the planning right, and of course we developed the *Fishermans Bend Framework*. The previous Labor government released it in 2018. The member for Albert Park is well versed in that document and the important investment in infrastructure that has taken place since then – schools, bus services and the rollout of an orderly, planned approach to the Fishermans Bend precinct.

The member for Caulfield said we are not delivering housing. The Fishermans Bend precinct is on track to deliver the housing that was set out in the *Fishermans Bend Framework* by 2025 – 5000 homes by 2025, so tick. That precinct is delivering, because of the investment and the planning of this government doing it properly, the housing that Victorians want in the Fishermans Bend precinct, predominantly around the Montague subprecinct, where there is an existing cluster of transport and services. That is a sensible way for that precinct to be developed, and it is the Labor government that

is seeing that those housing opportunities are being delivered in that precinct in that way. As we move through the development of that precinct and the different subprecincts that are involved in it, we will see the rollout of more housing and more infrastructure.

The Sunshine–Albion precinct is an exciting opportunity for further development in our state. Eventually, over the long term, it should see some 20,000 homes developed in that subprecinct. We are engaging with the local community and engaging with local members of Parliament about the rollout of our plans in that particular precinct. Of course the Sunshine and Albion train stations will be on the Melbourne Metro line, so when the Melbourne Metro opens next year it will have access to that wonderful train line and that new tunnel running through Melbourne.

The Footscray precinct is an incredible precinct. The member for Footscray has been working very hard not just in terms of advocating for and seeing the delivery through of the \$1.5 billion Footscray Hospital, the new hospital that is being built, an incredible new health facility in her electorate, but also talking with the local community and engaging with the local community about what happens on the old Footscray Hospital site. The local member of Parliament was very active in the engagement process that we had with the local community to understand what they wanted to see on that old site, and of course housing will be a key thing that the government wants to see there. But there have been a range of other community uses that have come through from the community consultation. We have released that for public consumption, and I just want to congratulate the member for Footscray, who has been a staunch advocate for community uses on that old hospital site, which served the community so well for so long.

Arden was mentioned by the member for Caulfield as well. Arden is a cracker of a precinct because it sits around a brand new metro train station. The Minister for Planning and I were out there the other day making an announcement. The planning minister was announcing the greenfield land supply for 10 years. We were in front of the Arden station. It is a wonderful metro train station that is just one stop from Parkville – one stop from one of the best biomedical education precincts in the world, with some of the best university facilities and great research facilities – and then just another stop on into the CBD, one of the greatest CBDs in the world. Arden is a great opportunity. We are out to market at the moment, so I will not go into great detail around Arden, but the opportunity is there that the market has seized upon. We released a shortlist of bidders who are working with us on that to deliver a range of uses around the Arden station, including of course housing.

I want to come to Docklands. It would be very easy for me in my criticism of those opposite to lump Docklands into the Kennett government's bag of mistakes, but I have to say Docklands in my view is a precinct that is performing remarkably well, despite the criticism that some people will often level at it. I said in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee that Victorians seem to have three things we love: our coffee, our AFL team and bagging Docklands. I do not know why, because Docklands is a great precinct. It is not just me saying that. There are lots and lots of people who want to live in Docklands, such that, bearing in mind there are about 10,000 homes in Docklands at the moment, there are about 7500 homes still to come. The planning minister is kept very busy considering planning applications in that precinct because there is strong demand in the Docklands area, which is right on the edge of the CBD and right on the edge of Southern Cross station. It is a great spot – who knew? It gets windy in winter, but it is a great precinct. We are investing in important facilities there. Importantly, we are looking at the future use of the central pier, which had to be removed because it was unsafe. We are looking at better transport connections and better facilities for local people in the Docklands area. The recent investment in Marvel Stadium has been a great attraction as well.

I want to talk quickly about East Werribee, which is another great precinct. I know the member for Point Cook is a big supporter of us working there. We have set up the consultation process there. That is an exciting precinct, with 400 hectares of developable land. The work is starting there. We are very close to kicking off first works there. There are a whole range of things that are happening across our precincts. My other agency Development Victoria is busy delivering homes in Sunshine North – 300 homes in the LUMA development. At Olio in Officer there are 228 homes being delivered there.

In Springvale South there will be 47 townhouses and 16 land lots. We are delivering at Riverwalk in Werribee and at Ivanhoe on the old water tank site there at the top of Upper Heidelberg Road. In Knoxfield we will see around 400 dwellings built there. This bill is about delivering transport and housing so that we can build a better city and a better state. Those opposite obviously do not have a policy response, because we have not heard it.

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (11:23): I rise to speak on the Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. We have heard from speakers throughout this debate and from the Premier over recent days that their policy announcements and responses are repeatedly about population growth. It has been the first sentence that has come out of the Premier's mouth before every announcement, talking about the fact that she will grow Victoria and Melbourne to the size of London. That has been the first sentence that has come out of the Premier's mouth. Currently metro London has 15 million people and Melbourne has 5 million. That would be a threefold increase to the size of this city. That is the sentence that has come out of the Premier's mouth. What the Premier has not said but is absolutely true is that if we follow the government's path, we will sacrifice the livability of this city for population growth – if we follow the Premier's path. We have seen it, because this was the most livable city in the world. It is now no longer the most livable city in the world.

Do you think dealing with population by saying we are going to put half of Melbourne's population growth into three council areas is going to fix it? Of course it will not. It is shocking policy. What this particular bill does is say, 'If you are based around an SRL-declared location, you have effectively all rights removed.' This bill includes things like compulsory land acquisition and removal of rights in relation to compulsory acquisition. It is a total takeover of the land up to almost 2 kilometres around the sites – not at the sites, 2 kilometres away. In Bayside it is the communities 2 kilometres away. In those sites there are 200,000 people affected. In the first 10 major activity centre announcements almost 200,000 people are affected. In the next 25 that were announced roughly half a million people are affected. These decisions have affected roughly 1 million people. So 1 million people who are living around the major activity and Suburban Rail Loop zones have no rights.

This has never been done in this country – never been done. There has never been a wholesale takeover of the rights of the community from the planning system, because every other government – Labor or Liberal – has understood the importance of community over government. Communities include the people who build those communities around them. The people who live there have built them. They run the shops and they employ the locals. At no time has a government said, 'We on high know better than you about your future, and we will take away all rights from you in the name of population growth.' What that will do is sacrifice the livability of our city. You can see it because it has already gone down.

What is so pernicious in the government's decisions is they are based in politics – of course they are. You have got a minister talking about high-rise development and its importance, except in her own seat. She is against high-rise development in her own seat and a number of years ago talked about being opposed to a 10-storey development. We could not have a 10-storey development because it would affect the local amenity and neighbourhood character – but she is happy for 20 elsewhere. 'Just not in my seat,' says the minister. The reference I just gave was a few years ago. I will give credit. What I will then also refer to is three years ago the minister being opposed to three storeys. The minister opposed three storeys in her own seat three years ago. There are pictures on the web for everybody to see. What the government is now allowing to be built is six storeys for almost a kilometre around every major activity centre – six storeys – but not three in the minister's seat. What a hypocrite. That is outrageous. That was three years ago, and the government comes in here and says to the three council areas that are going to cop it, 'Bad luck.' But three storeys in her own seat – no. That was three years ago – absolutely outrageous.

What this bill does is take away the power of community, and no government should ever think they are more important than the community. That is what this bill does at its core. And I am certain that Victorians and Melburnians will turn and see this. It has never been done before because no-one will

accept it. No-one will accept having no say, and within a year all of these communities are going to start to see six storeys being proposed in their streets and they are going to say, 'Well, it's the Premier.' And it is the Premier, who, by the way, is 150 kilometres away. The Premier is wrecking Melbourne and does not live here. The Premier is wrecking Melbourne from 150 kilometres away. What a disgrace. Labor talk about the fact that they stand up for their communities. Do you think I am ashamed to stand up for my own community? Are you joking? I will stand up for my community every single day, and I am going to call out what the Premier is doing from 150 kilometres away, not from Melbourne. The Premier is going to be on her pension by the time this stuff is imposed, out on her pension 150 kilometres away. That is where the Premier is going.

The Premier is stuffing half of Victoria's population growth into three council areas. It is outrageous what the Premier is doing, but Victorians will see it. Victorians will see it once they understand that they have no rights. Just initial mapping in my own electorate shows there is unlikely to be one street where these new powers are not overlaid – in an entire electorate, not one street. How is that acceptable, to think that the entire electorate is a major activity zone? It is absolutely outrageous to take away the rights of a whole community purely because of politics, purely because of the Premier's envy, from 150 kilometres away, for population growth and the sacrifice of livability.

But it is not just that, it is also the oversight, and we saw only yesterday the minister announce the approval of a project that went across her desk from a Labor Party donor. And that is what we are going to start to see. We are going to start to see approvals going through the minister's desk with no probity or oversight, and there should be. Of course there should be; you cannot have an entire system taken through the minister's desk. Where is the probity in that, a Labor Party donor getting the tick from the minister? There is no probity or integrity in that.

This bill is a disgrace. What the government is doing to the community – a million people – is an absolute disgrace. Victorians are going to see it and they will not allow their livability to be sacrificed, especially when the Premier who is announcing and approving lives 150 kilometres away from the city she is wrecking.

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (11:33): Well, I know what can destroy livability, and that is not providing great public transport. It does take good planning and good housing and other matters and not only thinking of the boomers but also thinking of future generations, because if we just left it up to the opposition they would happily abandon them, based on the dearth of policy and of thinking – even thinking – about possibilities for changing our city in a way that means that millennials are actually given a chance, given a go, and that younger generations are able to get into the market. And I have actually had really positive feedback with the recent housing announcements, in particular from younger people saying, 'Thank you; you're giving us hope. I've actually got a chance to get into the market, a chance to perhaps live near where I work as well.' So they will not necessarily, but it is about diversity. It is about having choice, because some people might want to live in the outer regions of Melbourne because there are many benefits to living in some sort of regional space et cetera, but there are also those like me who live right smack bang in Southbank in a 37-storey building. So when we talk about six storeys et cetera, I suppose it is all relative. But the point is having choice, and unless we invest in appropriate infrastructure we cannot give people choice, because they will all be relegated to cars.

I heard a lot of this feigned care for people and so-called rights, which I think are being bandied about in a way that I am not sure is necessarily constructive. Is it caring to condemn future generations to a life of gridlock? I do not think that is very caring. And I know that there was another point made about setting up major infrastructure divorced from community. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is not a day that goes by when I do not have people in the community who are more and more keen to use public transport and be less reliant on cars, because they do not necessarily like sitting in their car for 1, 2 hours a day, maybe even 3 hours a day, to and from where they work. And there are also a lot of advantages when you can live in an activity centre particularly, where you have everything

you need in close proximity, which means less time travelling and more time actually with family as well.

I did want to pick up on the point about Fishermans Bend. Unfortunately, when it was rezoned under the Liberal government they forgot about things like schools – I don't know, who needs a school? Who needs a school or sporting grounds? The SES needs somewhere to go – who knew? These are some of the pragmatic elements, and also of course transport planning, to make sure that people can actually move around where they live. So that is why our government has done the work, rigorous planning work, and engaged with community on it and sought their feedback and their input, because they are living in those areas. I should say specifically I am zoning in on Fishermans Bend but not exclusively, because this bill has a bigger and broader premise to it.

I have to say, as part of implementing improved transport infrastructure, since 2022 almost 1500 extra bus services have been delivered for Fishermans Bend, and it is really working on that turn-up-and-go premise. And, guess what, government actually liaised with the local industries in Fishermans Bend to say, 'What are your needs? What do your workers need to be able to get in and out efficiently from Fishermans Bend?' Some will live there, some will not. So there are the 235, the 237 and the 606. And I have to say, as an added bonus with the 606, because that actually has a different trajectory, it goes down to Elsternwick station, and a really nice benefit of that is that it gives uplift to that particular service, which I have to say used to lag. I remember sitting and waiting for that bus – it could have been 30, could have been 40 minutes – in the cold at night, which was not particularly pleasant. But it has actually been really terrific for the schoolkids, because there is now greater frequency on that particular bus service, and so I got some really lovely feedback. Who knew that community might actually be connected to their transport services and might really care about being able to have an efficient way to get around our wonderful city.

It does upset me a bit. I know the previous speaker was talking about 'Oh, Melbourne's been destroyed', liveability et cetera. This is a pretty fantastic place to live, and so talking down our magnificent city and state, I take exception to that. But the integral corollary of that is making sure that we have the appropriate infrastructure to be able to support the growth of the city into the future and thinking about not just those who already are well settled and have homes but also current and future generations. And maybe more people can actually live close to their parents – assuming they get along; this is all about choice of course. But how nice it is to be able to live close to your family. I think for future generations that sounds like a pretty decent idea.

I was looking at the reasoned amendment and I was thinking, 'Okay, I get that you can paint a picture here trying to look like you as the opposition are really out there fighting for community. But, let's see, what have you opposed? Metro Tunnel, West Gate Tunnel and every single level crossing.' They have form, and that is why we are sort of like, 'Another reasoned amendment?' I do not know the motivation here. I am really curious, because they are painting themselves as the saviours of communities, but they do not really want to invest in the transport that our communities actually need and also the housing that is going to enable more Victorians to get into homes, whether they are buying or whether they are renting. I am just going to raise that question.

If you look at the history of the opposition when it comes to major infrastructure projects and housing and even planning – planning properly – I know that in Albert Park there has had to be a lot of retrofitting because a lot of schools were closed under the Kennett government. It is actually much more expensive to have to buy the land well after the fact, but we did it. Our government did it because, I do not know, somebody did not think about the fact that if you have lots of people in a certain place they might want to send their kids to school locally. And we have wonderful local schools. If you are talking about South Melbourne Primary School, that is a vertical school – absolutely fantastic, an amazing school. I am going on a tangent, and I must not go too much on that tangent, but the phonics instruction there is next level. They are really surging ahead with that, and Noel Creece, the principal, is really proud, as he should rightly be, because he is doing the right thing by the students in the local community.

We also have South Melbourne Park Primary School. That had to be built as well because Mr Kennett forgot about the fact that communities need schools, and actually getting rid of them was not the sharpest or the most sound idea. But of course we are prepared to invest in our communities and to work with our communities to make sure that they have the services they need and the capacity to actually be able to live in a way that is suitable. And what do I mean by suitable? That you are not having to schlep long journeys in a car and that you actually have choice if you want to be able live close to where you live and work.

Another nice thing about the West Gate Tunnel Project: I met a local tradie who was working on that and learning how to be a good electrician. He actually had to go underground each day. It is quite an unusual process that perhaps someone like me would not be so used to. But what is really fantastic – the point of this – is that he is absolutely ecstatic to have this great opportunity to get his first leg in the door and get the skills he needs for the future. We know that if these major infrastructure projects were canned, thousands and thousands of Victorian jobs would simply go – they would be cut – and that would be absolutely devastating.

With the Labor Party we always look holistically at major infrastructure projects. We look at the housing opportunities and all the other infrastructure that people need in proximity to transport – whether it is hospitals or whether it is schools or so many of the things that regular, normal Victorian communities need because they are human beings. It is fundamental, isn't it? It is fundamental. We are thinking about these things and working with the community.

Michael O'BRIEN (Malvern) (11:43): I rise to oppose the Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 and support the reasoned amendment from the honourable member for Caulfield. My community is being asked to bear the brunt of this Labor government's slackness over 10 years. Explain this to me: how is it that more homes were approved in the four years of the last Liberal-Nationals government than in 10 years under this government? This government have failed. They have absolutely failed. They have failed in the greenfields; they have failed in the brownfields. They have failed to listen. They have failed to learn. They have failed to act. Now a desperate Premier, who has not been able to do anything since she has become Premier, has thrown out her own lifeline – her political lifeline. She says, 'I'm going to be the builder. I'm going to be the person who sticks high-rises all over Melbourne,' as though that is going to do anything. This is the same Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery who could not even deliver a Commonwealth Games. Let us see how many homes are actually delivered by the time of the next election, because I do not think there are going to be too many. I think all the millennials this government cynically think they are pitching to are going to look around at the next election and say, 'Where are these homes you promised?' The fact is, they are not going to be there.

If you want to take the example of the recent announcement that Malvern station is going to be one of the areas where there is going to be heightened development, there is already a 17-storey apartment building going up behind it – 17 storeys. Do you know what the entry level for that apartment building is? For a one-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment it is \$739,000, not including stamp duty. You will get no change out of three-quarters of a million dollars for a one-bedroom apartment. Do you know too many millennials who have three-quarters of a million dollars and, if they do, want to live in a one-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment? This is not about affordable housing. It is not about housing choice. It is about looking after Labor's big developer mates.

I am delighted that the Minister for Planning is at the table, because she has just approved and rubberstamped a development proposal for 173 Burke Road in Glen Iris in my community – a development that was rejected by Stonnington council, a development that was rejected by VCAT. This minister has gone and rubberstamped it and given it approval despite the opposition from the local community and Stonnington council. Who is the developer? A donor to the Labor Party. What a surprise! Tens of thousands of dollars in donations from this donor to the Australian Labor Party and they get to bypass the normal processes, and this minister signs off on it. Where is the probity on that,

Minister? That is disgraceful. It is absolutely disgraceful. Do not just ask me; here is what Stonnington council has said about it:

The State Government on Friday announced it had fast-tracked approval of development at 173 Burke Road, Glen Iris, that received a record number of community objections.

The City of Stonnington received 198 objections to the development when it was first considered through a 2021 planning application.

It goes on:

“The Council is concerned with what it considers is a poorly thought-out planning decision”, City of Stonnington CEO Dale Dickson said.

“The Council is of the view it is an overdevelopment that will place an unacceptable burden on local roads and infrastructure, impacting the amenity of residents now and into the future, including occupiers of the proposed new apartment complex.”

If you want an example of what this minister and this government are going to do to communities right across Melbourne, it is this. Ignore the fact that Stonnington council has knocked it back, ignore the fact that VCAT has knocked it back, and rubberstamp an approval through the back door over the minister’s desk from a big Labor Party donor. That is the way this government wants to do planning in this state.

Members interjecting.

Michael O’BRIEN: Minister, you can carry on about it all you like, but I am calling it out, because it is affecting my community. I am not coping it, and my community is not coping it. Donations for permits – clearly that is the way it works. This minister is the biggest hypocrite in the world, because when it came to objecting –

Lauren Kathage: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, I believe the member is impugning the minister in relation to accusations of corruption.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Paul Hamer): I do not think there was a point of order.

Michael O’BRIEN: This is the same minister who, in writing, objected – oh, my goodness – to a three-storey development in her own electorate. Five storeys is fine for Glen Iris, but three storeys is too much for Patterson Lakes. What an outrageous hypocrite this minister is. You cannot complain about three storeys in your own electorate while you are rubberstamping five storeys in someone else’s electorate that has been knocked back by VCAT after a 12-day hearing and knocked back by local council.

James Newbury interjected.

Michael O’BRIEN: But they did not donate. If the record number of objectors in Stonnington had donated, maybe they would have got a better hearing from this minister. Maybe they should have just signed up to the Labor Party and donated money to the Labor Party. That seems to be the way you get your development facilitation program permits through this government. What an absolute disgrace it is. The worst thing is if this minister and this government had the slightest interest in actually improving housing availability, do you know what, in my community they could have worked with the local council. We have a draft housing strategy already under development, which would actually lead to a really significant improvement and increase in property in my electorate. No-one is saying we cannot build. No-one is saying we do not need more homes – but work with the community. Stonnington council has already got a strategy to increase the number of homes without 20-storey towers looking into everyone’s backyard. This is a government –

Members interjecting.

Michael O’BRIEN: Oh, no 20-storey towers? We have got 17 storeys in Malvern. What makes you think we are not going to get 20 storeys? We have got 17 storeys in Malvern. Who says we are

not going to get 20 storeys? We are going to have massive high-rise towers right throughout my electorate. Here are the areas that have been nominated by the government: Armadale, Darling, Gardiner, Glen Iris, Hawksburn, Malvern, Toorak, Toorak Village, Tooronga and Chadstone. Ten of the 35 are in my electorate, and this government says, 'Oh, but look at all the investment we're doing.' They have nominated Tooronga train station as being one of the development location sites. Is the level crossing still there? Yes. Is Labor going to remove it? No. Look at Glen Iris station – another one that has been nominated by this government: up to 20 storeys. Is the level crossing still there? Yes. Is Labor going to remove it? No. So this is a government that continually wants to impose pain on communities without any investment.

When was the last time this government invested in one of my schools? I was at the Lloyd Street Primary School fair on Saturday, and I had a great chat with the principal, who is an excellent principal. They need a million dollars in maintenance funding just to be able to keep the place going. They get nothing from this government. This is a government that only takes and takes and takes from my community. They take taxes, they take everything. They give nothing, and now they want to impose the consequences of 10 years of doing nothing on housing strategy. They want to impose the pain of that on my community without any investment.

Is this government going to stand up and say, 'Oh, look, we'll remove the level crossing at Tooronga Road. We'll remove the level crossing at Glen Iris station. That would be fair, wouldn't it? If we're going to impose a whole lot of high-rise, high-density overdevelopment housing in these areas, at least we're going to get rid of the level crossings.' No, they do not do that. They do not do that at all. This is a government that just takes and takes and takes and gives nothing back. This is the last roll of the dice for a Premier who has not been able to find herself for 12 months. She has now put all her eggs in the one basket. This is what she does. Whether it is Suburban Rail Loop or whether it is this housing strategy, it is a roll of the dice.

But my community has already seen the consequences of when a bad Labor government makes bad planning decisions that benefit Labor Party donors. We have seen that with this minister's decision over 173 Burke Road, Glen Iris – not supported by the community, not supported by Stonnington council. The minister had a chance to actually say, 'You know what, we've got this new DFP. We're going to listen. We're going to act properly,' and they have not done that. They have chosen to do the bidding of their donors instead of listening to the council and listening to the community, and if the government thinks this is a vote winner for them, I say good luck to them. Because we are builders, and we demonstrated that when we were last in government. This is a government that is very good at ripping up contracts for things like the east–west link, but I tell you what, my community are not going to be the patsies that have to pay the price for this government being absolutely hopeless when it comes to planning and housing policy.

Bronwyn HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (11:53): What a selfish bunch they are in the opposition on the other side of this chamber. The gathering of people in Brighton really said it all: the visions of that, the selfishness, the greed. We have been listening to the member for Malvern talking about all the terrible things that Labor is doing across Melbourne – but it is not across Melbourne. What he is saying basically is, 'Leave places like Malvern and Brighton alone that have all the infrastructure, all the good things that people need. Don't share them with anybody else. Send everybody that needs a house out to the outer suburbs,' which I represent in the electorate of Thomastown, where the infrastructure is not there and in fact even if it was funded today, it would take years and years and years to build in order to provide the necessary services for people coming in. But young people, Victorians, need the choice. They need to be able to live, whether it is in Brighton, in Malvern, in Thomastown. They should have that choice, and they should be able to enjoy and share in the infrastructure that is already there and the infrastructure that all Melburnians should be able to have a piece of. It is just appalling, the scaremongering and the frightening and the peddling of this sort of rubbish that is being conducted by the opposition, when we are trying to address the shortage of

housing and ensure that young people can get a house, can buy their own home and can have the security of their own home.

In the Thomastown electorate I see the number of people coming into my office that cannot afford their rent anymore and are facing eviction or are living in their cars, and then we hear what the opposition talks about. We do not hear anything about homelessness from them. We do not hear anything about how the fundamental human right to have a roof over your head should be something that all Victorians, all Australians, should be able to expect and demand of their government. There is peddling of mistruths and rubbish from the opposition. The amendments that are contained in this bill are all about facilitating the delivery of infrastructure building. Yes, it may change some timeframes in terms of when notices are given and work is going to start, but in the main this legislation is administrative in the sense that it is about trying to make sure that work is done on time and on budget.

I would like to give a few examples of the problems that we have had in the past with the way infrastructure has been delivered in Thomastown on some great projects – for example, the O’Herns Road interchange, which was an election commitment that the opposition did not support at the time. That was in the election I think of 2018. There have been lots of removals of roundabouts and at least six brand new schools built in the outer suburbs. All of these infrastructure projects, once done, have been fantastic, but because of administrative problems in the past these projects have had problems. For example, we had generators running the lights at the Dalton Road–Childs Road intersection after removing the roundabout there, because the utility companies did not schedule in connecting the lights to power and there was nothing that could be done about it from government. We had to pass legislation to ensure that utilities and essential services were all part of the scope of a project to ensure that those sort of things did not happen again. This is what is going on with this piece of legislation as well.

We have done so much infrastructure building and learned so much from it, whether it is the level crossing removals, the schools or the huge projects. We have got the New Epping project in Epping, which provides affordable housing for many, many people in the area. From our experiences there are things that are delaying projects or making them cost more. We want to make sure there is legislation to stop those problems or blockages happening in the future. This is what this legislation does.

It also talks about ensuring that the Premier can declare a number of projects in one project rather than having to deal with each project separately. For example, we have got the Keon Park level crossing removal. That has already happened, but it was on the Mernda line. There are other level crossing removals such as the Bell Street one, Oakover Road and Murray Road. In the future those sorts of projects can be done as one big development that is of course much more efficient and takes up less organisational time. You would hope because of the economies of scale that you could do the work in a more efficient and less costly way.

I would also like to talk about the Epping Road duplication that is underway at the moment. That is again a huge project that is going to mean so much for residents once it is finished. I just have to give a shout-out to residents and thank them for their patience, because it has taken quite some time. Who knows, if this legislation had already passed, maybe it would not be taking as long as it is now. At the moment there are road closures and there are very low kilometre-per-hour restrictions, but people are getting through that because we know that that road, once done, is really going to free up some of the congestion in that area. But again, as an example, over time as the population has changed and moved, and since COVID, there has been a problem further up on Epping Road at Bridge Inn Road. This development we are doing goes to Craigieburn Road East, and there is probably another kilometre before Epping Road joins Bridge Inn Road. I see the member for Yan Yean is here. That section of road is not part of the scope of the Epping Road duplication, and because of the way the processes are structured and the fact that the project had already been scoped out, it was not possible to include that extra bit of road into the duplication program for Epping Road. Maybe, with legislation such as this, if it was already in force, that could have happened and therefore it would have addressed a change in population movement, the way people move around the area, and that may have been able to be

included in the Epping Road duplication. Unfortunately it could not have been because it was not part of the original scope, and therefore that is something that we need to advocate for along with community members into the future.

This legislation, despite all the carrying on from the opposition, does not make huge changes; it does not take away the massive rights of people. There are still the environmental investigations that are required. There are still the same planning processes that we have to go through. This is all about making sure that our projects can be delivered even more efficiently than they are now. I know in the Thomastown electorate we continue to see building and building and more building, whether it is, as I said, the schools, the removal of the Keon Park level crossing, the duplication of Epping Road, the removal of roundabouts or community centres being updated and refurbished. For all of this work, what lies behind it is a lot of planning, a lot of technical work, but also there are a lot of legislative supports under those sorts of projects that have to be followed.

This legislation, in the main, is all about really how different government departments deal with each other. If the opposition were really serious about cutting red tape and ensuring that bureaucracies are more efficient, they would be actually supporting this bill and making sure that it passes this house as quickly as possible so that we can get on with the job of supporting Victorians, making sure that there are more homes for Victorians, there are more roads and there is more rail. Here we have got an opposition where all they do is whinge and complain about nothing being done, but every time we try to do something they are whinging and complaining about that as well. So really they are irrelevant to the progress of Victoria, irrelevant to Victorians, and we just are going to continue to get on with the work that we are doing: better housing, more housing, more infrastructure to support our communities, a better Education State with the building of all those fantastic schools such as Lalor Secondary, which I spoke about yesterday, and the great work they are doing and how the new school has actually transformed the way that the students at that school work and feel about themselves, which is great news.

Kim O'KEEFFE (Shepparton) (12:03): I rise to make a contribution on the Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, a bill for an act to amend the Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009, the Planning and Environment Act 1987, the Road Management Act 2004, the Suburban Rail Loop Act 2021 and the Transport Integration Act 2010 and for other purposes. The reforms in this bill will amend the Planning and Environment Act 1987 to enable the Premier to declare a development, a proposed development program or proposed works program to be a precinct project and to describe the area and land that will be used for that project. This highlights the total disregard for communities and local government, giving the Premier the right to pick and choose locations without community consultation. This takes the rights away, as I said, from local communities and local governments, who would normally know their communities so well and could actually contribute so much input to these consultations that will not be happening.

This is a poorly thought-out bill that does not give any consideration for local voices. I note the Minister for Transport Infrastructure in his second-reading speech states:

It is in the public interest to develop the infrastructure and places that are needed to provide Victorians with better housing, transport, employment opportunities and access to services and amenities.

The minister also states:

We need to create a better way to deliver the housing and infrastructure Victorians need where they need it.

I could not agree more, and that is what should be happening for all Victorians. This is not happening in my electorate, and this bill highlights the city-centric and metropolitan focus in spending and the total disregard for the regions. Selfishness was raised in the chamber today, and some of the statistics and facts that I will point out today will talk about selfishness when it comes to the fair share of the budget and the fair share for regional communities.

I have raised many times in this place the housing crisis that my electorate is experiencing and the high numbers of homelessness. The previous member on her feet did say that no-one has mentioned the issue in relation to homelessness in the chamber today. The level of homelessness and rental stress in my electorate is one of the highest across the state, and when it comes to housing there is such a shortage that every single day we are hearing stories. Just yesterday – and I am very happy to provide this to Hansard – I received an email from a gentleman. He and his wife are on over \$250,000 in income a year but cannot get a rental property in the region. They relocated to Shepparton 12 months ago and are currently living in a caravan on someone else's property. This just highlights a significant issue that we have with housing. We should not be focusing on city-centric projects, we should be allowing opportunities for all of Victoria to have appropriate housing. In the six months to December 2023 both social and public housing stock declined, by 54 and 466 homes respectively, while the number of available bedrooms has reduced by 2733 since Labor announced the Big Housing Build in 2020. More than a year since the government's housing statement, the number of homes actually built across the 12 months to June 2024 fell by 2700 on the preceding year. The government committed to build 80,000 new homes a year for the next decade. With only 55,563 homes built, that is well below their promise.

Having public transport is critical to ensure people do have access to the transport that they need, and I do not dispute that. The current transport services in my electorate are not providing anywhere near the level of transport required – again a testament to regional Victoria not being acknowledged. This bill states the benefits and need for having housing and transport near to each other, yet I cannot even get extended bus services in my electorate, bus services that would also provide transport to the rail station. I have been calling for a bus review since I have been in this place, which has been ignored. We now currently have an active Parliament petition asking for the same thing. Dysons are frustrated and bewildered that their hands are tied and they cannot provide the bus transport services and extended services the community need. It has been 15 years since we have had a bus review. In the past 15 years the region has grown significantly, with increased population and housing estates stretching across the region. Dysons bus company cannot increase these much-needed services to reach those communities without a review – a bus review, not billions of dollars on a tunnel. This just highlights the total disregard for the transport needs of regional communities.

When it comes to our train services the federal government committed \$320 million toward the \$400 million Shepparton line upgrade. The project started in 2021 and was meant to be delivered late last year, and we are still waiting for a response from the Minister for Transport Infrastructure in this place from a question on notice I asked back in May on the expected completion date. This is the type of disregard we are experiencing in the regions. I have also raised the issue of overcrowding, where we have had passengers having to stand for 2-hour trips from Shepparton to Melbourne. We need more carriages to meet the increasing demand. These are the types of poor services and issues that are being ignored in regional Victoria, yet in the minister's second-reading speech he said:

We are ... delivering important ... projects that will slash travel times and help to keep Victorians moving.

Well, that clearly is not happening in my region. The Labor government do not consider the transport needs of regional Victoria. They are turning their backs on the progress and growth of the regions and their transport needs.

The much-needed Shepparton bypass is a critical infrastructure project that will provide a transport route that will remove the convoy of trucks through the CBD of Shepparton and Mooroopna and provide a more efficient route for thousands of trucks and vehicles that travel through the towns every single day. Currently we have only one river crossing between Shepparton and Mooroopna, and an average of 30,000 vehicles use that causeway daily. When we talk about transport, connectivity and population growth, regional Victoria is growing at an extraordinary rate, and we need the infrastructure to support that growth. My electorate is a major transport hub, with over 25 per cent of the state's trucks registered in the Goulburn Valley. While this government spend big on city-centric projects, they are turning their backs on industries that they depend on and that depend on an efficient and safe

road network. Whilst this government are spruiking their Suburban Rail Loop, my region is trying to navigate a primitive road network. The crumbling and appalling roads are costing truck companies thousands of dollars in repairs every month, because this government is neglecting our roads and failing to provide the much-needed infrastructure for one of Australia's largest manufacturing and agricultural regions. Yet we are being ignored because of this government's city-centric focus and financial mismanagement of the Suburban Rail Loop, a project with no credible business case costing billions of dollars and billions in cost blowouts. It is astounding to think this government have prioritised billions on this project at the sacrifice of health, housing, road maintenance and addressing the cost of living. It shows how out of touch this government really is. GV Health have had stage 1 of their hospital redevelopment funded and completed, yet stage 2 has not been funded, so we have a partially completed hospital redevelopment.

This government have their priorities all wrong. Their financial mismanagement and project cost blowouts are making life harder for Victorians. The state debt, as we know, is set to reach \$188 billion in 2027, the largest debt of any state or territory in our country. This includes over \$40 billion in cost blowouts, waste and financial mismanagement. Whether it be the Suburban Rail Loop, the North East Link, the Metro Tunnel or the West Gate Tunnel, they have all blown out in cost and time, costing all of regional Victoria really important infrastructure. Interest on that debt alone we know will reach \$26 million a day, and there is so much that we could be doing with that money.

Times are really tough, and we are in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. Victorians, as we know, have been hit with increased taxes since 2014, making Victoria the highest taxed state in the country. The Premier's taxes on housing, jobs, rents, schools and holidays are making the cost-of-living crisis worse. By forcing Victorians to pay the highest taxes in the nation, Labor have left Victorians with less money to spend, and the financial pressures and financial distress that people are experiencing continue to rise. Every Victorian will pay for Labor's financial mismanagement for many generations to come.

This bill is a slap in the face for regional Victorians and only strengthens the poor decision-making and financial mismanagement of this government. The bill ignores the disastrous financial consequences by putting all of the government's eggs in the one basket and ignores the failings of this government by ignoring the critical issues and financial distress that are facing so many people in the state of Victoria. With their blinkers on, the Labor government proceed full steam ahead with their projects that this state cannot afford, ignoring the impact that their financial mismanagement is having on the state, and Victorians have had enough. The bill takes away power, and it takes away the voices of communities.

Meng Heang TAK (Clarinda) (12:12): I am delighted to rise in support of and to make a contribution on the Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This is another important bill that will enhance the government's ability to develop and deliver state-led or state-facilitated precincts and reduce time, cost and risk. As we have heard, this bill will support the effective and efficient delivery of priority precincts and the Suburban Rail Loop and all other major transport projects through the improvement of delivery and other related powers.

These are state-shaping projects and projects that are very important to my community, particularly the Suburban Rail Loop. They are projects that will change the shape of our state, change the way that we move around our state, transforming our public transport network by better connecting Victorians to employment, hospitals, universities and of course each other. That is particularly true in our community, with the Monash employment cluster, Monash Medical Centre and Monash University. We are talking about a better and more direct connection to vital health and medical facilities at Monash Medical Centre and others. We are talking about more jobs closer to where people live. Employment in Clayton will almost triple to around 57,000 jobs as a result of the SRL. That is a really important result for our community.

The SRL East, between Cheltenham and Box Hill, will deliver a huge benefit to our community, to the south-east and to regional Victoria, with faster and more reliable public transport and greater access to jobs, health and education; slashing travel time; creating new jobs and housing; delivering more direct journeys; and enhancing walking, cycling and green space. These are all really important outcomes, and this bill will help to support the effective, efficient delivery of projects such as the Suburban Rail Loop and all other major projects.

I am also really excited about Clayton as a transport superhub. This station has come a long way in my short time here in this place, from the notorious Clayton Road level crossing to the new, elevated Clayton station. It is unprecedented, and that transformation will continue with the development of the superhub, connecting more people to our vibrant town centre and providing faster and more convenient transport to destinations across Melbourne and to regional Victoria. It will also make it easier for metropolitan passengers and regional passengers from Gippsland to access those leading medical research facilities and hospitals and our retail, entertainment and employment area nearby, as well as to travel to Melbourne's other middle suburbs.

The transport superhub will connect into both the SRL East and the existing Clayton station, catering to more than 90,000 transfers a day by 2056, making it one of Melbourne's busiest metropolitan stations, which is a great outcome for our community, driving growth and activity. These are exciting times for our community and great opportunities for implementing planning reform, easing the housing pressure, delivering infrastructure and stimulating economic investment and benefit for our community locally and for our state.

This bill helps to support the effective and efficient delivery of those priorities and objectives through several amendments. Firstly, I would like to touch on how it is amending the Planning and Environment Act 1987, known as the PE act, to reduce the time, cost and risk associated with developing state-led or state-facilitated precincts as defined under the priority precincts prioritisation framework. This is achieved by enabling the Premier to declare a precinct project to be of state or regional significance and by providing the minister and public authorities specified as being responsible for the development of a declared precinct project access to project delivery powers specified in the Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009.

There are several amendments to that act, which is also known as the MTPF act, namely to support the delivery of precincts around major transport projects by expanding the definition of 'non-transport infrastructure' in the act to facilitate the delivery of major transport projects that have associated precincts as a component. Further to this, there are amendments to expand the definition of 'transport project' in the MTPF act to enable a declared project to include a program of work or projects. Finally, there are amendments to improve the MTPF act project delivery powers and other related provisions to provide timesavings, reduce costs and mitigate legal risks that presently exist, which is obviously an important priority. These are broad positive changes across these two acts aimed at effective and efficient delivery of projects, and they are changes that I am happy to support here today.

I should also just note that the bill also makes minor amendments to the Road Management Act 2004, the Transport Integration Act 2010 and the Suburban Rail Loop Act 2021 to support and ensure consistency with the above amendments. Again, Acting Speaker Farnham, these are broad changes that I am happy to support here today in my contribution. The changes in the bill will help to deliver important projects such as the Suburban Rail Loop and all the other major projects here. We are seeing some exciting progress in Clayton already. You have been to Clayton before or at least driven past. I am excited to work together with all the other stakeholders that continue to work on Clayton today and our surrounding suburbs, which will grow into the future.

Allow me to say a little bit more. Although Clayton, or part of Clayton, is no longer part of my electorate due to the distributions two years ago, before that I used to do a lot of doorknocking and talking with many of the shop owners in Clayton. Clayton is becoming vibrant. It is not only the food and the different food stores that you can have, from Indian to Chinese cuisines, but more importantly,

it is an employment hub now. During my doorknocking I spoke with many of those who live very close to Monash University and also the medical hubs and medical precincts like the Heart Hospital. It is a place for nurses, doctors and specialists who have decided to call this place home or at least a temporary home – let alone talking about Monash University, which is not far away from there. We welcome many of the overseas students who later will call this place home.

We are moving forward with these conversations and delivering the vision across Clayton and Heatherton, and there will be further refinements through ongoing engagement with our community. There are some really exciting proposed changes that will help bring a greater mix of low-, medium- and high-density homes into the area around the new SRL East station at Clayton, allowing more Victorians to live closer to where they work with world-class public transport, world-class health services and an employment hub. The change builds on Monash council's work in recent years to increase density, helping to bring more affordable homes and residents to Clayton right next to world-class public transport. Not long ago my good friend the member for Mordialloc and other MPs had the benefit of meeting with the City of Kingston. We are very excited about the vision for Clayton and Clayton South and about the projects that will bring more people to live closer to where they work, to their community and to where they study. Again, this is an exciting time and a transformational project that will help Clayton and surroundings to realise its full potential as a global health and research precinct with more homes and housing choices for workers and residents, capitalising on the great qualities of our community and the easy access to education and medical facilities along with it. I commend the bill to the house.

Matthew GUY (Bulleen) (12:23): Well, despite the name of the bill, Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, this bill predominantly deals with population. It is around population growth and population management. I have said in this chamber on a number of occasions, when we are growing at record rates – we have come back post COVID, and we are now growing again at record rates – the government's response to date has been very, very haphazard. While state governments do not set our population growth rates, we should not be passengers as well. It appears almost to me that the government's response to date to the population challenge that we face has been to be passengers, to say, 'We have no input in this matter, and we just can't do anything about it.' Well, they can. They can and they should. Good governments, sensible governments, have sensible, reasonable and respectful conversations with councils to manage that level of growth.

I note the other side – and I hear it from presentation after presentation – are saying this ridiculous line that 'You're blockers' on my side of the chamber. There are members like me who have major activities areas like Doncaster where we have tried for the best part of 10 years to have what the council wants, which is for the Labor government to remove the mandatory height limits in central Doncaster so we can accommodate population in central Doncaster to take pressure off suburbs around it to preserve that neighbourhood character, and the government has done nothing for 10 years. Why would the government look at areas in the member for Malvern's electorate, which do not and cannot cope with major levels of high-rise development on the on-the-ground infrastructure, when here have members like me saying there are parts – parts – of my seat that can? I have directly requested two former planning ministers to assist, and their response has been to do nothing. This is part of the challenge this state has, and that is ad hoc accommodation of population.

What kind of government says they are going to put the majority of the population growth in one state into three local government areas in the inner-city area of Melbourne for the sake of politics but has no plan for decentralisation? It does not look at the City of Greater Geelong, which has got 300,000 people, which within 20 years will be as big as Canberra. Geelong as a metropolitan area and Ballarat as a metropolitan area, with over 110,000 now – we have areas with reasonable upgrades to infrastructure on the ground – can accommodate population growth, and we should be seeking to decentralise. This side of the house had the state's first decentralisation minister in Digby Crozier. His daughter is the Liberal leader in the upper house. We had a decentralisation minister for a reason. You cannot accommodate population by just having an ad hoc approach – by going, 'Let's pick here. Let's

pick here. Let's pick here,' for the sake of politics. It will never work, and you will end up with a much worse outcome.

I note the Premier, who is the member for Bendigo East, has not talked about Bendigo as a population accommodation area, which it should be. It is a big city. It is a reasonable city. It is a nice place. It has got a good climate. We should be looking at places outside of Melbourne for accommodating population growth. Needless to say, many of the committees, such as those for Bendigo, Ballarat and the Latrobe Valley, have been asking for the previous coalition government's regional growth plans to assist with population accommodation and investment attraction to their areas, which has fallen on deaf ears, predominantly those of Richard Wynne, who did nothing on this front for seven to eight years and who did not renew regional growth plans, and that is just a fact.

We have an opportunity to grow all of the state in a sensible way to manage population growth. Simply saying we will have a one-size-fits-all approach across the growth areas and outer suburbs or indeed the mid-range suburbs of Melbourne is just stupid. The activities areas across the eastern suburbs of Melbourne are so different. What makes our city one of the most livable in the world is that those activities areas have had planning schemes that have respected their personalities, if you like, for the last 30, 40, 50 years – under the Bracks government and under the Cain government. Why is that different now? Because it is all about politics. It is not really about solving the problem, which is a sensible way to accommodate population growth.

Supply in a market does not help developers. I have said this so many times. It is never listened to by left-wing journos down at the *Age* – a couple in particular who were on the take from elements of the union movement. What you do when you put a lot of supply into a market is that you will either stabilise or lower prices. That was evidenced when the coalition was in government by putting a large number of extra lots – in fact 206,000 – in the growth area market over four years. In Melbourne's growth area market the price fell by \$15,000 from the time we were elected to the time we left office four years later. Population growth was stronger and our economy was stronger, but the market demand, as it was stronger, was still offering a reduced price because we were putting more supply into the market.

For the Labor government to say they are going to put in 180,000 lots over 10 years – well, I say to them: double it. Why isn't the Minister for Planning going back to the Victorian Planning Authority and saying, 'Look, you have a conclusion on every precinct structure plan in the growth areas of Melbourne, and I want that conclusion. You come back to work with me on that date, and let's get them through so we've got a pipeline of supply in our growth areas to adequately manage supply in our growth area market, predominantly focused around existing activities areas and existing PSPs or in areas where we know we have got under-the-ground infrastructure either already in place or close to.' Instead the government says, 'We've have got a plan for a plan that might come about in 10 years.' That is not a plan, and that is silly. There are better ways to do it, and I might throw decentralisation into that as well.

As I have said before, when in government we approved 206,000 lots in four years. That was homes for nearly 580,000 extra Victorians. There were blockers at the time. There were a lot of blockers for this, and those blockers were the people who are now throwing those kinds of insults at me. You have got to be joking. I was monikered Mr Skyscraper, and now I am being told I am a blocker. I am offering up an activities area in my electorate. This side is being told, 'You're a blocker.' I do not think so. We have a sensible view of development. A sensible view means it is not one size fits all. That is dumb. That is why we are opposing this bill, because it is dumb to say one size fits all. It is smart to say, 'Use councils' existing planning growth forecasts with them to get the density where it is required and do it properly.' It is what we did in government with *Plan Melbourne*, which was a coalition government initiative, and with regional growth plans, which were a coalition government initiative, and that accommodated population growth and allowed people to get into the housing market. There were tens of thousands of apartments we approved downtown, and I was monikered Mr Skyscraper – not an insult. I have got news for you: I am only five foot seven, but I will tell you it was not an insult, because

they were homes for Victorians, and they remain so. But they were put in the right locations – sensible locations, locations in the CBD.

When we tried to put a capital city zone through areas such as central Ballarat, central Geelong and central Bendigo, guess who were blockers? The Labor and left-wing councillors on all those three councils. Oh, no, it was going to signify the end of the world. The sky was going to fall. Hens would not lay eggs. It would be all kinds of disaster. But we offered a sensible solution for the downtown areas of those cities – not the suburbs, not like what this bill is putting forward today, putting it in areas which do not have the ability to cope, but in sensible areas that can accommodate growth.

We have a government that put height limits in Fitzroy and Carnegie – which I said was an activities area. Labor, under Richard Wynne, put all height limits in at two storeys and now comes back and says, ‘Oh well, maybe we can accommodate 20.’ The current minister put height limits in Preston Market when it is flat – I lived in Preston for 12 years – and cut three or four storeys off the Shangri-La down the road for no reason, just because they wanted to. These are all homes. When you run around and say, ‘Now we’ve got a population challenge, and now we’re going to build more apartments,’ after 10 years of opposing, you kind of lose your credibility, and the credibility is already lost in the industry. And politics – people can have all the debates in this room. Outside of it, in the industry, Acting Speaker Farnham, as you would know as a former builder and as I would know as the former planning minister, the industry has walked, because the industry knows from ten years – after 10 years of being told ‘You’re a demon; you’re a demon’, most of them have gone to Queensland. Coming in with a tax incentive 12 months after the event and saying, ‘Now we’re all for you; please build,’ – it is a bit late.

To come out with arbitrary requirements in activities areas that no-one has thought of before because there is no infrastructure is a bit silly. You need a whole-of-state approach to manage population growth. That is what *Plan Melbourne* was. That is what the coalition government did. When you are a Labor government that comes in after 10 years of blocking and then says, ‘Now we’re building,’ because you have got to rebrand a Premier at 30 per cent in the polls, most of us see through that and say, ‘Actually, this is a plan for you to hang onto your job so that the member for Niddrie doesn’t take it,’ as opposed to actually seriously trying to seek a solution to Victoria’s population problems. We on this side of the house know that managing population is a difficult task. We have done it before, but it involves a whole-of-state approach, a genuine, sensible, serious whole-of-state approach. When you come to the Parliament with bills that really are just about politics, then you get a reply that it is politics and not common sense.

Luba GRIGOROVITCH (Kororoit) (12:33): As a former secretary of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union and obviously a very proud supporter of it, it gives me enormous pleasure to rise and speak to the Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I am always excited to speak about public transport and accessibility for more Victorians when we need it most.

This legislation reflects and enhances the Allan Labor government’s commitment to developing thriving priority precincts across all of our state. It is a key part of our target to build 800,000 homes in Victoria over the next decade. And the heartbeat of our precincts, I would say, is our stations and the wonderful people who staff them and who run the public transport system. They always deserve respect, both on and off the job, and to be recognised as a thriving part of the lovely precincts and communities they service. Public transport workers do keep Victoria moving, and they are salt of the earth people. I am proud to be associated with them.

This bill is something that our Labor government is really excited about. We are taking a step on the road to a better and more livable Victoria. This bill aligns with the government’s priorities and objectives in relation to implementing planning reform, easing housing pressure, delivering infrastructure and stimulating economic investment for the benefit of the state, and this all ties in with the 2023 Victorian housing statement and of course the 2024 precincts prioritisation framework, which ultimately, all together, will see more roofs over the heads of Victorians.

This legislation is designed to further extend and modernise the delivery powers under the Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009, the MTPFA for short, so that it provides better facilities for the delivery of all major transport projects and reduces time, cost and risks. It means that the 2009 act will now also extend to precincts, which will expand the project delivery tools available to expedite the delivery of housing construction as well as other priority uses such as education and of course health.

The Allan Labor government's \$100 billion-plus investment in Victoria's transport infrastructure has produced significant economic, environmental and social benefits for our state. With our state's population expected to reach 10 million by the 2050s, the delivery of rail and road projects will not only keep Victorians moving but will aid the development of a more green and livable state. This bill delivers the Allan Labor government's priorities and objectives to ease housing pressure, deliver infrastructure and stimulate economic investment for the benefit of Victoria. It represents our government's continued commitment to developing the right infrastructure and amenities in the right places to support thriving communities across Victoria.

Victorians know that the Allan Labor government will continue to deliver, as we always have. That is why existing major transport project delivery powers allow for timely and efficient development of major transport projects. This is evidenced by the government's monumental track record of transport infrastructure delivery over its past decade in office: the Level Crossing Removal Project, which everyone in this house has been the beneficiary of, the suburban roads upgrades, the regional rail revival, the Metro Tunnel project and of course the West Gate Tunnel Project, which I know us westies are very excited about. These investments have not only cut travel time and improved safety, but they have created thousands of jobs in this state when we need them the most. I am proud of the level crossing removals that are happening in Kororoit, and I have currently got one happening on Hopkins Road, which we all cannot wait to see come to fruition. These are projects that get Victorians home sooner and safer.

The intention of this bill is to extend and modernise delivery powers under the MTPFA 2009 to ensure that we can continue to facilitate the development and delivery of this Labor government's iconic major new transport and precincts projects. It does this by focusing on delivering priority precincts in a way that streamlines delivery outcomes and reduces the red tape to projects and the broader community. The government's experience over a decade in office in delivering transformative infrastructure projects means that it understands where opportunities are to streamline existing delivery processes while ensuring appropriate safeguards for individuals and communities.

Currently, when utility infrastructure needs to be relocated for a project, a project authority must compulsorily acquire an interest in the land based on the anticipated location of the utility infrastructure prior to the construction starting. This bill, however, will enable a project authority to cut out work such as relocation of utilities on any land inside the design project area, provided that they later acquire the interest in the land. We want to continue to get it right, and that is why this key change will prevent project authorities from acquiring more land than might ultimately be required, which can happen between construction drawings and the as-built conditions of the utilities.

Local councils are generally the appropriate organisation to operate and maintain community assets like park benches, basketball courts and lighting, which are often constructed as part of our major and iconic transport projects. That is why this bill will enable a legal mechanism to transfer community assets constructed on Crown land to councils. This means a project authority can enter into an agreement with council to own, maintain and of course govern the use of the community assets on Crown land. This is a Labor government that delivers, and that is why we are prioritising the modernisation of the delivery powers that are aimed at reducing red tape.

Recognising the significance to the state of facilitating priority precincts, the Premier will be able to declare such precincts under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. Once declared, precincts will benefit from access to comprehensive delivery powers under the MTPFA 2009 to help to minimise

the existing challenges associated with precinct development. With more delivery tools, this will facilitate a higher volume of homes – and jobs – for Victorians that are connected to the necessary transport infrastructure and amenities that are required to support our thriving communities. The delivery powers being made available already exist and therefore do not provide any new precedents, but this will enable existing powers to be used more efficiently and more effectively for the community's benefit.

Many precincts across our state will benefit from these changes. For example, a renewal like at Fishermans Bend will be able to benefit from better land assembly and infrastructure coordination, increased integration and development, and it will generate even more value for the community. Providing these precincts with access to the delivery powers under the 2009 MTPFA will enable a more streamlined approach for its future infrastructure needs. We want to ensure that our precincts, which are critical for creating the housing and services which Victorians need, are futureproofed. That is why this bill gives precincts greater access to an expansive set of delivery powers that will make our precincts more livable, more thriving and of course more connected than ever before.

By contrast, those opposite have no plan for the future, no plan for infrastructure and, as we have heard, no plan for housing. Labor has a clear and decisive vision for Victoria's future, while those opposite failed to plan for Victoria's future needs when they were last in government. They failed to deliver on a single major project. They can sneer all they want, but it seems that John Pesutto's only plan is to sack workers, cancel the long-planned rail line to Monash Uni – which of course is Australia's largest university – delay the project, have more cars on the roads and make sure that Victorians are stuck in gridlock. Do not believe me? Every major project Labor is delivering those opposite have opposed. As we have heard before, the Libs have voted against the Metro Tunnel, the West Gate Tunnel, every single level crossing removal since 2014 – which is gobsmacking – the Suburban Rail Loop and the North East Link. Those opposite have sought to cut, close and cancel, but projects like level crossing removals are changing the way that millions of Victorians live and play and get around safer.

On this side of the house the Labor government stands on a record of delivering for the people, and we are very proud of that. We are proud of the Big Build program. We are proud of the way that it is going to shape our future – an investment in social infrastructure that Victorians have now endorsed, despite those opposite, on multiple occasions. On this side of the house we are committed to creating thousands of jobs for Victorians, ranging from construction over to engineering. As of today there are over 17,000 Victorians directly employed on Victoria's Big Build. For every 100 jobs on the Big Build about 200 more are supported through the supply chain. At peak construction, the Big Build is estimated to support 38,000 indirect jobs, and that is what matters to Victorians – jobs. Including indirect and direct, that is over 50,000 jobs across the Victorian economy. Labor is focused on delivering the projects that Victoria needs, and we are not taking a step backwards. Our government's record and the need to deliver planning and other related reforms to unlock benefits for Victorians for years to come – that is why I am proud to commend this legislation to the house.

Brad BATTIN (Berwick) (12:42): I have just been asked to keep my voice nice and calm from the other side, so I will try and keep it calm. And when I say calm, I would actually turn around and go, 'I'm still amazed that we've got Labor members of Parliament who are coming in here and reading their speeches verbatim from the notes they've obviously been given from their bosses to make sure they stay on message.' When are the backbenchers of the Labor Party going to learn to stand up and do a speech with some notes, maybe their own ideas, and have a discussion? Then we might get some real ideas and some real concepts of how it is impacting us out in our communities.

I heard from the previous speaker then, from the notes that she read verbatim – which she could have tabled – when she spoke about the issues from the Liberal government and what the Liberals did to not do anything with infrastructure and how we did not build things. Do they forget they have been in government since, effectively, 1999? In that time, out in those growth corridors, some of our wonderful areas which I have the pleasure of representing, there was commitment for the Clyde rail. Clyde rail

was promised in the 1999 election. The member for Mordialloc would remember that, because I think I just saw a photo from when he was actually at school, back in 1999, down Berwick way. 2002 – the member for Mordialloc would remember that one too because he was still at Berwick College.

A member interjected.

Brad BATTIN: I am just referring to the member for Mordialloc. He would have remembered that; he was down at Berwick College. In 2006, the year the member for Mordialloc graduated, it was promised again by the Labor government to put in the Clyde rail. 2010, 2014, and then all of a sudden it has fallen off; they have turned around and said, ‘No, we don’t need rail down in Clyde.’ But we approved all the plans to change the green wedge zone in about 2002 to ensure that we can have thousands and thousands of families move into that area down there, so we have now got a population through Clyde, Clyde North, Berwick, Berwick South, all of those areas down there, where we have had thousands of families move in, and we just simply do not have the infrastructure.

The one thing I will give Labor some credit for is that we have had transport plans in the past; I just do not give them credit for delivering those transport plans out in the growth corridors. If you drive down Clyde Road at the moment, you may as well be on a rollercoaster with the amount of potholes. The only areas of Clyde Road developed from Centre Road, effectively, all the way down to the freeway and to the Gippsland highway are areas that developers have done, so it goes in and out and causes a bottleneck of traffic. Or you could go down to Thompsons Road. Thompsons Road is an absolute nightmare. We are hearing from parents who are going to the schools down there who are travelling 30 and 40 minutes just to get to a local school around the corner from them. This means if you travel 30 or 40 minutes each way – let us just assume it is an hour – it is two hours a day to drop your kids off and pick them up from school. It is simply not good enough to say we are going to put all the planning in place to allow people to live down there but we are not putting the funding in there to connect roads. Bells Road does not connect through, and Thompsons Road should be going through to the employment zone.

I note again that the previous speaker said one of the most important things for people in Victoria is jobs. Well, if you opened up the employment land all the way from Clyde North to Clyde and out through to Officer and you connected Thompsons Road, you would create thousands of jobs. At the moment, in Casey alone, more than 70 per cent of people in Casey have to travel outside of Casey to go to work. With a population of over 300,000, you would hope that we could have created employment land to allow those people to work locally. If they could work locally, they would be home on time. They would get to see more of their family and probably would not have to worry as much about some of that travel to and from the schools. We continue to see this government talk up their big population growth and the things that they are doing, but the growth corridors continue to miss out. As this government wants to pour all its money into the Suburban Rail Loop, what they are forgetting is all of that money that goes in there is taking away further funding from development in electorates like mine and electorates like those of the members for Pakenham, Narre Warren North, Narre Warren South and Cranbourne. All of those electorates are the ones that miss out. They just do not get the infrastructure that they need to ensure that they can travel around.

You go down Pattersons Road now. Pattersons Road is the divider between me and the member for Bass. Again, we are seeing development go through that area that is out of this world. The member for Bass and I will be on a unity ticket here – the communities down there are amazing. They are absolutely amazing. What they are doing is they are developing and building really strong, united communities where they are working together. In some of these areas the crime is not as high because they have got communities that are out and about celebrating local events, making sure that they are engaged with their local community and supporting local businesses, but they are struggling to get out of the area to go anywhere. Pattersons Road leads straight down to a roundabout and effectively to a one-way road at the other end of it, which is causing issues and traffic mayhem. By the time a train station gets down there – considering it was promised in 1999 – people will have bought three or four

cars, and to change people's habits is going to be really difficult through that community. They will already have the options to drive, and we need to make sure that rail down there is an option.

The other section down there is buses. I heard the member for Shepparton was talking about the bus review. Again, we have had the bus review down our way, and that bus review from Casey council said we are so short on buses, it is unbelievable.

Michaela Settle interjected.

Brad BATTIN: You are probably reading your interjection while you are doing it as well, so that is fantastic. Thank you very much. A quick little note, signed and authorised by the Premier, was it? If you are going to sit across there and throw jibes at me, then you should maybe consider that one of the things down in the growth corridors is that growth corridors are really struggling when it comes to buses. We are having an issue down through the growth corridor with buses. We cannot get the bus –

Michaela Settle interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): Member for Eureka, you will cease interjecting. Member for Berwick, you will go through the Chair.

Brad BATTIN: Through the Chair, maybe the member for Eureka would like to come down and look at the bus review for the areas of Clyde, Clyde North and all of Casey, where people cannot get a bus. You cannot get public transport around. The government brags that they like to put buses within 400 metres of every home to ensure people can travel about without using their vehicles and stay off the road, yet you cannot get a bus through most of these new estates down there. And when I say 'new estates', they end up talking 10 years before they put the buses in some of these communities, and if they continue to wait for some of these buses to come on, again, people do not have faith that the system is there to transport them around.

The other thing that has been found in the bus reviews down there is the buses go through the estates and effectively go through five, six or seven estates to go from point A to point B. An example would be from Pakenham through to Fountain Gate. People are not going to get a bus that is going through nine different estates if it is going to take them an hour and a half to travel what should be a 20-minute trip. We need to have that review looking at what Casey and Cardinia have done and the work they have put forward with this – and the bus associations – and have transport channels so we can go straight through so people know that if they get on the bus at 9 in the morning they could be at Fountain Gate at 20 past 9 in the morning, not at 20 past 10. If they are going to be wasting an hour or an hour and 20 minutes on a bus when they could be doing those trips in 20 minutes, they are just not going to do it.

So as the government comes in here and talks about any transport plans and transport things they have delivered, they have got to start to look at the growth corridors. It is the growth corridors that continuously get neglected by Labor. They continuously do not get the funding that they need. Every council through our area continues to call for the funding that we need for the roads and the infrastructure. They are doing the work the government should do when it comes to the bus reviews. They have got it on a platter ready for the government to go. They just need to look at it.

Acting Speaker Farnham, I know even down in your area when we go down through Warragul we are starting to see that growth now. What an opportunity for the government to actually go to Drouin where they are seeing the growth and Warragul where they are seeing the growth and start the planning, not just planning transport hubs to come back into the city or make a train that goes faster. Why aren't we looking at how we are creating jobs out through Warragul and Drouin? Then people in Pakenham and Casey can have a different direction to go for future employment. That eases pressure on the public transport system and on the roads. We get to see opportunities for families to actually go for local jobs – hopefully some well-paid jobs down through those communities – and they can come back and travel home easier. More importantly it will also take people from Warragul and Drouin off

the road, who are travelling through those areas in growth corridors, reducing the amount of transport we need through there.

We have seen too often this government come in here and pat themselves on the back and try and say that everything is the Liberal government's fault from our four years in government. It is about time that someone on the other side had a little footnote at the end of the notes given to them by the minister that says, 'It's about time we, the Victorian Labor Party, take responsibility for the failures that we have in relation to public transport, to transport infrastructure, to the roads, to the maintenance of the roads across this state and why people in growth corridors continuously get neglected.' Why does it take them so long to travel from their house to the Monash Freeway and then half the time effectively from there into the city? The roads around those growth corridors are a disgrace, and it is about time this government took responsibility.

Ros SPENCE (Kalkallo – Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Community Sport, Minister for Carers and Volunteers) (12:52): I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

Ordered that debate be adjourned until later this day.

Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Tim Pallas:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Michael O'BRIEN (Malvern) (12:53): In the absence of the member for Frankston, who I think still had about a minute or 2 minutes to go – he has clearly given up, he has already gone home, he does not want to finish his contribution on this bill – I am very happy to step into the breach. Don't you love it when the chickens come home to roost? It was back in 2017 when this government increased taxes on off-the-plan apartments. We warned them that it was not going to work. We warned the government that it was an economically dumb thing to do, and the reason why it was an economically dumb thing to do is very simple. To get a new apartment complex off the ground financially, you need to pre-sell a lot of them. The banks actually need to know that there are financial commitments there before they will lend money to a developer to build a new apartment project. The only reason why people would precommit to a new property they have not even seen yet is if there is a substantial financial benefit for them to do so. That was what the whole off-the-plan discount was about.

People are taking a risk when they buy off the plan, because they do not see the final product. You have already committed to buying it. You buy off the plan based on maybe a display suite, based on plans and designs, based on the marketing material, but you do not actually know exactly what you are getting. In order for you to take that chance that what you sign up for may not be what you get or may not be to your liking, you have got to have a big incentive for people to do that, and that is what the off-the-plan stamp duty concession was about. For those who do not know how it works, effectively if you buy off the plan then you only pay stamp duty on the value of the land at the time of that contract being signed. So if it is signed before the building is built, then the stamp duty only applies to the unenhanced land and therefore it is a much bigger saving.

In 2017 this government, through one of its I think now 55 new or increased taxes, and the Treasurer decided to get rid of the off-the-plan stamp duty concession for everybody except for owner-occupiers. The fact is that a lot of apartments are bought by investors. As soon as you say to investors, 'We don't want you to buy off the plan,' because as I said there is no reason why you would buy off the plan unless you get a financial benefit for it, you are basically taking them out of the market. The fact is

there are just not enough owner-occupiers who are willing to stand up and get these projects off the ground, and that has led to a reduction in supply. So when this government talks about responding to a housing crisis, it is a housing crisis which this government itself has largely contributed to, because this government made deliberate taxation decisions to stop apartments being built in 2017 when it got rid of the off-the-plan stamp duty concession for investors.

The Real Estate Institute of Victoria warned the government at the time. I understand the Treasurer probably did not want to get free advice from the former Treasurer, the Shadow Treasurer as I was at the time, but he could have listened to the REIV. Here is what the REIV said back in 2017:

The REIV does not support the removal of the off-the-plan concessions for investors. This change will reduce the attractiveness of property investment in Victoria, further limiting rental supply at a time when vacancy rates are already tightening.

The government was warned. They were warned by the people who actually know the property industry pretty well, the Real Estate Institute of Victoria, that this was going to hurt supply, and that is exactly what happened. When I started off my contribution by talking about chickens coming home to roost, that is what I meant. This government were warned that what they were doing was economically reckless, was going to lead to a reduction in supply of new apartments, and yet the government ploughed on and did it anyway, and now all Victorians are reaping the consequences of this government's failures.

Of course the government cannot even bring itself to fully reverse its tax increases from 2017. It is trying to sell it as a great tax cut, but it applies only for 12 months. This is not a permanent change; this is a temporary change. It is trying to roll something in glitter and pass it off –

Juliana Addison: Roll what in glitter?

Michael O'BRIEN: Something. I will let you fill in the gaps, member for Wendouree. So I actually feel very sorry for the Labor backbench, who have obviously been instructed to come in here and try and big this up and sell this as being a great tax cut, when all it is is a temporary relief from a new tax that Labor imposed, which it is going to go back on in 12 months time.

Tim Richardson interjected.

Michael O'BRIEN: I would not talk about polls if I were you. The REIV warned the government at the time. I warned the government at the time. Anybody with half a brain warned the government at the time, but this government of course thinks it knows better. How much did the government make when it imposed these new taxes back in 2017? \$841.2 million was the additional revenue over the forward estimates? \$841.2 million. The government says that this one-off 12-month tax relief will cost \$55 million, so clearly the government does not think –

The ACTING SPEAKER (Wayne Farnham): At this point in time we are going to break for lunch, and hopefully everyone will get off the red cordial.

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

Business interrupted under standing orders.

Questions without notice and ministers statements

Child protection

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (14:02): My question is to the Premier. The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's quarterly report shows that 17 children known to them died in 2023–24, but according to the annual report tabled today, the independent commissioner for children and young people was notified of 43 child deaths in 2023–24. Why is the Premier trying to cover up the true number of deaths of children known to the government?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:03): In answering the member for South-West Coast’s question, at the outset can I reject the claim that she has made in her question. It is incorrect. As the member has noted, the report was tabled in the Parliament today. The Minister for Children has spoken about this in the other place and also has addressed the media on this matter. As I said to the house on Tuesday, any death of any child is indeed a tragedy, and we hold very firmly at the centre of the work that we do supporting children –

Roma Britnell: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, I have the documents to prove the evidence: the 43 deaths in this one and the 17 deaths in this one. I am happy to table that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Roma Britnell: Misleading the house.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order, and the member knows that such things need to be done in a different way.

Jacinta ALLAN: As I said, any death of any child is a tragedy, and when we consider these matters in this place we should come to this discussion in a manner that befits the gravity of the subject matter that we are talking about. As I have just indicated, we will always prioritise the health and safety of children. As the Minister for Children has acknowledged, and I do as well, we always acknowledge that there is more that we can do. In addition to the additional investment, the additional reforms that the minister and the government are working on, we know that there is more work that can be done both within the department but also right across government. And this is the work that the minister is doing right now. It is important work, and –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, under standing order 58 the Premier does have to be direct, and this question went to the department’s under-reporting of deaths and the decision by the government to under-report. I would ask you to bring the Premier back to the decision to under-report deaths.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On the point of order, Deputy Speaker, there is no point of order. The Premier is being both direct and factual in her response, and I ask that you rule the point of order out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant to the question asked. A point of order is not an opportunity to debate the matter.

Jacinta ALLAN: While we do that work, I would also like to acknowledge those frontline workers who work in really tough situations, but always with the care of vulnerable little Victorians absolutely at the front of everything they do.

Roma BRITNELL (South-West Coast) (14:06): WD, a vulnerable 12-year-old girl with the intellectual age of a six-year-old, spent three years in residential care being preyed upon and prostituted before she was charged with murder. In the annual report released today, the commissioner for children and young people took an unprecedented step, saying:

For the first time, I decided to share an individual inquiry with the premier of Victoria, as I am determined that WD’s experience prompts real change.

In taking such an extraordinary step, hasn’t the commissioner highlighted that the Premier has done nothing to stop children being prostituted and dying in government care?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:07): Again the conclusion that the member draws from the commissioner writing to me is one that I just do not agree with, and I do not believe it is borne out in any evidence that is being presented by the member. Again I would absolutely caution any member going into the specifics of any case, and I am certainly not going to do so, because I am also not able to legally comment on this or any other individual case. Just as I said earlier –

John Pesutto: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, on relevance, the commissioner for young people states in her report that she had to take an extraordinary step of raising the matter and she published that in her annual report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point of order was on relevance. The Premier is being relevant to the question asked.

Jacinta ALLAN: There is no dispute, and I acknowledged at the outset in my answer to the question that I have acknowledged receipt of the commissioner's correspondence. What I am not legally bound to – indeed none of us should be – is commenting on the specifics of this individual case. It is deeply inappropriate. I will say – *(Time expired)*

Ministers statements: Auburn South Primary School

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:08): I wish today to use this opportunity in the house to acknowledge and thank and pay tribute to the Auburn South Primary School community. This morning the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and I visited the school, as the minister did yesterday as well. We visited the school to pay our respects following that awful, tragic accident that occurred on Tuesday afternoon.

At the outset I would like to acknowledge the principal Marcus Wicher, the teachers and support staff at Auburn South Primary School, and I thank them. I had the opportunity today to speak to a number of them and thank them on behalf of the Victorian community for their care and their dedication. Their focus today and yesterday and tomorrow and next week on supporting their students is just remarkable, and I thank them for that dedication. It demonstrates the best of our education system; it demonstrates the best of our community.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the work of our first responders – the professionals, the paramedics, the police and the other emergency services. I thank them for their professional response but acknowledge that as people, as humans, they too will have been deeply touched by this tragic accident.

Also, over the past 48 hours we have seen an outpouring of love and support for the Auburn South Primary School community, which I was also able to convey to the school today. We saw that as well with the flowers and tributes that are being presented to the school from people right across the community. The Department of Education has significant resources that are being placed within the school, and they will need to be there for some time. It will be some time for this ongoing process of healing to be undertaken. In finishing, I do extend condolences to the family of little Jack, his mum and dad Michael and Jayde, his sisters Olivia and Charlotte, and all of his classmates, who are grieving the loss of their mate Jack.

Government performance

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:10): My question is to the Premier. According to IBAC's most recent perceptions-of-corruption survey, 69 per cent of Victorian public servants agree that corruption is a problem in Victoria, almost double the 2016 figure. Why has the Premier failed to support public servants and tackle corruption in Victoria?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:11): In answering the question – and I note that I will be entirely relevant to the question in answering it in this way – I absolutely reject the claim that the Leader of the Opposition has made. I absolutely reject –

John Pesutto interjected.

Jacinta ALLAN: The Leader of the Opposition may remember well that we actually passed legislation in this place when we came to government to strengthen IBAC's powers. We have also put legislation through the Parliament and have now introduced a parliamentary integrity commissioner,

whose work will also commence. As I said yesterday, I am proud to work with a strong public service that is focused on delivering frontline services to the Victorian community.

John PESUTTO (Hawthorn – Leader of the Opposition) (14:12): Yesterday and today the Premier directly attacked IBAC by describing data from their perceptions-of-corruption survey as ‘false’, ‘baseless’ and ‘untrustworthy’. Why do Labor premiers always try and undermine our independent integrity agencies?

Members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my right, I need to be able to hear the question. Leader of the Opposition, could you repeat the question at the end there, please.

John PESUTTO: Why do Labor premiers always try and undermine our independent integrity agencies?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:12): This is a deeply dishonest misrepresentation of the comments I have made, and they are deeply dishonest because that is the form of the Leader of the Opposition. I went through yesterday the actions of a previous Liberal government that sacked an Auditor-General, that interfered with the office of the chief commissioner and that had numerous Ombudsman’s reports; Fishermans Bend and the office of living it up come to mind. I am proud that we lead a government that has strong public servants working with us. We have strengthened the role of IBAC, and we respect them. When it comes to respecting the work of independent officers, I draw the Leader of the Opposition’s attention to the comments made by his own Shadow Attorney-General on the appointment of an Ombudsman. I am not going to repeat those comments, because they were disgraceful and they were attacking an independent officer of this Parliament.

Ministers statements: planning policy

Sonya KILKENNY (Carrum – Minister for Planning, Minister for the Suburbs) (14:13): More homes means more opportunities. Last week we announced more ways we are going to build more homes for Victorians, especially young Victorians. We are going to build thousands more homes near trains and trams. We are slashing stamp duty to make it cheaper for Victorians to buy an apartment, unit or townhouse off the plan. We are delivering the longest ever pipeline of new greenfield land – 10 years worth of family homes and backyards. And we are making it easier to subdivide, kickstarting a townhouse revolution, an achievable dream for millennials.

This week we got right back on with the job of getting more homes built. Earlier this week we said yes to nearly 1000 new homes at the Waterfront precinct in Docklands, and we have just said yes to 60 new homes in Glen Iris with improved architectural design through the government’s development facilitation program. Best of all, 10 per cent of these homes will now be affordable. So that is more homes – more affordable homes – close to services and close to medical centres, shops and local parks, built alongside a new supermarket and within 500 metres of a tram stop.

Members interjecting.

Sonya KILKENNY: It seems the local member does not want more affordable homes, and maybe it is time for the member for Malvern to explain himself to young Victorians.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, may I refer you to Speaker Brooks’s ruling that it is inappropriate for a ministers statement to be used to attack the opposition – the ministers statement whereby the minister is confirming the donor development that she has approved.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: We all thank Speaker Brooks for his contributions.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On the point of order, Deputy Speaker, a point of order is not an opportunity for the Manager of Opposition Business to cast imputations against the Minister for Planning. Under standing order 118, I ask that you ask the member to withdraw the imputation that he has made.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the House, I am about to rule on the point of order. Manager of Opposition Business, I will rule on your point of order. As per Minister Brooks's ruling, it is not an opportunity to attack the opposition. I ask the minister to resume her ministers statement.

Sonya KILKENNY: We do not do dodgy deals with developers. If you want to make an allegation, you take it outside.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the minister has just approved the development from a donor and is throwing money –

Members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order or will be removed.

Sonya KILKENNY: It is Halloween after all, you spooky members. You put fear into communities in Hawthorn, in Malvern, in Brighton. We get on and build more homes for Victorians because that is what they want our government to do.

Economic policy

Brad ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (14:18): My question is to the Premier. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Budget Office has found that every single Victorian now carries a debt burden of \$19,500, higher than the Commonwealth and every other state. Is it the government's plan that this figure will go down next year?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:19): I thank the member for his question because it gives me the opportunity in answering his question directly to remind the member that we outlined our fiscal strategy at budget time, which goes directly to the question that the member asked. As part of our fiscal strategy of course we are focused on growing our strong economy – an economy that has seen more jobs created in this state in the last 12 months than any other state, a state that is attracting more business investment than any other state –

John Pesutto: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, it is a question about debt, very clearly.

Jacinta ALLAN: On the point of order, Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition is busy interjecting and not listening to the answer to the question that was asked by his colleague, but I directly answered the question at the outset. I directly answered that question at the outset, and I was providing some further detail to support that to the member.

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

Jacinta ALLAN: I appreciate that the Leader of the Opposition does not want me to remind him and the house that we are predicted to be the fastest growing economy over the next five years by Deloitte Access Economics and that we have created more jobs than any other state in the nation, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics – 130,000 more jobs, more than any other state.

Brad Rowswell: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the Premier is not being directly relevant to the question. It was a very specific question asking whether debt will be reduced next year. The Premier has gone nowhere near to directly answering that question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Sandringham knows that points of order are not an opportunity to repeat the question. The Premier was being relevant to the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: As I said, we outlined that fiscal strategy at budget time, and I am sure we could provide the member with another copy of the budget papers for him to be reminded of that fiscal strategy, which answers his question directly. I was going to remind the member too that not only have we in Victoria created more jobs than any other state, but we are building, approving and completing more homes than any other state and we have the strongest business investment of any other state. These are facts that are provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Of course there are alternative

approaches that you see – for example, ones that come from the United States of America, where they have debt ceilings in place, which we see results in a US-style public health system. If you had a debt ceiling in place in this state, it would result in a US-style public health system. We know that approach is all about cuts and closures, which Victorians know is a Victorian Liberal government true to form.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before the supplementary question, the noise level is too high on both sides of the chamber, and I will remove members.

Brad ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (14:22): By 2028 the Commonwealth PBO forecasts that every single Victorian will carry a debt burden of \$25,100 due to Labor’s financial mismanagement. Has the Premier been advised whether the Commonwealth PBO’s forecast is wrong?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:23): When it comes to referring to decisions made by Commonwealth agencies, I remind the member that we will always advocate very, very strongly for a fairer share of infrastructure funding, for example. It has got everything to do with answering the question –

Brad Rowswell: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, on relevance – direct relevance – the Premier has gone nowhere near to answering the very direct and specific question which I posed.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Premier was being relevant to the question as far as Commonwealth agencies go.

Jacinta ALLAN: The reason why this is important of course is because we continue to seek support from federal governments for the delivery of productive infrastructure and for the support of our schools and hospitals, like any other state. This is an important point when it comes to how revenue is collected in this country by state and federal governments. Victorians are federal taxpayers too, which is why we will continue to advocate for a fairer share of funding.

Brad Rowswell: On a point of order, it was a very specific question, Deputy Speaker: has the Premier received advice that the Commonwealth PBO is wrong?

Michaela Settle interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Eureka can leave the chamber for half an hour.

Member for Eureka withdrew from chamber.

Brad Rowswell: The Premier has not answered that very specific question, and I would ask you to bring her back to the question which I asked.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Premier was being relevant to the question asked. The Premier has her concluded answer.

Ministers statements: housing

Colin BROOKS (Bundoora – Minister for Development Victoria, Minister for Precincts, Minister for Creative Industries) (14:24): I remember a time when the seat of Richmond had a Labor member of Parliament who knew that their job was delivering for the people of Richmond – not protesting, not dividing the community, but delivering great facilities and great outcomes for that local community. There is no better example of Richard Wynne’s legacy in that electorate than in the Fitzroy Gasworks redevelopment. The Labor government has taken one of the dirtiest sites in the country, remediated that site and produced a wonderful senior secondary campus for local high schools: the Wurun campus, where students are able to come and learn in great facilities; and the Bundha Sports Centre, a wonderful sporting centre with four netball and basketball courts, a futsal court, a gym, a whole range of other facilities – all the bells and whistles. The name ‘Bundha’ was gifted by the Wurundjeri people, by Aunty Gail Smith. It is a wonderful example.

Today, with the Premier, the Minister for Planning and Mr Erdogan from the other place, we announced that 820 new homes will be delivered at that precinct. Twenty per cent of those homes will be affordable, so that means there will be more affordable options for people who want to live in that wonderful area close to transport and close to services, giving people great opportunities. Of that affordable housing, the 20 per cent, there will be social housing, disability housing and a great partnership in one of the parcels of land down there with Nightingale Housing, who do great work. While those opposite – the Liberals, the Nationals and the Greens – do everything they can to block and oppose housing, this side of the house gets on and delivers housing because we know that more homes means more opportunities.

Electoral reform

Tim READ (Brunswick) (14:26): My question is for the Premier. Australian voters can allocate their own preferences when voting above the line for the upper house in other states and federally but not here in Victoria. In this state above-the-line preferences are directed by parties using group voting tickets, which can be gamed to elect parties off microscopic votes. Western Australia got rid of this system after their last election, when the Daylight Saving Party was elected off 98 votes. Will Labor trust Victorians to direct their own preferences at the next state election?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Brunswick, could you rephrase that question to directly relate to government business – just the last part?

Tim READ: Will government policy allow Victorians to direct their own preferences at the next state election?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:28): Deputy Speaker, I see you have invoked the mercy rule with that question. The member for Brunswick and indeed many members of the house who are interested in these matters know that the Electoral Matters Committee have handed down their report, as they are required to do following the conduct of every state election. I am sure, by the sound of the question from the member for Brunswick, that it is not just the government that is considering the recommendations in that report. It appears that other members of Parliament are considering the recommendations in that report. I did reflect as the member was asking his question whether there was an element of conflict that should be declared in asking the question, given the results that the Greens political party, I am advised, have experienced in recent times, whether it is in Yarra or Brisbane. But I will leave it for the member for Brunswick to self-declare those matters. As I said, there is a committee report that the government is considering its response to. We will respond in due course.

Tim READ (Brunswick) (14:30): With the manipulation of group voting tickets by cartels of micro-parties that pay for a seat in Parliament – it is really quite astonishing that it took the WA government just a few weeks after that election result to resolve to eliminate group voting tickets, whereas we have put up with it for years and years and years – there is a success fee of \$55,000 to buy a seat in the Legislative Council. So the question is: will the government allow Victorian voters to be manipulated for cash by this unrepresentative system in 2026 because it gives Labor the result it wants?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:31): Goodness me. I thought the opposition were the only ones asking questions with a complete lack of evidence and substance, but it appears the Greens have joined in as well. In rejecting much of the colourful flourish, or the beige-style flourish, from the member for Brunswick in his question – there is so much that is wrong with that question that I do not have time in the 34 seconds available to unpack it – I repeat my earlier answer to the substantive question on the substantive issue, which is: we are considering the Electoral Matters Committee report and we will respond in due course.

Ministers statements: Victorian energy upgrades program

Lily D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park – Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Energy and Resources, Minister for the State Electricity Commission) (14:32): I am delighted to update the house on how the Allan Labor government is not only building more homes and more opportunities for Victorians but helping to make existing homes more comfortable to live in and cheaper to run. Demand for energy-efficient space heaters, heat pumps and hot-water systems has skyrocketed under our Victorian energy upgrades program since last year. Why? Because Victorians know that going electric can save them thousands of dollars off their energy bills every year. Using our discounts, Victorians have installed enough electric energy-efficient space heaters to remove a million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions since last year alone. Victorians have saved up to \$3600 on new heating systems with the VEU discount, and the benefits do not stop there. You can save \$600 each and every year on your energy bills – real savings in your pocket, not in the gas companies' pockets.

The member for Tarneit will be glad to know that homes in his electorate have received these discounts for more than 1100 heating and hot-water systems since mid last year. Close behind is the member for Narre Warren South's electorate, over 1000; in Werribee, 960; in Melton, 855; and in Laverton and Cranbourne, 840. But for all other members of this place I also have good news, because every single household and business saves money because of the VEU. Why is that? That is because energy-efficient appliances reduce our demand on energy, which reduces wholesale electricity prices for everybody. This is one of the reasons why we consistently have the lowest wholesale electricity prices in the country. The previous Liberal government tried to kill the VEU program and failed. Like all zombies on Halloween, they will always come back for a repeat performance – zombie blockers, one and all. Instead we will keep helping Victorians save money on their energy bills every day.

Economic policy

Jess WILSON (Kew) (14:34): My question is to the Premier. How much interest are Victorians paying on our net debt each day?

Members interjecting.

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:34): I have had some assistance from my colleagues. As they pointed out, this is a question that was asked and addressed yesterday in this place.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, on relevance, three times the Premier has been asked this question in relation to debt and interest, and the Premier is yet to answer the question.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On the point of order, Deputy Speaker, the Premier has been on her feet for 15 seconds. She is being entirely relevant to the question. I ask that you rule the point of order out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Premier has just started her response and will continue.

Jacinta ALLAN: As I indicated in the 15 seconds after I started answering the question, this question was asked and addressed yesterday in this place. Also, alongside the reporting that happens each and every year and throughout the year through the budget papers, of course we know that interest rates also have some fluidity depending on what the Reserve Bank decides at its regular board meetings. What we are focused on every day is continuing to grow the economy, creating more jobs than any other state –

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the Premier is debating the question. Repeatedly the Premier has been asked how much the interest is – repeatedly – and the Premier is refusing to answer the question. It is just evasive.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Premier is being relevant to the question asked and will continue, preferably in silence.

Jacinta ALLAN: As I was saying, it is no coincidence that every time I talk about Victoria creating more jobs than any other state in the nation the opposition jump up and do a point of order at that precise moment, because these are facts that they do not like to hear. They do not like to hear that the Victorian economy is forecast to grow strongly, and we will continue to support the strength of our economy. We will not be introducing cuts like the Liberal Party are proposing to do, as they revealed just this very week.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, the Premier is required to be direct and relevant. Three times the Premier has been asked about interest in Victoria – three times. The Premier is not going anywhere near the question that was asked. This is an important question, and I would ask you to ask the Premier to address the question.

Mary-Anne Thomas: On the point of order, Deputy Speaker, we know the member for Brighton loves the sound of his own voice – getting up constantly and interrupting the Premier, who has been directly relevant to the question that was asked of her – and I ask that you rule him out of order.

John Pesutto: On the point of order, Deputy Speaker, we cannot make the question any simpler. If the Premier does not want to answer it, she should simply tell the Victorian people that the Premier will refuse to answer the question. How much interest are Victorians paying every day? It is a simple question; we just want a number.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: A question was asked about net debt. The answer was answering on net debt. The Premier was being relevant to the question. I am not in a position to tell the Premier how to answer her question, as you have heard before. The Premier has finished her answer.

Jess WILSON (Kew) (14:39): The Premier has now been asked three times how much interest Victorians are paying on our net debt every day. Is the Premier so financially incompetent that she cannot answer basic questions about the budget?

Jacinta ALLAN (Bendigo East – Premier) (14:39): I again remind the Shadow Minister for Finance that this information and information that is contained in many of the questions that are asked by the opposition is published regularly through the budget papers. But really, as we know, when it comes to supporting Victorian workers, when it comes to supporting Victorian families, Victorians know that they can trust Labor governments to look after them, as opposed to those opposite, who have revealed their plans for cuts, who have revealed their plans for a US-style –

Members interjecting.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am not sure who that was, but you are warned.

Jess Wilson: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, on relevance, this was about financial incompetence and the budget. And just so the Premier knows, it is \$17.8 million every single day.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Premier was being relevant to the question. A point of order is not an opportunity to repeat the question.

Jacinta ALLAN: And just so Victorians know, the Liberal Party revealed this week that once again they will cut those frontline services the Victorian community relies on.

Ministers statements: education funding

Ben CARROLL (Niddrie – Minister for Education, Minister for Medical Research) (14:41): I am delighted to update the house on how the Allan Labor government is building schools in great communities right across our state – \$36 billion invested by our government in education and \$17 billion in infrastructure. That has created more than 2200 places right across our state, transforming communities by transforming education and facilities – Best Start, Best Life, primary school, secondary, and post year 12. We plan and we invest.

When they were last in office Fishermans Bend, the largest renewal project in the nation, was planned without one school, without one kindergarten and without a secondary school. We in the Allan Labor government are building all three. Let us go to the last election. They promised only four schools to be built at the last election. But it gets better: ‘Naphine promises 3D printers for every government school’. We are going to build schools; they were going to print them.

On this side of the chamber we will always invest in education. The last time they were in office they never planned and they never bought any land, but they cut Reading Recovery, they cut Free Fruit Friday and they cut the education maintenance allowance. Under our government, education is every person’s ticket to having a life of prosperity. It is transformational, every investment we make in education. We make sure every student gets to live their first and best life, and we will keep investing in education. While over there is a wall of noise, we will keep focusing on our teachers and our school students.

Constituency questions

Lowan electorate

Emma KEALY (Lowan) (14:44): (880) My constituency question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the information I seek is: how many people will have to die at the Eurambeen-Streatham Road and Glenelg Highway intersection before the roundabout is completed? It is so devastating to hear that just last Sunday we lost another local life at this extraordinarily dangerous intersection. This is something that I have been campaigning for since at least 2017. It was back in that time period where flashing lights were installed. We did see in 2020 that the federal and state governments put money towards installing a roundabout. But here we are four years later, the roundabout has not commenced and we have had another fatality. It is very difficult for the local CFA volunteers who have to turn up to these incidents. I am getting letters from them. I ask the minister to support our community to ensure that this roundabout is installed as soon as possible.

Narre Warren North electorate

Belinda WILSON (Narre Warren North) (14:45): (881) My question is to the Minister for Environment. Given the container deposit scheme has just celebrated its one-year anniversary, how many of my constituents in Narre Warren North have claimed a refund? The container deposit centre in Hallam is the fifth-biggest collection in Australia and has made a huge difference to people’s hip pockets as well as sports clubs and many charities.

Evelyn electorate

Bridget VALLENCE (Evelyn) (14:46): (882) Hereford Road, Mount Evelyn, particularly between Birmingham and Rangeview Roads, is dangerous and congested. Hundreds of residents, from young children accessing the sports facilities to families and the elderly crossing to the shops or the medical clinic, are concerned for their safety as a result of regular accidents and near misses. My question is to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety. What is the Department of Transport and Planning’s position on the proposed development at 19–23 Hereford Road in Mount Evelyn? Yarra Ranges council’s decision about the planning applications shows the department found the access arrangement is incompatible with the operation of Hereford Road and the proposal would lead to unacceptable road safety outcomes. I have called on the state government since 2022 in Parliament to fix this dangerous road. If this proposed new development proceeds, it will significantly increase traffic on this already congested road, and the state government would need to plan significant road safety upgrades as a result. The Mount Evelyn community deserves to know what the government and Department of Transport and Planning’s position is on this development at 19–23 Hereford Road, Mount Evelyn.

Laverton electorate

Sarah CONNOLLY (Laverton) (14:47): (883) My question is for the Minister for Planning. As part of the fantastic announcements made last week, the minister and the Premier announced that we will be creating a simpler, more efficient system to tackle developer contributions towards state infrastructure. As the minister knows, areas like ours in Wyndham benefit from growth areas infrastructure contribution funding, whereas in other local government areas these contributions are directly collected by council. It is this GAIC funding that has been instrumental in delivering so many minor infrastructure projects and upgrades across Wyndham. In 2020 this funding also helped to establish two new bus routes in Wyndham, including the 152 bus service, which connects Tarneit to Williams Landing station via Allura estate in Truganina. More recently, this year's round of GAIC funding releases saw over \$46 million in funding for local infrastructure, including \$39.6 million for another new bus route connecting Tarneit and Laverton stations via Trug North. So my question is this: how will these reforms to developer contributions benefit communities in Laverton?

Brighton electorate

James NEWBURY (Brighton) (14:48): (884) My question is to the Premier, and I ask: when will the Premier consult with Bayside about her intention to allow 20-storey high-rise towers in my community? Without showing any community respect, the Premier recently snuck into a locked Brighton building to announce the Labor government's intention to approve high-rise towers around Church Street and Bay Street in Brighton and Hampton Street in Hampton. This follows the previously announced approval of high-rise towers at Hampton East's South Road intersection. We know that Labor have not just approved towers, but they will also allow six-storey buildings in suburban streets almost 1 kilometre away from shopping strips. An immediate community petition against the Premier's attack has gained 3500 local signatures. To date, the Premier has not released any of her secret mapping or any of her secret planning changes or guaranteed any proper community consultation. My community knows that the Premier is sacrificing the livability of our city for population growth. Her record will be of wrecking our city, despite living 150 kilometres away.

Mulgrave electorate

Eden FOSTER (Mulgrave) (14:49): (885) My question is directed to the Treasurer, and my question is: how many people in the Mulgrave electorate are estimated to benefit from the stamp duty concession changes made last week to off-the-plan units? The government has recently announced a swathe of policies to help improve housing stock and get more young people into their own home. My office has already had a number of constituents contact us indicating how excited they are for these changes, and I am looking forward to the Treasurer's response.

Sandringham electorate

Brad ROWSWELL (Sandringham) (14:49): (886) My constituency question is to the Premier. Members of my community are hardworking people. They pay their taxes, they earn a wage, they provide for themselves, they provide for their families and they contribute through their volunteer and charitable works back to our community. It is the people of my community that make our community such a great place to live, to work and to thrive. But they have been burdened by the financial mismanagement of this Labor government over the last 10 years. They are being burdened with \$19,500 in state government debt on the head of every man, woman and child, as revealed by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Budget Office today. So I ask the Premier: when will the Premier reduce Labor's debt burden for the hardworking taxpayers in my community?

Albert Park electorate

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (14:50): (887) My question is for the Minister for Education. Many families in my constituency are eager to learn more about the Victorian school saving bonus and how it can support their children's education. How is this Allan Labor government supporting local schools and families in my electorate of Albert Park?

Morwell electorate

Martin CAMERON (Morwell) (14:50): (888) My question is for the Minister for Education regarding the Victorian School Building Authority's make-safe program, and my question is: can you explain why Moe's Albert Street Primary School must fund critical permanent repairs out of their operating budget? During the recent Parliament-in-schools session in Albert Street I observed a sectioned-off area in the main thoroughfare with removed flooring and walls and plastic barriers, and I was informed that it had been in place for over 12 months. I learned that while the make-safe program is meant to address emergency remediation works, this particular space has remained unstable and unsafe since October 2023. The school have been told they must fund the permanent repairs, estimated at over \$25,000, from their own operating budget. This presents a substantial financial burden for the school. I understand that other schools in my electorate also face similar issues. Minister, could you explain why the Moe Albert Street Primary School must fund these permanent repairs out of their own budget?

Kororoit electorate

Luba GRIGOROVITCH (Kororoit) (14:52): (889) My question is for the Minister for Public and Active Transport. Minister, as we discussed when you visited the electorate, residents of the growing suburb of Aintree have raised with me the challenges they face when accessing public transport. Currently Aintree residents are serviced by bus route 444 every 40 minutes, and this increases to 20 minutes during peak times. This bus route does a loop around the beautiful suburb of Aintree to collect residents wanting to go to Rockbank station. However, residents have expressed that this service is well utilised and is often at capacity. My community are avid users of public transport, and they want to ensure that we continue to improve our public transport network as the community continues to grow. Can the minister investigate opportunities to increase the capacity and access to public transport for the residents of Aintree?

Rulings from the Chair**Constituency questions**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (14:53): Yesterday the Manager of Opposition Business took a point of order regarding an answer to a constituency question from the Premier, which the Speaker took on notice. Members may ask ministers questions about the service delivery and policies in their departments. It is not in order to put to a minister a question for which another minister is more directly responsible – see Erskine May, 25th edition, paragraph 22.17. There are a couple of provisos to that. Where a question cuts across more than one portfolio area it is admissible to direct a question to the Premier, and as the Premier is the leader of the government, questions about government administration overall may also be directed to them. However, it is open to any minister, including the Premier, to provide a response that indicates the question is better directed to a minister with primary portfolio responsibility. Equally, the minister or Premier can simply ask another minister to provide a response. An answer specifying that another minister is better placed to answer is a valid answer. I do not uphold the point of order.

James Newbury: On a point of order, Deputy Speaker, on clarification, is that upholding now a rule that a Premier is not capable of answering a question and therefore will pass issues to subordinate ministers because the Premier is unable to answer them? I do make the point again that I never saw the former Premier not able to answer a question put through adjournment or constituency questions.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is going a little outside a point of order. The ruling is the ruling. Should you wish to discuss it with me or the Speaker outside the chamber, that is completely appropriate. I am happy to do so, and presumably the Speaker will be back very soon.

*Bills***Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024***Second reading***Debate resumed.**

Michael O'BRIEN (Malvern) (14:55): I should probably thank the Heart Foundation for the free socks I got for my heart health check during the lunchbreak. They were quite surprised. They said, 'You used to be Treasurer, didn't you?' I said yes. They said, 'We didn't think you had a heart.' I do have a heart, but apparently the blood pressure is a little bit high. Who would have thought, being in this place, that your blood pressure could get up? But anyway, there we go.

We are debating this 'chickens come home to roost' bill, as I call it, because this is the government that of course made a big song and dance about having a tiny, temporary, 12-month reduction in a new tax that it imposed itself. It smashed Victorian taxpayers for \$841.2 million over the forward estimates in 2017 when it abolished the off-the-plan stamp duty concession. The government was warned. Forget what I said, but the government was warned by the Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV) that abolishing that concession was simply going to crush supply in the apartment market, and so it came to pass. The government increased taxes. The government took the investors out of the off-the-plan market. It meant fewer projects got up, and then that led to a housing crisis.

The government is now trying to make a song and dance about fixing problems of its own creation. A little bit of humility would not go astray. I would love to see the Treasurer come in here one day and say, 'Look, I'm sorry. I got it wrong, and now we're trying to fix my mistake.' No. He comes in here and asks everyone to pretend that it is some great tax cut when it is a minor, temporary reduction in a tax that he himself imposed. There are only two ministers in this government who have been ministers for the same portfolios all the way through. One is the Treasurer and one is the Minister for Energy and Resources. When you look at those two portfolios – and we read in the paper today about Victorian gas prices going up again – you have to say they are two of the worst performing ministers across the 10 years of this Labor government. Why the Premier keeps them in those portfolios is beyond me, because from a Treasury point of view we are clearly the worst state in the country. We have had the highest unemployment every month for the last six months. We have got the highest taxes in the country. We have got the highest debt in the country. This government just has lost the plot.

We are not going to oppose a bill that delivers a tiny, temporary reprieve for 12 months of a tax that the Labor government imposed. We are not going to be bloody-minded. We actually want to see lower taxes across Victoria. But please, spare us the claims that this is some wonderful version of tax reform, because we know that it is not. Stealing \$10 from the collection plate and putting \$1 back does not make you a good person, but that is the effect of this bill. They have stolen \$10 out of the church collection plate, they have put \$1 back in and they expect to be praised for it –

David Southwick interjected.

Michael O'BRIEN: and to claim a tax deduction as well, no doubt, member for Caulfield. You had the REIV making very clear at the time this tax was first imposed that it would lead to a housing crisis. Well, the chickens have come home to roost. But unfortunately for Victorians, they are the ones who are paying the price for the appalling economic and tax policies of an inept Labor government.

Katie HALL (Footscray) (14:58): It is a delight to make a contribution to this bill, the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024. We have spent the last week talking about more homes for Victorians. It is very confusing listening to the Liberal Party. You are not quite sure if they are for it or agin it. The member for Malvern was talking about chickens for about 5 minutes. He has just chickened out of the chamber. You would think that the Liberal Party, who opposed us debating this legislation and bringing it on to deliver this tax cut to deliver more homes, would have been more

fulsome in their support, but because they are negative Nellies they cannot quite bring themselves to say, 'That's a good thing. Let's get this done.'

A member interjected.

Katie HALL: Negative Nellies, yes. I have been delighted over the last week to have seen the announcements from the government and the Premier, including an announcement that was made in my electorate of Footscray. Of course we have had quite a bit of development in Footscray, including some of the development that was brought on by the member for Bulleen. The member for Bulleen has been speaking a bit this week about how he is the only one in the Liberal Party who is not a NIMBY. But one of the issues was that when he approved all the housing in my electorate in the Joseph Road precinct he approved it without developer contributions, so we ended up with these enormous towers and no community infrastructure. We did not even have roads. The council is just starting to build roads now. The reason we are now starting to retrofit infrastructure into Joseph Road in Footscray is because the previous planning minister, Minister Wynne, took the developers to court and secured retrospective developer contributions for that site in Footscray. It was just such disrespect to the people of my community to approve all of this housing with no infrastructure – no parks, no footpaths, no roads. We had an issue where a developer overbuilt on one of his sites, and the council had to deal with that issue.

It has been a total shemozzle, the amount of damage that was caused in the four years when those opposite had the great privilege of being in government. It is better for them to do nothing at all. All we have seen in our time in government is this confused opposition. They are not sure whether they support more housing or whether they do not. Certainly what we have seen from the member for Brighton in the past week is that development is fine if it is in Footscray in my community, but he certainly does not want it in Brighton. But what that shows is the stark difference between our values. I want more housing. I want quality housing for my community. I want young people who have grown up in Melbourne's inner west to be able to afford to live near their families. I think that is a fundamental difference. But over there it is just like, 'Oh, we're all right. We own our own homes. Some of us own 17 of them.' But for everyone else, now that they have got what they want and what they need, they are going to lock the gate so no-one else can come and live near the public transport or the infrastructure, which has predominantly been funded by Labor governments in the middle and inner suburbs of Melbourne, this beautiful city that the Liberal Party constantly run down. They cannot think of a positive thing to say.

But for me it is very exciting to see announcements around development along train lines and tramlines. We are building the Metro Tunnel, and Footscray is one of the biggest beneficiaries of the Metro Tunnel because we are going to have a turn-up-and-go service. For communities like Tottenham, where it will be turn up and go on the Sunbury line, with an extra 60 per cent capacity on that train line, that is going to be transformative. Of course there should be renewal of places like Tottenham – and Footscray, which as I mentioned has already accommodated a huge amount of growth. My commitment to my community and this government's commitment is that we will work hard to make sure that the people who bought properties under Matthew Guy's planning regime will get the infrastructure that they need. We are the ones who are following up and making sure that the developers pay their fair share, that we have the parks, the roads and the infrastructure that people deserve and that there is dignity in the housing that is provided. That is what this is all about. I am so excited that this government has demonstrated this commitment, particularly to millennials and to younger Victorians.

I represent a community that has one of the highest rates of renting in the state, and I represent one of the youngest communities. I know for those young people who are renting the dream of owning their own home is closer than before, because this government has said that it is committed to delivering the housing that they need and they deserve. I was really pleased to hear the Minister for Precincts speak about the current Footscray Hospital site before. Many people would be aware that we are building a \$1.5 billion new Footscray Hospital right in the heart of Footscray. It will have

5000 workers a day and provide 20,000 extra treatments a year. It is going to be an extraordinary transformative project for my community. That is opening next year. Do you know what else is opening next year? The Metro Tunnel and the West Gate Tunnel. We are also getting new trams that will take patients and workers to that hospital. Of course we should have housing around that area that supports the workers that will be going in there.

The current hospital site presents a great opportunity for the people of Footscray. We held a consultation earlier this year and we had 5000 people visit the Engage Vic website to tell us their aspirations for the current Footscray hospital site. The current Footscray hospital was built by the people of Footscray, and what happens in the future will be informed by the people of Footscray. One of the key things they asked for was affordable housing – a mix of housing, social and affordable – but also public open space. That is something I am going to fight for for the community of Footscray, because we know that when we build more homes we need to build the infrastructure around them to support those communities and support thriving communities. I think the current Footscray hospital site represents an enormous opportunity to build something really special that is centred in community input. That report was released last week, and I am thrilled to have been able to meet with the Minister for Precincts and express my community's views around the kind of housing and public open space and facilities we need in Melbourne's inner west.

These stamp duty concessions represent a great opportunity for young people in my electorate as well. I think that one of the hardest things when you are on an average income and when you are stuck in a renting cycle is that you feel like saving a deposit is an enormously challenging thing. I know that this will improve confidence and will offer a great opportunity for savings, particularly for young people in my electorate, but anyone buying an apartment, unit or townhouse off the plan will be able to claim this concession. This is a fantastic initiative, just one of many, and I cannot wait to see what else we have to announce, because this government is backing young people. It is backing millennials so that they can fulfil their dream of buying their own home and living close to where they want to live – perhaps even Mum and Dad. It is a really exciting reform, and I commend the bill to the house.

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (15:08): Well, it is clearly Halloween – trick or treat. This Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024 is a big trick, and there are certainly no treats here. The only thing scary about Halloween is the Allan Labor government, because they are going to send this state broke. We see Victorians that are struggling, and this is just another bill, named the duties amendment bill – but again, this government just makes up these names, 'more homes' – that is not going to deliver more homes. This is a sugar hit for 12 months for off-the-plan. For those people that already have a project well and truly underway – buyers in the gun, ready to go – at that point in time would there be the stamp duty incentive for them to be able to benefit from that?

We have no problems in terms of the intention to get rid of stamp duty for off-the-plan and for first-time buyers. The idea is good; the intention is good. But let us not forget that in 2017 it was this government and this Treasurer that actually removed the off-the-plan incentives. We had a number of people say at the time that this was going to be very problematic in terms of encouraging supply in the market. It was something that people got used to, and this government effectively created less homes. They created the housing crisis which we now have, because it was this government and this Treasurer that got rid of the off-the-plan duty concessions that we now have here. The REIV said that when they removed the off-the-plan concessions they did not support that because they said it would reduce the attractiveness of property investment for Victorians, further limiting rental supply at a time when vacancy rates were already tightening. We know the idea of being able to apply these kinds of off-the-plan stamp duty concessions is about creating more new homes, creating more investment properties and creating more supply into the rental market.

With the housing crisis which we have right now, thanks to the Allan Labor government, a big component of that is that people cannot get a rental. You have queues miles down the road of people looking to be able to get into one-bedroom apartments. It is almost like an auction to determine who gets to rent a home, and that is not sustainable. The idea about getting more stock, more investment

and more homes through the off-the-plan subsidy being put but then taken away shows that this government is flipping and flopping when it comes to these things. There is no certainty, and ultimately it is taxpayers that miss out.

The government mentioned the member for Bulleen before, and when the member for Bulleen was the planning minister one of the things that I absolutely recall is we could go around and look around the city and see how many cranes were in the sky, how many buildings were being done and how many projects were underway because we had a planning minister and a government that was all about building more stock and getting stock into the market. If you fast-forward to the situation today, that is completely different. If you look at a crane count, it would be nowhere near what we used to have when we were in government. It is pretty simple: we have more taxation than we have ever had before. We had the off-the-plan stamp duty saving, which was an ongoing thing, removed by this government, and only because they failed, and we now have a housing crisis, so they want to give a temporary stay of execution. What will happen in 12 months time? It will be back again, just when you have got investors that want to get projects up and about. What will happen to the certainty of those projects? It takes more than 12 months to get a project off the ground. That is why this government has no idea about property, no idea about economics and no idea about managing anything at all. When you come up with a project you have got to look at the land, you have got to get planning, you have got to get architectural drawings, you have got to have consultation and you have got to talk to councils, talk to stakeholders and get funding and financing for the project. That can take three years, if you are lucky, on a big project, yet this government want to give a 12-month stay of execution on this.

We know at least that some projects, which have been put on ice because of the huge taxation, the uncertainty and the financial mismanagement of this government, will be able to get going. We are not sure how many, by the way, from the briefing that we had, because this has all been really rushed because the government are literally trying to play catch-up. This was only announced yesterday. This was all rushed, and we are talking about it today with very little briefing or background, and the department is still unsure in terms of how many homes ultimately this is going to provide. With 6000 stakeholders, how much revenue is it going to cost? \$55 million – when we knew we had the member for Malvern quite rightly saying it was \$842 million prior to it being abolished. So we have gone from \$842 million to \$55 million now on the cost of this project, yet we have got more demand now than we had before. One would think it would cost a lot more in terms of the savings than what it is now. It probably means there are not a lot of these projects that are ready to go that they can actually benefit from because they take more than 12 months. It takes more than 12 months, so again this is very much a trick, not a treat, because ultimately people are not really going to benefit here. The Allan Labor government are so quick to cut ribbons and put out press releases without the substance and without the details behind them, and again it is Victorians that miss out. We know during all of the housing grand plans that they are putting forward, like we heard today, this government are all about no voice and no choice when it comes to home owners and when it comes to Victorians. They do not want to listen to Victorians, they do not want to provide them choice, they just want to say, ‘This is where you’ll live and these are what your options are; take it or leave it.’ I think most Victorians have had enough of that – being told by the government what to do, how to live their lives, where to live. They are absolutely sick of it, and I think this is another example of that. It is another example of why we have the housing crisis.

Even things like again the Premier is off today doing an op-ed about Brighton – she is so infatuated with the suburb of Brighton she has missed out on the whole state of Victoria. She lives miles away from the rest of Melbourne. That is creating an absolute mess of the planning and the housing situation in Melbourne and in greater Melbourne. The north and the west are going to miss out again because there is no infrastructure there. There is no infrastructure because it has not been planned. You cannot jam apartments; you cannot jam everything into Brighton, Malvern and even Caulfield and expect that that is going to work. You just cannot do it.

Steve McGhie interjected.

David SOUTHWICK: Ultimately these properties and these high-rise apartments at \$1 million or \$1.5 million are not going to be affordable for anybody, member for Melton. They are not going to be ready for anybody. I would think, member for Melton, you would be actually encouraging people, because I know in your electorate of Melton they are missing out on the infrastructure. They have been calling out for the infrastructure. I know, member for Melton, they want roads.

Steve McGhie interjected.

David SOUTHWICK: I am talking about transport infrastructure, member for Melton. I can tell you that they are missing out on transport. They are missing out on roads. They are missing out big time in Melton, and that is because they have been forgotten. In Melbourne's north and Melbourne's west they have been forgotten because we know, and the Minister for Transport Infrastructure at the table today knows, that 26 kilometres of track – the Suburban Rail Loop – is at the expense of everything else, including the member for Melton's seat, which will not benefit from a single dollar of the Suburban Rail Loop's \$34.5 billion. I tell you what, I will come down with you, member for Melton. I will take a walk with you anytime, and we will ask people what the people of Melton think about the Suburban Rail Loop. Would you have me down, member for Melton?

Steve McGhie interjected.

David SOUTHWICK: Great. I will come down. I will take that invitation, and we will go for a walk down in Melton and we will ask the constituents in Melton what they think about the Premier putting all of her eggs into one basket, the Suburban Rail Loop, at the expense of suburbs and electorates like Melton that are missing out. I will take that every single time, because I know this is a government that does not care about Victorians, does not care really about building any homes, does not care ultimately about the rental market, getting people out of queues and into a home, and does not care about choice. No voice, no choice. That is what this government wants to do, silence Victorians and try to run roughshod over each and every one of the people who are dealing with a housing crisis, a cost-of-living crisis and a debt crisis all attributed to the Labor Allan government that cannot manage money and cannot manage major projects.

Lauren KATHAGE (Yan Yean) (15:18): 'There were cranes in the sky,' we heard from the member for Caulfield – cranes everywhere. He was so pleased with himself. Well, maybe in the city, but in 2012, when those opposite extended the urban growth boundary out, out, out into the farmland, out where they had never been before, do you think there were any cranes building infrastructure in the outer suburbs? No, absolutely not. They were just busy making developers rich. They made them rich, and they put nothing in place for the people who would be coming out to live there. I am going to tell you the evidence. Between 2010 and 2014 – when who was in government, those opposite – how many dollars did they invest in infrastructure in my electorate of Yan Yean? How much? Nothing. Not a cent, not a skerrick, not a crane. There were no cranes in the sky in Yan Yean. I hope he enjoyed his cranes in the city, because they are coming back. The cranes are coming back to the inner suburbs, and I hope they like the second coming of the cranes, because we are going to be busy building houses and getting on with it.

We heard more fanciful words from the member for Caulfield about this government saying, 'This is where you live, this is what your only option is, this is what you get.' Well, I think that is what we are actually hearing from those opposite, who in many ways – overt and subtle – are telling us, 'We don't want your kind here. We don't want your humble and hardworking people to come and live in our suburbs. Haven't you heard the apartments are very expensive?' It is like that scene from *Pretty Woman* when she goes to the shop; we are being rejected from their special suburbs.

We heard more of that from the member for Sandringham as well as the lead speaker on this bill for those opposite. He said, 'Do you know that there's an apartment for sale for \$23 million?' Well, I did not – not in my circles, there is not. He suggested there should be a cap in this bill. He does not want expensive apartments to be included. He does not want stimulus for people to build and move into

expensive apartments. It is nimbyism by stealth, because they want the apartments to not be built in their area. They want to make sure that they are far away from them. It is nimbyism by stealth, and we have got the proof there. We know that the member for Sandringham is against having people move into his area. In 2021 he opposed 1048 apartments going into Highett – 1048 homes for Victorians opposed by the member for Sandringham.

That just tells you everything about these people. You just cannot trust what they say. You cannot trust a single thing they say. I am nervous for the future, because what the member for Sandringham said when he spoke on this was that we – the Labor government – have had 10 years to demonstrate that we actually care about Victorians. What have we done to demonstrate our care for Victorians in those 10 years? Well, I am happy to inform the member for Sandringham, if he is interested, that we introduced free kinder, free TAFE and apartment standards. We made 10 times the number of new businesses available. We have introduced so much renewable energy, new hospitals and free nursing degrees. We did not cut Free Fruit Friday; in fact we have expanded the breakfast clubs. These are the ways that we have demonstrated that we care about Victorians.

What makes me scared is that the member for Sandringham said it is going to take them ‘10 years to unpick’ that, so we know that once they are in government they are going to set about unpicking all the ways that we have demonstrated and delivered our care for Victorians. All I hear from those opposite is cuts. Cuts – that is what is coming with them. That is all they will do. We know that all the ways that we have supported Victorians will be in the firing line of those opposite, because the humble and hardworking people that this government represents and supports are not worth anything to those opposite, and it is very, very sad.

Other ways that we are demonstrating our care for Victorians are through our fair go for renters and our fair go for the outer suburbs, because what we are doing is flipping the 70–30 divide. Previously we have seen way too much development in the outer suburbs and not enough in the inner and middle suburbs, so we are flipping that. We are fixing the unfair split of suburban growth.

I was really pleased to have the fantastic Minister for Planning in Wallan last week, looking at some of the issues around different developments and staging. I am so pleased that the next lot of estates that are coming to Wallan are being staged and sequenced so that before they come online, before people are moving in, we will have the new Wallan East primary school, the new Wallara Waters kindergarten, the new maternal and child health centre, the new ramps onto the Hume Freeway – thank you, Minister for Transport Infrastructure, who is at the table. All of these really important and essential infrastructure pieces will be in place before the next estates start being populated by people, because we are thinking about how to make sure that people that live in the outer suburbs have what they need to thrive and that the communities are made up of families who have access to health, education, jobs and transport. I am so proud to be part of a government that does not just sell off land to make developers rich in the outer suburbs but builds communities in the outer suburbs. How easy it was for those opposite to just sign off on an expanded urban growth boundary, and in came the Labor government to do the hard work of then going ahead and building community. The humble and hardworking people of the outer suburbs will always be better off under a Labor government.

We are making sure that developers give their fair contribution as well. We know that developers need to contribute more to that important infrastructure that communities need. They need to contribute more to the stations, the roads, the schools and the like, and so that is why we are working on an updated system of developer contributions to make sure that everybody is pitching in for the best life for people in the outer suburbs.

Those opposite are obsessed with what they call livability – the livability of the inner city. They want to kick out the ladder from underneath them, and bad luck to anybody else who did not make it there in time. Basically, they want to set us up to be like the *Hunger Games*. That is how it feels – the district that you are in determines your fate. But we simply do not accept that on this side of the house. We believe everyone gets a go and everyone can have choice about where they want to live. Personally I

would not want to live near the member for Sandringham or the member for Brighton, but if others do, that is their choice, and they should have the ability to do that.

Apartments have come a long way. This government has put in place over a number of years improvements to apartment living to ensure that designs meet the needs of the people that live there in terms of light, warmth, cooling, access and space; the ability to make that apartment your home; and all the other rights and supports that we have given to renters, including the recent announcements and supports to ensure that when you move from one rental property to another you have a fair, equitable and transparent bond return process and that you cannot be asked to leave for no reason. We do not just represent one group of people. We do not just represent people for whom life is good and life is easy; we represent all Victorians. All Victorians are represented here. Those opposite seem to be making a lot of the fact that the Premier lives in Bendigo, as though that is some sort of mark against her. Do you know what is happening in Bendigo? Housing development, because the member for Bendigo East welcomes people to Bendigo. And if the member for Sandringham wants to move there, that is fine by us as well. So there is more voice, there is more choice under this side, and we are building the houses that Victorians want and need.

Danny O'BRIEN (Gippsland South) (15:28): It is interesting to follow Katniss Everdeen in the debate on the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024. Some of the rhetoric we are hearing from those opposite is just extraordinary. Apparently we are fascists that are taking people out of their homes and shooting them. This is –

Members interjecting.

Danny O'BRIEN: They admit it, says one of them. Seriously, after 10 years in government, that is the best you can do? We heard it in question time: 'Ventnor'. Oh, drink. Let us go again. Let us talk about Ventnor from 10 years ago. Like yesterday, we were talking about the Kennett government. Why don't we go back to the Bolte government? Tell us about what John Cain Sr did. You guys have been in government, as you know, for a very long time, and you are still obsessing about Jeff Kennett. You are still obsessing about what Matthew Guy did 10 years ago.

Members interjecting.

Danny O'BRIEN: I am glad you have all woken up a bit, because you have been asleep at the wheel for the last 10 years. This legislation is the best evidence of how asleep at the wheel this government has been, because when you hear the Labor government saying, 'Hey, have we got something for you,' have a good look at it, because as is the case in this legislation, what they have got for you is simply what they took away from you seven years ago. It is exactly what you took away seven years ago. 'We are bringing in a stamp duty concession for off-the-plan purchases. We are bringing that in.' You took it away seven years ago. This was your policy.

Danny Pearson interjected.

Danny O'BRIEN: Do you know what, it is very pleasing to have the member for Essendon at the table, because when this legislation went through in the State Taxation Acts Amendment Bill 2017, where the government took away the stamp duty concession that they are now bringing back, there were seven speakers on this side. There were more even numbers in those days. There were seven coalition speakers. Guess how many proudly got up and spoke about their policy on that side in 2017? Well, there were two and the minister at the table. There was the Treasurer, and to my great surprise there was the member for Ivanhoe and the minister at the table as well cheerleading. In fact he spoke for his full 10 minutes on the State Taxation Acts Amendment Bill in 2017 and did not mention that they were taking away the off-the-plan stamp duty concession. It was one of the actual key parts of the legislation in that year's budget, and the minister at the table did not even mention it.

Danny Pearson interjected.

Danny O'BRIEN: You probably did; 12th-century agrarian policies of the Assyrians probably would be something that you would have spoken about. This legislation is just more of a con from this government, taking away from you one day and then giving it back to you and expecting you to be grateful. There were some extremely good comments at the time. There was a matter of public importance as well that the then Treasurer, still the Treasurer, got up and spoke on. There are a few things that are quite apposite to revisit on a day like today, because in 2017 the then Treasurer said:

This government will not stand idly by, watching the benefits of a rising property market return to increasingly fewer hands.

That was seven years ago, and now you are still trying to fix it. You are still saying the same thing. You are still trying to fix it:

The Andrews government is not content to sit on its hands while an entire generation is locked out of housing.

Now we have got the current Premier saying she is going to be the Premier that puts millennials into housing. You started doing that 10 years ago, you said, and you are still failing. They are still failing. The Treasurer said at the time:

The off-the-plan stamp duty concession, as of 1 July 2017, will only be available to those who intend to live in the property.

It goes on:

The off-the-plan concession only exists in this state, and it is about time it became a lot more targeted.

Obviously 'about time' has moved on to a different time. Seven years later we are going back to the future. He said:

This will help tilt the scales back towards buyers who intend to occupy the property as their primary place of residence.

It was a really good idea in 2017 to remove the off-the-plan stamp duty. I think what is most important to understand in this is that the government did not just do this in isolation and think everything would be hunky-dory, because the members opposite will be surprised to learn that they were told. It is very useful that although there has been significant change in the population of this house since 2017 it was the minister at the table, the member for Ivanhoe and the Treasurer who all spoke on that legislation. I spoke on it, and the member for Malvern spoke on it. I think at the time he might have been the Shadow Treasurer. He said:

If you take investors out of the pool for off-the-plan projects, which is the intended effect of this tax increase, you will simply see fewer projects get the go-ahead.

I missed the member for Malvern's contribution, but I very much hope that he said 'I told you so', because he did. The member for Malvern and I think the REIV and the property council all said the same thing. If you remove the off-the-plan purchase, you are going to get less apartment towers built. And now what have we got? We have now got the Premier saying, 'We are bringing in a stamp duty off-the-plan concession so we can get more apartments built.'

Bridget Vallence interjected.

Danny O'BRIEN: Exactly, member for Evelyn. Just admit you got it wrong. If only the government would admit they got it wrong.

Danny Pearson interjected.

Danny O'BRIEN: I am sorry, but I cannot do the words 'Essendon' and 'reigning premiers' in the same sentence, and I will not do it. The minister just needs to understand. Like I said, it is a shame that the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, having spoken on the bill that removed the off-the-plan stamp duty concession in 2017, did not actually mention – maybe he knew that in 2024 – 'This is a disaster.'

We're going to have to bring it back, so I'm not going to mention it in my speech because that will be embarrassing.'

Danny Pearson interjected.

Danny O'BRIEN: Fine-tuning. This is the way this government works. 'Don't listen to what we did in the past; don't worry about what we might have said or what we might have done.'

Bridget Vallence interjected.

Danny O'BRIEN: In fact the member for Evelyn is right. I am surprised that they are not trying to say that this off-the-plan stamp duty concession was removed by the Kennett government – because that would have been helpful, wouldn't it – or maybe by the member for Bulleen. It was the member for Bulleen's fault. I mean, they called him Mr Skyscraper yesterday because he actually got things done. He got housing built. He actually got things done, and now they are criticising him. They are saying, 'You guys didn't do as many houses as we do.' The Assistant Treasurer is trying to say they are the reigning premiers. When it is so obvious in this circumstance that the government's past policies have failed, it should be a wake-up call for all Victorians to look at every housing announcement that the government made last week and see how much of that is spin. To come in after 10 years and say 'We're going to provide housing' is just extraordinary.

There are no benefits – there are very few benefits of you guys being in government for a long time, but that is one of them. Whatever is happening in this state is not anyone's fault except the current government. This government has failed repeatedly on housing. They have failed on the rent issue; I cannot believe the economic incompetence of this government bringing in more rules with respect to rent and rental properties that are going to send more and more landlords or rental providers out of the market at a time when we have virtually zero vacancy rates and rising rents. You are economically illiterate on that side. I am saying that without looking at the minister, because I know he knows a bit about economics, so he must be embarrassed about some of these policies. But this government has failed dismally when it comes to housing, it has failed when it comes to rentals and it cannot manage money. And that is why Victorians are suffering under this Victorian Labor government.

Steve McGHIE (Melton) (15:38): I rise to contribute to the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024. I do have to make a comment about the member for Gippsland South. I am pleased that he had his heart health check before that contribution. He has got his socks, and he has got good results. I am pleased that he has done that, and he can go back and relax now and settle the heart rate down.

I am pleased to contribute on this bill that has been put by the Treasurer. It is a significant step forward in the creation of more homes, and that is why in the title of this bill it directly goes to more homes: the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024. By introducing this temporary incentive for off-the-plan land transfer duty concessions for purchases of eligible apartments and townhouses, we are helping to create the origin stories for many, many thousands of young Victorians hopefully buying into the housing market and buying off-the-plan apartments and townhouses.

The Allan Labor government knows that there is only one way out of the housing crisis, and it has been mentioned many, many times. It is that we need to build our way out, and that is what we are going to do in many ways. It is not just one aspect; there are many aspects that come together. It is not just townhouses and apartments; it is the release of government land. I know that there was some reference in one of the earlier contributions to the Premier living up in the Bendigo region. She was out at Bendigo last Friday announcing some further developments out at Bendigo. I think it was 1000 or 1300 new homes to be built. So, again, there are many, many aspects to what our government is doing in delivering more homes for Victorians and for Victorians to come into the housing market.

It just means greater opportunity. Having a home gives young families greater opportunity for their futures. That is why our government is committed to projects like, as was mentioned earlier today, the Fitzroy Gasworks redevelopment, which will transform land in Melbourne's inner-city suburbs to

deliver the homes that our people need. I think it is in excess of 600 homes in that area. That will include social and public homes. That is a fantastic outcome. It is not just about building structures, it is also about creating communities where more Victorians can live – where they rent or where they buy near the things that they need and the lifestyles that they value and the lifestyles for raising a family and having the infrastructure and the facilities close by.

We are also unlocking land and taking decisive actions to meet the housing needs of a vastly growing city. I will just make reference to what is happening in my electorate in my local government area of Melton. Over the next 10 years Melton is going to grow by another 100,000 people. It is at about 208,000 people at the moment, and it will grow to in excess of 300,000 people, so we need to further develop areas around Melton. I noticed with some of the precinct structure plan announcements that Melton West PSP, Melton East PSP and the Bulmans Road PSP will be over the next 10 years developed to provide more homes in that outer-western fringe of Melbourne. That is fantastic, and that will provide houses for families moving in. As I say, it is 100,000 people over the next 10 years, and it is going to be amazing.

I need to pick up on what the member for Caulfield was raising. He made reference to the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) and the people in Melton who would see no benefits and that we were lacking infrastructure and things like that. I am just going to remind him of some of the infrastructure that is coming into Melton. Very shortly we will be turning a sod of soil for the new Melton hospital – a \$1 billion hospital – and it will be completed by 2029. This is a fantastic thing for this community, such a fast-growing community. The Minister for Transport Infrastructure is at the table, and we are currently getting underway with level crossing removals in Melton – four of them. Melton will be level crossing free by 2026 and will have a brand new Melton railway station by 2026. These are some of the –

Bridget Vallence: Acting Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

Quorum formed.

Steve McGHIE: I will come back to where I left off before we were interrupted, and that was making reference to the infrastructure in Melton and in particular our road and rail infrastructure. I did mention the level crossing removals. I did mention the new Melton railway station. We have also got a \$650 million upgrade of the Melton rail line. That will be fantastic. We will only benefit from –

Bridget Vallence: On a point of order, Acting Speaker, we are speaking on the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill, and I do not recall seeing anything about the Melton hospital in that bill. Debate has been wideranging –

The ACTING SPEAKER (Jackson Taylor): It has been a very wideranging debate. The member for Melton to continue. There is no point of order.

Steve McGHIE: Before I went to the Melton issues I did say that I was responding to the member for Caulfield's comments in his contribution, and that is why I will continue to talk about my electorate, because we have got many, many fantastic infrastructure projects that are going to cater for the additional 100,000 people who are moving into Melton over the next 10 years. I will come back to it – a \$650 million upgrade of the Melton rail line, with nine-carriage trains. We are going to extend the length of the platforms at the stations to allow those nine-carriage trains to be able to stop at that those train stations. There is a whole heap of work going on that we will benefit from. But there is also the broader infrastructure work that will assist the western suburbs, and that is the West Gate Tunnel and the Metro Tunnel. People from the west, and in particular from Melton, will benefit from these infrastructure builds.

And of course we are introducing some new bus services in Melton to cater for areas like Eynesbury. They will have a new bus service before the end of the year. We have extended the FlexiRide service, and that was budgeted for in the May budget. So to suggest that Melton has been left behind because

of the SRL is complete nonsense. In fact the government injected billions of dollars of infrastructure into the west and into Melton prior to anything to do with the SRL. I could go on about other things like TAFE colleges and new schools. I could go on about that, but I will not – I will come back to the bill itself.

I thought it was a bit rich for the member for Bulleen to bang on about flip-flopping planning changes. The Maribyrnong council are still bearing the effects of the financial disaster he inflicted on them when he inappropriately approved the Joseph Road developments. I know the member for Footscray went to that in her contribution and the disaster of those towers there along the Maribyrnong River – unmade roads, no pathways, no windows in some cases and terrible shadowing. Our government and the local council have had to do a hell of a lot in regard to trying to rectify what is probably the worst example of some sort of urban renewal under that previous planning minister from the opposition – even though he thinks is probably one of the best planning ministers. I think he has got a lot to live up to, let me tell you.

As I say, there have been examples from the past of terrible actions by the opposition planning people. We have put together a very bold and fantastic plan about building more homes, more apartments and more townhouses. This bill goes a long way to assisting purchasers to buy into the market off the plan. This will assist people that are trying to get into the market, and it is a fantastic bill. I commend the Treasurer on introducing this bill, and I commend the bill to the house.

Nicole WERNER (Warrandyte) (15:48): I rise to speak on the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024. A big thankyou to the government for introducing this bill in the house mere hours before we started to debate it in the chamber! We thank you for that, and we thank you for forgoing parliamentary processes and common courtesy to even allow the opposition to have a look in! The government jumped from introducing the bill in the chamber shortly after midday on Tuesday to then jumping to debate the bill that same day at 6 pm. But let me tell you, it was some foreshadowing of things to come. As the member for Sandringham so eloquently said, this is policy on the run. This is the timeline of events as they happened: first the government introduced a bill shortly after midday on Tuesday, and then they provided the coalition with a bill briefing at approximately 4:30 pm that same day, only to then debate the bill in the chamber at 6 pm on that Tuesday. Typically you would give about two weeks for legislation as important as this – that would be the courteous thing to do. But here we are; this is where we have landed. So while the government gave us less than 6 hours notice to develop a position on legislation, consult with key stakeholders and all of the like, that is probably more notice than you will get as a Victorian before the government approves construction on a 20-storey apartment building next door to you or deems your neighbourhood as the next high-rise, high-density megacity.

Let me take you back to 2017, the year the then Andrews Labor government decided to scrap the off-the-plan stamp duty exemption, a critical support that made housing more accessible for Victorians. They scrapped it in 2017 despite clear warnings from industry experts that removing this exemption would reduce rental supply and make homes harder to afford. They pushed ahead, claiming it was about fairness. Fast-forward to today and here they are backflipping on their decision and bringing back this exemption, would you believe? No-one backflips better than the current Premier, Jacinta Allan. She has backflipped on her government's position on raising the age of criminality, she has backflipped on pill testing, and she has even backflipped on the fact that young people actually want to be able to afford to buy their own homes.

Was it not your former Premier Andrews that said just last year – he is on public record saying this – that he had spoken to a grand total of a focus group of his kids and his friends' kids, and he pretty much summarised it as 'No, you know what, young people don't actually care about buying their own home.' You have heard so many times this week the government talking about millennials and gen Z and how they want to get into their own homes, yet here is another backflip from the Allan Labor government. I mean, give me a break. Just last year your former Premier said that he had been talking to his kids and his friends' kids, and home ownership was not a thing for them. Can I tell you now, as

an actual millennial, not just one that is masquerading to have their best interests at heart, we indeed do want our own homes; we do believe in home ownership. These are conversations I am having with people in my peer group every single week, and I am so glad that the Allan Labor government has finally woken up to this fact. We celebrate that; that is fantastic. That is why we on this side of the house are the party of home ownership, because we actually have believed in it. We have not toed-and-froed on it, we have not backflipped and flipped and flopped on it, but we have believed in it from the very beginning, and we believe in home ownership as the coalition.

In fact it was my migrant parents that moved to this country for a better future for their future family. They did not have kids yet; they had come from Malaysia and they decided they wanted to move to Australia, the Lucky Country, and part of that reasoning was because they wanted to be able to live the Australian dream to buy their first home. So I am so glad that the Allan Labor government, in contrast to the Andrews Labor government, has finally woken up to this reality 10 years later. A decade in, finally here we are. You would think that the Premier would be keen to showcase her backflipping in her gymnastics skills at the Commonwealth Games in 2026, but alas, thanks to her she has got to board a plane to Glasgow to be able to do that.

It is absolutely rich of the Allan Labor government to tout their lofty and ambitious housing target to build 800,000 new homes in the next decade; it is. On average, if you look at that lofty and ambitious claim – and that is not just me saying that, that is councils saying that all across Victoria – you would need to build on average about 80,000 homes, not hard maths, year on year to achieve this goal in the next decade. Never mind that councils have trashed this lofty target. Never mind that the government is imposing their will upon local governments, these councils, as to where the homes should be built as they protest this, without any community consultation. But get a load of this: while they are talking about wanting to build homes for Victorians, the cold fact is that home approvals in Victoria are at their lowest level in a decade. Can I say that again: while the government are talking all about how they want to build homes for Victorians, home approvals in Victoria are at their lowest level in a decade. As reported by the *Age* early this year, Victoria is down 17.6 per cent from the previous year, with only 51,068 flats and townhouses given the green light across the state, well short of the average needed to deliver the government's average target of 80,000 homes a year. That is the truth of it – unbelievable.

Instead of a full apology or acknowledgement of their mistake, the government have brought forward a limited temporary measure, reintroducing a partial exemption for only 12 months. While I will accept we welcome this change, because it is something that you would actually change yourself to begin with, it is a tragedy that this government got rid of the exemption in the first place. It is one of the key reasons we are in the housing crisis that we are in today. It is not like we did not warn them. The member for Malvern back in 2017, who was speaking against the abolition of the off-the-plan stamp duty concession, said the following:

We have also seen the abolition of the off-the-plan stamp duty concession for everyone except for owner-occupiers. Again another increase in tax, another stupidly thought out, poorly thought out, ill-designed new tax from a Labor government which will have the opposite effect to that which is intended.

...

... what happens when you reduce housing supply in a market where there is demand? Prices go up. It is not economics 101 – it is even easier than that – but Labor does not get it. Labor, by introducing this new tax, will put higher pressure on housing prices, will reduce supply to the market and will have the opposite effect, not just for investors, but for first home buyers too. This is a dumb move, a dumb move by a government that does not understand the market and has just got dollar signs in its eyes regardless of the consequences.

That from the member for Malvern back in 2017 when you abolished this very stamp duty exemption. The member for Malvern is a gentleman. I trust that he will restrain himself from an 'I told you so'. But jeez, with that level of insight and clairvoyance, surely, member for Malvern, we need your tips for the Melbourne Cup. That is quite remarkable.

Do not just take our word for it. Let us hear what the experts have to say. Melinda Jennison at the Real Estate Buyers Agents Association of Australia has said that over the last 10 years Labor could not be trusted on property taxes and taxes generally. She has pointed out that the 29 new or increased property taxes from this government have actually made property more expensive, have made housing more unaffordable, have made home ownership more out of reach and have made Victoria a place where investors are fleeing from.

Simon Pressley, head of research at Propertyology, has called this change a trap for buyers, emphasising that off-the-plan property purchases have significantly more associated risk than established properties, and warned that the government's proposal to lure people into such a trap by scrapping stamp duty on new dwellings is reckless policy.

Then there is Richard Temlett, national research executive at Charter Keck Cramer, who noted that while the government's reform could potentially result in 32,000 additional sales, the actual numbers might fall short because there are fewer than 7000 off-the-plan options currently being marketed. He also cautioned the government not to assume more development will come on line as the market will not turn on overnight. Temlett's concerns make it clear that lofty projections will not substitute for real available inventory in the market.

In the words of these industry leaders, we see a common thread: this government's temporary solutions and rushed decisions are a far cry from the well-considered, impactful policies Victorians need. The warnings are there. Let us hope that the government is listening. That is it for the time that I have left. I have too many pages.

Nick Staikos interjected.

Nicole WERNER: I could go on and on for another 20 minutes if only you would let me, member for Bentleigh.

Chris COUZENS (Geelong) (15:58): I am absolutely delighted to rise to speak on the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024. Can I start by congratulating the Minister for Planning and the Premier for the enormous amount of work that they have done. This is incredible work. I know my community have welcomed it, very much so. We know that there are real challenges around housing, and that is no different in my electorate of Geelong. We know that more housing provides accommodation for people, but it also includes the opportunity to revitalise our city in Geelong, which has been on the cards for a while.

When I have listened to those opposite in this debate, basically they have no plan. They have no plan for Victoria's housing future. That is clear in what they are saying. All they have done is to bag it, not given us any other options to go with. I think what we are debating today is extraordinary work, and for all the harping on by those opposite, they have got nothing to offer us.

I think ideas like slashing stamp duty, for example, for off-the-plan apartments and townhouses are fantastic. That is going to bring more developments into my electorate of Geelong, particularly in our inner-city area, and as I mentioned, we are working hard to ensure that we bring that vibrancy back to the inner Geelong area. We have set a target. We set a target some time ago for up to 16,000 people living in the CBD. Obviously, you bring people in, and they use the infrastructure, the resources, the shops and those sorts of things because they are living there. At the moment it is quite slow because we do not have those people living in the CBD. All the consultation that has been held over the last couple of years has highlighted the fact that we do need to have people living in the city and we do need to have that target of 16,000, and this is a great opportunity for that to happen.

I think better design is another great aspect. We are not going to have shoddy apartments built, we are going to have good-quality designed apartments and townhouses and those sorts of accommodations, which anyone would want to live in – as we should. On some of the comments from those opposite, why are we not supporting people to live not only where they want to live but where they need to live

and to live around their workplace or their networks and their family members? We should be doing everything we can to ensure we are providing that good-quality, secure housing and that we are doing it where people need it to be and where people want to live in our communities. This plan is all about that. It is all about ensuring that people get to live in good, safe, quality housing – and are not subjected to some of those bad landlords that we hear about often – in the part of the community they need to live in. This plan enables that to happen. It is really important for a community like mine. We have also talked about making it fairer for renters and Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria. I have many constituents coming into my office and talking about their landlords and the unfair treatment that they experience from their landlords. This is another benefit for constituents in my electorate who have been subjected to some of those unfair treatments by their landlords.

I think also fast-tracking the pathways for building homes that meet the test of build quality, good design and sustainability are all factors that had to be in this document. I think it is really important that our homes are far more sustainable than they have ever been before. We know that climate change is a big challenge. We know that the many programs that we have been running, whether they be solar panels or solar heat pumps, all those things, are really important to our communities, but also any future development should be required to be sustainable. These are really important matters as well.

It also ensures that developers can build better homes without delays and additional costs, which again is really important, because we know the longer something takes to build, the more it costs. I have seen that in my community. I am sure many others have seen it in their communities. To enable these things to happen quickly is really important. I think one of the ones that is really resonating with my community is dividing blocks so that it is easier and faster and cheaper to build new homes. Many people in my community have either done it or are considering doing it, because they can start to house other family members. It is another house on a block that was sitting there vacant on unused land in lots of cases. That has been a really great opportunity for people in my electorate. But I think overall people need to be able to live where they have their networks, where their family is, where their school or their TAFE or their university is but also close to public transport and amenities. I mentioned our Geelong CBD earlier. It is around the railway station, and it is around all the amenities that people need. It is a great opportunity. We have already started to see some development there, but we know that this plan will offer much more to developers but also much more to young people, to people wanting to live in an apartment block or in a townhouse. Those opportunities are very clearly there with this plan.

We want to make sure that housing is affordable and secure and that there are housing options close to services. I think for low-income people, for people relying on social housing and public housing, these are the things that are really important, because it actually reduces their living costs if they are living close to their workplace, for example, or they are living close to the public transport they need to utilise to get to work every day or to get to uni or whatever it might be. So these are great opportunities for people to live close to those services but in particular our rail services. There has been some development around South Geelong station. There are apartment blocks that have been built there, and people are scrambling to buy those. There are great opportunities for those communities, for people that are living in those apartments. They can now just walk across the road to the railway station or to the bus stop, so these are fantastic opportunities.

My community is delighted with this plan. We have more work to do to let people know what their opportunities are, but I think by having the Geelong Authority in Geelong, by having the Geelong central project in Geelong, who are working on making sure we meet that target of having 16,000 people living in the CBD, we can revitalise Geelong at the same time as having those new apartments and townhouses and so on built in our city. By having that housing, by having those people, it equals a vibrant community. We will see that grow over time. Once these apartments and townhouses are built in my community, I know that it is going to make a huge difference to the city of Geelong and the people that live there. The traders, the entertainment venues and the restaurants will all benefit from having so many people living in the CBD and enjoying our beautiful waterfront

and all that it has to offer, having bay views from those apartments. That has been the plan for Geelong for some time. This is now going to drive that and make sure that it does happen and it happens in a timely way, because we cannot just rely on people doing it on their own. We need to have a plan like this to ensure that people are being housed where they want to be housed. I commend the bill.

Gabrielle DE VIETRI (Richmond) (16:08): I rise in support of the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024. Reforming stamp duty has been the Greens' policy for a very long time. We know that stamp duty is a barrier to first home buyers, it is a barrier to people wanting to downsize and it disproportionately impacts young people and single women. The Greens have long called for stamp duty to be abolished for this reason and replaced with a broad-based land tax, a fairer tax. Because moving away from stamp duty and towards a fairer tax would help ease the housing crisis, as would reform of negative gearing and capital gains tax at a federal level. We have been saying it for years, and we have not been alone. Here in Victoria we have already had an inquiry into land transfer duty fees, with a damning report tabled last year calling for reform of this inefficient and volatile tax. Back in 2022 there was a federal inquiry into housing affordability across Australia, with a report recommending that states replace stamp duty with a land tax. The experts agreed – academics, economists, stakeholders across the political spectrum – and they have all called for a move to a more equitable tax. How housing is taxed impacts the affordability of the housing, and stamp duty artificially inflates the cost of homes by charging people every time they move. So after years of pressure and advice and advocacy, although it is only a short-term intervention as opposed to a permanent rescission, it is encouraging to see Labor finally moving on this.

They will have our support on this bill, as they have had our support on the empty homes tax, which was increased, expanded and reinforced through negotiations with the Greens; as they have had our support on the short-stay levy, which was coupled, thanks to the Greens' support, with more powers for owners corporations and councils to turn properties that have been hotels back into homes; and as they have had our support for reforms to homes in residential parks. In fact the Greens have supported many of the government's housing bills this term.

As we support this, we note the great lengths that the Premier has gone to this week to try and lay blame on the Greens for their inability to resolve the housing crisis as she deliberately shifts the blame and tries to shirk responsibility for Labor's hand in this housing crisis. We know that decades of Labor and Liberal policies of giving tax breaks to wealthy developers, to property investors and to speculators, their refusal to build any more public housing – and not only that, the demolition of what scarce public housing we do have; we are the lowest state when it comes to the provision of public and community housing, with just 2.6 per cent compared to the national average of 4.1 per cent – and their refusal to control greedy landlords and end unlimited rent rises are the settings that have fuelled the housing crisis and left people struggling, unable to afford the rent, unable to save money for a deposit and unable to compete with investors just to get a roof over their head.

It is not a broken housing system. The system is working just as Labor has intended. They have prioritised the commodification of housing and the rights of those seeking profit over those in need of shelter. For too long they have reinforced the view that housing is an asset to collect rather than a basic human right, which is why although the Greens will not be opposing this bill – we will be supporting it – we will be moving amendments in the other place. Our amendments will ensure that the benefits of this bill flow primarily to first home buyers and owner-occupiers, and they are linked with the requirement for the home to actually be lived in. It sounds absurd, but this is a requirement that will ensure that these homes do not sit empty, that they are not just holiday homes or Airbnbs. It is not too much to ask, and we hope to have the government's support on this, because until we replace stamp duty with a broad-based land tax and make this change permanent, the benefits of this concession should not flow to companies or trusts or wealthy investors.

This bill should also have a reporting requirement. We need to know the impact that this change will have, and it should be publicly available so we know the total number of concessions granted, the monetary value for each of those concessions and the impact that it has on housing affordability.

Because the Greens support the densification of our suburbs and because we have long called for the abolition of stamp duty, we will support this bill, but we ask the government to do so much more, because building private homes alone will not fix the housing crisis. You do not have to be an economist or a housing expert to recognise that if the government continues to fail to build any new public housing, if they continue to fail to provide any genuinely affordable homes, it will guarantee that this housing crisis will actually get worse, and that if the government does not control unlimited rent increases, rents will continue to skyrocket and renters will continue to lose their homes.

Developers have in fact already come out and said that this new concession means that they can increase their prices because it will give buyers the ability to pay more. But housing is essential, just like education and health care, and governments should not just leave it up to the private sector to provide more of it. Why would developers, whose business model is driven by profit and scarcity, ever make housing abundant and affordable? That is why we need to get the government back into the business of actually directly building genuinely affordable, good-quality homes. That is why on top of seeking to amend this bill the Greens released our plan this week for a public builder to build tens of thousands of new, genuinely affordable homes to buy or rent – because this government could be and should be directly building homes that people can actually afford to live in. They can be rented or sold to first home buyers and renters at below-market prices. That is why we will keep calling on the government to make renting fair and affordable and limit how much a landlord can put up the rent.

This bill is encouraging. After years and years of pressure from the Greens, Labor is finally coming to the table to try to address the housing crisis, but if they continue to pander to private developers who benefit from the crisis, things will only get worse. Homes should be for living in, not for profit.

Bronwyn HALFPENNY (Thomastown) (16:16): I am also rising in very strong support of the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024. Before going into my discussion on the bill, I just want to say that it is so easy for anyone in here that is never going to be forming government and does not have to deliver on what they say to say anything that is populist, that sounds fantastic, or that anyone can say ‘Yeah, we all agree’ to. The dishonesty in this is there is no detail about how it all gets done. To be able to just go around saying whatever you feel like that you think might sound popular without any background as to what it actually means to deliver it or how you can deliver it is really quite dishonest in my view, and that is what is going on here with the Greens.

The Labor government has now been working for quite some time on trying to address the housing shortage in Victoria. But the other thing in all this blame about it being the government’s fault and this and that is that the housing shortage is a phenomenon that I think is global. It is not just in Victoria; it is in the rest of Australia and it is also in many places in Europe. We are hearing about the protests in places like Spain where people cannot live in an affordable house, or in Belgium wherever it is. In Venice people are trying to fight against more tourists for the very reason that there is not enough housing for the people that permanently live in that area. So it is not just here; it is across the globe.

As far as I can see, the Victorian government really is standing firm and working really hard at the forefront of trying to address these problems. A lot of this is because of course we see firsthand in the electorates that we represent the terrible consequences of the lack of affordable housing. People come into my office, many in the situation where they are looking at eviction because the rent has gone up. People are complaining about others that are living in a supermarket area because they do not have anywhere to live.

So we are starting with this proposal and the many other things that we are looking at, which are affordable housing, social housing and trying to turbocharge the industry to build more housing of all sorts to make sure that that housing is in places that have the infrastructure already. Somebody said to me, and someone might correct me, that if you build more dwellings or more homes in the areas that already have infrastructure, like the inner and middle suburbs, it takes something like \$1 extra in contribution for infrastructure, but if you do it in the outer suburbs like Wollert in the electorate of Thomastown it is something like \$4 that has to be spent there. So really we need to share the resources

that we already have. Yes, we still need to do more in terms of infrastructure, but we need to make sure that things are shared and that there are homes all throughout the state where people want to live so that they have the choice to live where they grew up, where their families and other connections are, or they have the choice to live further out if that is what they would like.

In terms of the Liberals, it seems like they would just want to see everybody moving further and further out. I see, for example, right now the Thomastown electorate is about 30 kilometres from the city and is probably getting close to the outer suburbs, but where are we going next? We are going to Donnybrook, Wallan, Kilmore – how far do we go? Many people that may be buying a house and land package there might rather, if they had the choice, be looking at living in perhaps Reservoir, where their family lives. I think there is only one apartment block in Reservoir. There is just the first multistorey development being built in Thomastown at the moment. There have been no complaints about that construction. It really is happening very fast now, and people see this as a good thing because there is more opportunity for particularly young homebuyers to get into the housing market.

I better get on to the actual bill that we are talking about here today, which will waive stamp duty for a 12-month period. Because we know the urgency of these things, this bill was introduced very quickly. At the moment there are certain circumstances where first home buyers or owner-occupiers, residents of Victoria, can buy a house and get a concession on the stamp duty, which can be \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000, \$60,000, \$70,000, \$80,000. They can get a concession on that. Now this is going to apply, this 12 months, to anybody that is purchasing an off-the-plan home, an apartment or a townhouse, to try to really encourage people to start making their decisions now rather than waiting for the future.

We know that there have been a whole lot of other things that the Allan Labor government has done to improve the situation for accommodation, whether it is the recently announced further improvement of rights for renters around not having to pay two bonds if you move from one property to another or having a dispute resolution system that is much quicker and easier to access. We know that it is not just a one size fits all. You cannot just do one thing in order to increase the number of homes. You need to do lots of different things for people that rent as well as those that want to buy.

I look at my children. My oldest son is 29. He is renting a house, in a share house. He is worried that the rent is going to go up soon. The people that he lives with do not like to even complain about any of the poor conditions of the house because they are worried that if the landlord is forced to improve the property, then that will mean that their rent will go up or, even worse, they will be evicted. I was talking to him only a few days ago and said, 'Why don't you look for something else? There's all these problems with it.' I probably should not say too much. What he told me was, 'Well, have you seen the state of the rental market in this area?' On Fairy Floss and all these social media apps there is all sorts of talk: 'A hundred people turned up for the viewing', 'There were 900 applications', 'Help, can somebody give a room for the next six months?' So we need to do something. We are doing something.

I know the Minister for Planning is looking at all the new planning regimes in order to also fast-track properties, but also there was a lot of reputational damage around the Liberal years when we had apartments being built that did not even have a window. They were all crammed in. The height of the ceiling is about 30 centimetres from the top of your head. This is what people think townhouses and apartments are.

A member interjected.

Bronwyn HALFPENNY: I do not know if I have got time to respond to the member over there, because I have seen lots of apartments without any windows or with just one window at the front and nothing else. They are just absolutely terrible. There are some not that far from where I am.

Getting back to this bill, the stamp duty concession is for all, and it is also about, with the work that has been done in planning, making better designs. We have other things that have been announced around a greater design booklet to look at how apartments could be better designed, what guidance to

give and how to go about building better-designed apartments and townhouses so that they are actually nice places to live, they do not feel cramped and they are well designed both on the outside for the neighbours that may live around them and also for the people that are actually living inside those apartments.

I know that, for example, the residents of Thomastown want to see their children have a home. When you look at the area of the north, often people's parents lived in maybe Preston or Reservoir or Northcote. Then they cannot afford to live in that area, so they go down the train track – they go to Reservoir, they go to Thomastown, or those that lived in Thomastown are going up to South Morang or Mernda or Donnybrook. While these areas are lovely places to live, with all the red gums and the trees and that sort of stuff out that way, you also need to be near your family and your community, particularly if you are a young family, in order to have all the support that you need. This legislation is something that I believe the residents and constituents of the Thomastown electorate will be very pleased to see once they see the outcome of the program that we have for housing.

Brad BATTIN (Berwick) (16:26): Good news: only 55 days till Christmas. It is only 55 days until Santa comes back into Victoria and will go around and hopefully deliver more in relation to housing than what this government has done in 10 years. We have had 10 years of a Labor government with their red suit on, walking around pretending now that all issues in the state are not caused by them. Now they have brought in a bill, the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024 – and we love it; we love a good Labor title when they put the names of the bills in, their 'more homes' bill, which they have brought in as a matter of urgency here in Victoria. They have brought it in because they need to get it through asap. It is a piece of legislation that in 2017 this government voted to get rid of to support the duties in relation to buying off the plan all those years ago.

I just want to clear up one myth, and this is specifically for the Greens. When the Greens were up here before, they were specifically talking around this absolute hate for private ownership of investment properties. They have this absolute distrust of any person who buys a property and puts it on the market for rent. It is like every person that does it is doing it solely for profit. A lot of them are trying to set themselves up for later on in life. But with that myth, trying to paint them all as these rich developers lying in their money, swimming in their big pools, it is like they have got this absolute fantasy land. I just want to put it on record. Here are some of the biggest investors in Victoria that put houses on the market, and if people want to question this group of people as people that do not want to give back to the community, I will leave that to the Greens to question it, because even Labor would back these people. Teachers are one of the largest owners of investment properties here in Victoria. Registered nurses –

Iwan Walters interjected.

Brad BATTIN: I am actually trying to defend your side here at the moment; I probably would not quite go there. Registered nurses are one of the biggest investors in properties here in Victoria. These are people that give back to the community every single day. During COVID they put themselves on the line to protect us, but the Greens want to paint them as horrible developers here in the community. Office administrators, IT managers, sparkies, sales assistants, police and firefighters are some of the biggest investors in the private market here in Victoria. Call centre operators – we are not going into the rich list here with call centre operators – and aged and disability carers, people who are giving back every day of their work, with the little bit of extra money they have to try and make sure they do not become a burden on the tax system later, also provide a house in the private market. Sales reps – the list goes on.

These are people that genuinely give back and support our community. They buy a property to set themselves up, yes, for a little bit later on, but these are not people who fit the descriptions that are given of these horrible private investors that increase the rent dramatically or will not let people complain because they provide them with a premises that is just disgusting. The reality is a very small percentage of investors are bad investors here in our state, and there should be legislation and rules to

catch them out and get rid of them. That is just a simple reality. If any developer or investor wants to provide a property that is not up to standard, that will not provide things like heat, hot water, air conditioning, comfort, safety – all of these things that you should be having in your home – then we need to put rules in place and ways to police them to catch them out. But can we stop this absolute rhetoric where that list of people – our teachers, our nurses, our coppers, our firefighters, all of these people that want to give back – are horrible, nasty investors, because quite simply they are not.

Out our way in the growth corridor we have got many developers that have been trying to get properties on the market. They have gone to the Minister for Planning, and the planning minister has refused to sign off on precinct structure plans through Clyde, Clyde North, Officer and Pakenham. We have got developers wanting to get properties onto the market, and people say, ‘Oh, the delay’s for them. They can make more money, they can get the profits out of them.’ The reality is they wanted them on the market a long time ago. All of that precinct past Thompsons Road in Officer has been ready and waiting for development. All it is waiting for is two things: investment from the state government into Thompsons Road to connect it and, two, sign-off on the PSP so there is employment land and land for people to build their first residence on or an investment property so people can rent in that area. So the only thing holding that up is the Victorian Labor government. That is the only thing holding that up. Everybody else is ready to go.

In Clyde we have got developments down there ready to go with thousands of blocks of land. What is holding it up? Investments in Thompsons Road and Clyde Road. And yet the government are going out to developers and saying to them, ‘Unless you build specific roads, you can’t do your development,’ and Bells Road out in Clyde North is one of those roads. Then the government say, ‘To put that road in, you have to go across either a gas pipe or the desalination plant.’ It used to be that you had to insure that to make sure it was protected; obviously for government assets you would protect it for two years, have an insurance policy on it for X amount of dollars, and there would be a negotiation in that. Now they want unlimited insurance in perpetuity. I do not know about you, Acting Speaker, but I reckon I would struggle to find any insurance company in the world that would insure a road for unlimited liability in perpetuity, so it is just not going to happen. So the minister needs to get involved, go in, tell the department that it is just not a reasonable offer or outcome, because what is it stopping? It is stopping more houses going on the market, stopping getting the land supply and stopping the massive increase because of the shortage in land we have through those areas. It is also stopping the development of a new school for students who are struggling in the education system and who are entering the justice system. We could build the Cire school down there and get it up and going. They are ready to go. They have got the land ready to go, they just need the government to sign off on that development down there.

But when it comes to this bill, the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill, I think it is most important that we put on the record here today that this is a tax that this government introduced in 2017, and at the time, as my good friend the member for Gippsland South has stated, it was said by Mr Pallas:

The Andrews government is not content to sit on its hands while an entire generation is locked out of housing.

So from 2017 to 2024 what have we seen? We have seen prices of properties go up dramatically, delays in developments and people no longer being able to afford many of their properties because of the taxes, and we have had 55 new taxes in this state, of which most are based on property, so therefore people are refusing to invest in it. The government has since that date introduced so many new taxes that investors are departing Victoria and moving into other states and relocating their money. The beneficiaries of this are places like Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales, where these smaller investors, like those I have mentioned before, will be going out and building properties to put into the market in those areas in Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales. And the reason? Because they can trust those governments. There are Labor and Liberal governments in there, and they can trust those governments, which want those developments to come in there and they want those investments in there because they know that the greatest way to solve the housing crisis that affects so

many states at the moment is less tax, more private investment and more opportunities to get houses on the market, whether it is in the rental market or for people to purchase their first home.

We know there is a place for social housing. I am very proud to see some of the social housing projects we have had out through Pakenham, through Berwick and Officer. We have even had some social housing projects that have been built by private enterprise and through entrepreneurship where they have put everything into ensuring women coming out of domestic violence situations have got a place to go and effectively call their own, to give them the security that they need. If you go and speak to the Clyde North information service or any service like that where they can put them into a home and it gives them the confidence that they do not go back to that domestic violence, that is a win. So we know there is a place for that. But we also know that it is not just a place for government; there is a place for the private sector in it.

So if I get anything out of today, we are going to support this going through. We are not going to oppose this, because we actually think it is great to see that we are going to reduce a tax. It is the first time it has happened from this government. We are going to see a reduced tax. But we have to get into the refrains of, particularly, the Greens, so I am only going to really target the Greens on this. We have to get it out of their rhetoric that all investors are bad, because we should be welcoming investors here in Victoria with open arms to assist with the housing crisis, to get more houses on the market, to ensure that we can keep the rental costs down and to make sure that people can genuinely have a place to go where they are safe and where they feel like they are welcomed. The only way to do that is to invite these private investors in, and this will assist partly.

Nina TAYLOR (Albert Park) (16:36): The Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024 – what is it about? It is introducing a 12-month, expanded off-the-plan stamp duty concession, which the government announced on Monday 21 October. The bill does not make any other changes. Now, the only reason I am saying that is to be really specific about what the bill is delivering. At the end of the day more homes means more opportunity, and that is why we are slashing the stamp duty on off-the-plan apartments, units and townhouses to cut up-front costs, speed up building and make it more affordable for everyone to buy off the plan.

This is one of a number of levers that our Allan Labor government is implementing in order to really turbocharge the building of the full spectrum of housing in Victoria but focusing on quality, focusing on where people actually want to live and making sure that we do not restrict the ability of millennials and beyond to get into the housing market – and, I should say, the reverse: actually giving them hope. Something I was saying earlier today is that when the most recent housing announcements – there have been a lot of housing announcements, not just recently – came through, we were actually getting some really positive feedback from younger Victorians as well. It was really lovely to see, because I think for a while a lot of them – and I have some younger people in my office as well – have felt ‘Hey, when is somebody going to think about us?’ There are people who have got their homes and they have got their lifestyles set up, but how are they ever going to get into the housing market? So I am really excited about this and the spectrum of levers that are being implemented to really take housing builds across the state, and the great diversity of housing builds, forward. We know it is an absolute imperative.

I will put in the caveat that it is not an exclusive challenge to Victoria or Australia. I know, for instance, even in the UK they also have a challenge with getting enough housing for their population and getting enough builders as well. It appears there are global challenges which are confronting so many people for a whole variety of reasons. In any case, I will come back to Victoria, because we are focused on Victoria. But I just wanted to give a little bit of perspective, because sometimes I have heard some arguments in the chamber saying, about Victoria and the Allan and Andrews Labor governments, ‘It’s all your fault, blah, blah, blah, blah,’ when in fact we know, if we can be really honest about this, that the challenge with having enough housing is not exclusive to Victoria, not by a long shot.

A fairer go for renters – we know that only Labor has been implementing a whole series of reforms to improve livability but also fairness for renters in our state. The Minister for Consumer Affairs actually announced some really terrific mechanisms of late to expedite the resolution of disputes, because we know that getting stuck at VCAT can be expensive, although VCAT compared to a court is meant to mitigate the costs of protracted litigation. Nevertheless, if you are having to have representation, there is the elevation of costs and time and stress, and we do not want people having to go through that simply to be able to have fair and reasonable circumstances for being able to rent. If renters have a simple dispute with their landlord, such as about repairs, maintenance, damage, bond claims or rental increases, it is not fair if it has to be dragged out in a formal hearing when it does not need to be. There must be alternatives, we recognise this, and that is why our Labor government will help renters resolve simple disputes through a free public dispute resolution service, which seems infinitely sensible, but also a huge relief.

I do not rent now but I did rent for many, many years – I think nearly 20 years, 25 years, somewhere in that vicinity – and I had the vicissitude of landlords. Some were terrific and some were a little less generous. These reforms are not about necessarily casting aspersions on anyone in particular. It is more about creating a fairer system for the rental space, so to speak, and also it is in their interests, I would have thought, for landlords to have expeditious resolution of disputes. I do not think they would want to be involved in protracted disputes either. It is not good on either side. Fairness actually extends to both situations: (1) the landowner or the property owner and (2) the actual renter as well.

I did have the pleasure of joining the Minister for Planning at a terrific six-storey apartment building in South Melbourne. Wow. I mean, it was absolutely amazing, and you should have seen the level of detail and thoughtfulness in every aspect of that build. It is a six-storey build right on the light rail and a stone's throw from South Melbourne Market. I timed it at probably a 3-minute walk to the market, which they do very regularly. It is really sensitive, sustainable design, making sure that people had enough space around the bed to be able to make the bed in the morning. It included a laundry tub, and I know as somebody who rented for many years that the luxury of a laundry tub is absolutely fantastic. It is hygienic but it is also just much more comfortable when you are having to do your handwashing as well. Even the cupboards featured different mechanisms to ensure that you are maximising the free space but not in any way detracting from good storage.

What we are talking about here is moving away from an era when apartments were poky. I think it was the member for Thomastown who said something about some really horrific design of another era, where it was just turbocharging the wrong way. I think to some extent that may have coloured some perceptions about what an apartment is, by perhaps only having a window at the front and no window through a property. That is not what we are about, and I think it is important to be really clear about the clear direction that we are heading, and also rewarding those designers and architects that really think through well-designed buildings and put an effort into planning them.

There is more detail. I just love these apartments; they were so good. The architects made sure that there is constant airflow in the apartment and a sophisticated sort of mechanism for heating and cooling. It is well insulated, and when you shut the door you cannot hear the outside world. You would not know that you are right in South Melbourne, and this is exactly what we are talking about.

We are aiming to reward affordable, well-designed buildings and the developers who put the effort into building them by granting them a fast-track through the planning system. That seems infinitely sensible. On the one hand, you are getting more homes built and more opportunities, but on the other hand, you really are incentivising good-quality builds that Victorians deserve. At its heart it is also about sustainability of course, lower emissions, but lower energy costs as well. So in the long run you are also saving money when you have got double glazing and other aspects in the bill. But I should say that the apartment block that we did visit is also aesthetically pleasing. It is not an eyesore when you are driving past. I had seen it many times before, and I was so excited to be able to get the opportunity to go in there and really experience what it is like.

There are so many exciting things happening in our state – prioritising a diversity of home choices, more opportunities, more homes for Victorians. I am certainly excited also by giving the younger generations hope, but hope with a practical outcome and a reality that can be delivered, and I think that it is incumbent upon us to do that. You cannot just say, ‘Don’t touch Malvern, don’t touch Brighton,’ and then thrash about when stamp duty is cut or is not cut. It is sort of a contradiction. You cannot have it both ways. There are some tricky little arguments over there, but all the same I am glad that there is support for the bill. We will take it – that is a good thing – and see more homes for Victorians.

Wayne FARNHAM (Narracan) (16:46): I am pleased to rise to speak on the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024. As you have heard previous speakers say, we do not oppose this bill. In fact we believe this probably does not go far enough, to be honest. For 12 months we are going to have this reduction in stamp duty, and I do not know how many homes that will really benefit at the end of the day. But the fact of the matter is that this government took away the stamp duty concession in 2017, and I wonder why today, seven years later, we actually have a housing crisis. This is part of the problem. The government should not be coming here trying to be the big white knight saying they are going to fix it when they stuffed it in the first place back in 2017. It is really that simple.

The reason why there were off-the-plan exemptions for stamp duty is because it is common sense. If you buy a block of land and then build a house, you only pay stamp duty on the block of land, you do not pay stamp duty on the construction of the house, and that is why this tax exemption was always brought in on off-the-plan construction. The other point to this is the exemption – the stamp duty exemption for off-the-plan – encouraged people to purchase. It stimulated the economy. This is why in 2017, when the government canned it, development started to drop off – and it is really that simple – because no-one wanted to purchase any more. There is always a risk in off-the-plan purchases, there really is, hence why that stamp duty exemption was encouraging people to purchase. There is a risk, because sometimes you hope and pray you are going to get what you paid for. It is really that simple. It is not like walking into a spec home that is completed and you can see the finished product. They may have a display suite that is probably 40 square metres or 60 square metres, but you are purchasing in good faith that you are going to get a good product. But people were prepared to take the risk because they had the stamp duty exemption.

What I am really, really curious to know today is: as of today, how many developers are out in the market ready to go? I think that is a very interesting point, because I do not believe there are that many developers out there ready to go to sale off the plan right at this point in time, because developers have had no faith in this government for the last decade. They are not jumping through hoops at the moment to try and develop. Even in the development industry the other week, when the government was talking about their policies, the developers were saying, ‘We need another 15 per cent to make this viable.’ Now, people beat up on developers all the time – they are greedy, they are this, they are that. At the end of the day they have to make a dollar. If you do not make a dollar, you go broke. If they go broke, they are not going to develop. It is really that simple.

I am not sure how many people are really going to get benefit from this from 21 October this year to 21 October next year. I really do not know how many people are going to benefit. Is it going to be 3000 people? Is it going to be 10,000 people? I am guessing it will be on the lower end. I really am. I would love to see the figures on developers that are ready to go today, because if they are not ready to go today, they are going to be years away, and this stamp duty concession will finish on 21 October 2025. If I own a block of land today and I have got to try and get the plans done, I have got to get the renders done, I have got to get the engineering done, I have got to go through the planning scheme, which is broken, and then I have got to get to market, how long do you think that will take? It will not take 12 months; I will guarantee you that. It will take a lot longer than 12 months, and this is the problem. The only problem with this bill is that it stops on 21 October 2025. That is the problem. Extend it. If you want to make a difference to housing supply and you want to make a difference to

people purchasing off the plan, extend this bill. Twelve months is not long enough. Not enough people will benefit from this.

It was in place for good reason. It was in place to encourage people to purchase. When people purchase it stimulates the economy. It was in place so investors could build up for their retirement. Those investors were creating the rental market. Where are those investors now? They are moving out of this state. They are moving out of this state because of the amount of taxes that have been introduced by this government. Fifty-five taxes this government has introduced, and more than 50 per cent of those taxes are related to building or land. That is why people are leaving. The land tax alone is driving people out of this state, and they are going to South Australia, they are going to New South Wales and they are going to Queensland. Those states are getting the benefit of this government's mismanagement. Those states are getting the benefit of this government not being able to manage money and raising taxes that much that it is driving investment out of the state.

To be honest, I support the bill. It is great, but the whole housing policy from the government at the moment is a real big Hail Mary. It really is. They hope it is going to work. 'We're going to fix the planning schemes; communities will not have a say.' This is a real Hail Mary from this government, and I still do not think they have it right. I really do not, because the housing industry at the moment is in such a state of disrepair.

I said this on my first day in Parliament in my inaugural speech: the problem with Melbourne's big infrastructure build is it is driving labour and materials out of the domestic market, and that is driving up price. That is one of the reasons why housing now is unaffordable. It has been major project after major project after major project all at once, so it comes back to the old analogy of demand and supply. If there is very high demand for labour and for materials, prices will go up. This actually will not come back until the Big Build gets under control and the government actually finishes a project – I do not know when. But that labour force, we need that back in the domestic market, and we need materials back in the domestic market.

The problem we have as well is we are now becoming an importer of materials. There is another cost escalation. We got rid of native timber that was bringing billions into this economy, and now we import that timber. We have not planned for plantation pine. We have not planned for that. We are 25 years behind on pine supply. Where does the pine come from now? Overseas. It costs more. Pine is up to nearly \$6 a metre for a bit of 90 by 35 MGP10. I know no-one over that side knows what I am talking about at the moment, and that is okay. You have got to take my word that when pine is at \$6 a metre for 90 by 35 MGP10 – it is more for 90 by 45 MGP12 – you know that housing costs are going to be unaffordable for the average person trying to get into their first home. That is part of the problem.

Yes, we support this bill, but the timeframe on this does not go far enough to stimulate housing growth and to simulate our economy. Housing was one of the biggest pushers of our economy in this state, and now we wonder why the state is in so much debt. We wonder why our interest bill is at \$17.8 million a day, as the Shadow Minister for Finance pointed out today – the Premier could not point it out, but the shadow finance minister pointed it out. When we get housing back up and going again and when we get a good government in this state that knows what they are doing, our economy will recover. But it is not going to recover in a timeframe of 12 months. That is not long enough. As I said, I would love to see the figures on this in 12 months time. I would love to see the figures of how many Victorians got the opportunity to buy off the plan, because I doubt it will be any more than 3000 people. That is not enough to solve this housing crisis, that is not enough to stimulate this economy. And it is not good enough from this government, who scrapped this in 2017, did nothing for seven years and now come in thinking they are the white knight that is going to save Victoria. They are not. They stuffed the state, and this is not going to go far enough. We support the bill, but it does not go for long enough.

Paul HAMER (Box Hill) (16:56): I would also like to make a short contribution on the Duties Amendment (More Homes) Bill 2024. It is a very important bill, one of a number of statements that

the Premier and the Minister for Planning, who is at the table, made last week, which will contribute to more homes across the state. I will just reflect a little bit on some of the contributions that have been made throughout today both on this bill and on the previous bill, which related to homes. I was particularly interested in the member for Malvern's contribution where he talked about the concentration of homes and how they are all suddenly going to be in Stonnington. I know the member for Brighton is here – he was talking about all the homes that are to be in Bayside. I was just looking at the increase in dwellings in the City of Whitehorse; the Box Hill electorate is entirely within the City of Whitehorse. Actually, more than double the number of dwellings were provided in the City of Whitehorse than were provided in the City of Bayside over that five-year period. Just 2000 additional dwellings were provided in the five years between 2016 and 2021 across the whole of the City of Bayside, compared with almost 6000 in the City of Whitehorse.

Mary-Anne Thomas interjected.

Paul HAMER: 'That is fantastic,' says the Minister for Health. That is because there is development occurring in Box Hill. If the member for Caulfield wants to see cranes in the city, he should come out to Box Hill. There is a build-to-rent proposal – well, it is not really a proposal, it is coming out of the ground. There are 450 dwellings in a build-to-rent complex, the largest build-to-rent complex in Victoria, I believe. It is a sign of confidence in the market that a developer has started work on this site, right in central Box Hill. It is walking distance to the existing station, and it will be walking distance to the new Suburban Rail Loop station as well, as that is what people want. As long as I have been a member, there have always been multiple cranes in Box Hill, because there is an opportunity for more residents to go in there.

I know that we have Liberal opponents in the upper house – in the lower house as well – who are actively campaigning against the Suburban Rail Loop, against the level crossing removals and against these towers. The largest tower which has been approved in Box Hill is a 51-storey tower, approved by a Liberal-backed council. Yet here we have the Liberal Party again wanting to block houses. They like the cranes, but they do not want more homes. That is the problem: they do not want more homes in the middle suburbs and they do not want more homes in the inner suburbs. Maybe they want homes in the outer suburbs, but they do not want the infrastructure in the outer suburbs. We need more homes, and we need any activity and any changes to the Duties Act 2000 that can facilitate that process. I commend the bill to the house.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The time set down for consideration of the remaining items on the government business program has arrived, and I am required to interrupt business.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The bill will now be sent to the Legislative Council and their agreement requested.

Education and Training Reform Amendment Bill 2024

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Ben Carroll:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

*Third reading***Motion agreed to.****Read third time.**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The bill will now be sent to the Legislative Council and their agreement requested.

Agriculture and Food Safety Legislation Amendment Bill 2024*Second reading***Debate resumed on motion of Ros Spence:**

That this bill be now read a second time.

And Emma Kealy's amendment:

That all the words after 'That' be omitted and replaced with the words 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the government conducts stakeholder consultation on a definition of 'good repute' and a right of appeal for seafood licensees prior to the suspension of their seafood licence.'

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minister has moved that this bill be now read a second time. The member for Lowan has moved a reasoned amendment to this motion. She has proposed to omit all the words after 'That' and replace them with the words which are on the notice paper. The question is:

That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Those supporting the reasoned amendment by the member for Lowan should vote no.

Assembly divided on question:

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

Noes (23): Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Tim Bull, Martin Cameron, Chris Crewther, Wayne Farnham, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, David Hodgett, Emma Kealy, Cindy McLeish, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keeffe, John Pesutto, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, David Southwick, Bridget Vallence, Peter Walsh, Jess Wilson

Question agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

That this bill be now read a second time and a third time.

Assembly divided on question:

Ayes (50): Juliana Addison, Jacinta Allan, Colin Brooks, Josh Bull, Anthony Carbines, Ben Carroll, Anthony Cianflone, Sarah Connolly, Chris Couzens, Jordan Crugnale, Lily D'Ambrosio, Gabrielle de Vietri, Steve Dimopoulos, Paul Edbrooke, Eden Foster, Ella George, Luba Grigorovitch, Bronwyn Halfpenny, Katie Hall, Paul Hamer, Mathew Hilakari, Melissa Horne, Natalie Hutchins, Lauren Kathage, Sonya Kilkenny, Gary Maas, Alison Marchant, Kathleen Matthews-Ward, Steve McGhie, Paul Mercurio, John Mullahy, Tim Pallas, Danny Pearson, Tim Read, Pauline Richards, Tim Richardson, Ellen Sandell, Michaela Settle, Ros Spence, Nick Staikos, Natalie Suleyman, Meng

Heang Tak, Jackson Taylor, Nina Taylor, Kat Theophanous, Mary-Anne Thomas, Emma Vulin, Iwan Walters, Gabrielle Williams, Belinda Wilson

Noes (23): Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Tim Bull, Martin Cameron, Chris Crewther, Wayne Farnham, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, David Hodgett, Emma Kealy, Cindy McLeish, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keefe, John Pesutto, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, David Southwick, Bridget Vallence, Peter Walsh, Jess Wilson

Question agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The bill will now be sent to the Legislative Council and their agreement requested.

Transport Infrastructure and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Second reading

Debate resumed on motion of Danny Pearson:

That this bill be now read a second time.

And David Southwick's amendment:

That all the words after 'That' be omitted and replaced with the words 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the government commits to conducting community consultation on each major precinct project declaration enabled by this bill.'

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minister has moved that the bill be now read a second time. The member for Caulfield has moved a reasoned amendment to this motion. He has proposed to omit all the words after 'That' and replace them with the words which have been circulated. The question is:

That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question.

Those supporting the reasoned amendment by the member for Caulfield should vote no.

Assembly divided on question:

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

Noes (23): Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Tim Bull, Martin Cameron, Chris Crewther, Wayne Farnham, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, David Hodgett, Emma Kealy, Cindy McLeish, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keefe, John Pesutto, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, David Southwick, Bridget Vallence, Peter Walsh, Jess Wilson

Question agreed to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

That this bill be now read a second time and a third time.

Assembly divided on question:

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

Noes (23): Brad Battin, Jade Benham, Roma Britnell, Tim Bull, Martin Cameron, Chris Crewther, Wayne Farnham, Sam Groth, Matthew Guy, David Hodgett, Emma Kealy, Cindy McLeish, James Newbury, Danny O'Brien, Michael O'Brien, Kim O'Keefe, John Pesutto, Richard Riordan, Brad Rowswell, David Southwick, Bridget Vallence, Peter Walsh, Jess Wilson

Question agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The bill will now be sent to the Legislative Council and their agreement requested.

Business interrupted under sessional orders.

Adjournment

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

That the house now adjourns.

Glen Eira College

David SOUTHWICK (Caulfield) (17:15): (901) Before I raise my adjournment tonight to the Minister for Education, a number of people have raised the tragic events at Auburn South Primary School, and I also want to put on record that my thoughts and best wishes are with those families of that school. It is an absolute tragedy, and our hearts go to all of those families in the spirit that has been demonstrated during the last few days.

It did make me think a little bit, that tragedy, about how important it is to be considering our schools, so my adjournment tonight is specifically to the Minister for Education, and the issue is in relation to a safety issue, particularly an overpass at Glen Eira College, which now has two campuses and has had for a number of years. I have been advocating since 2017 about an overpass or better safety measures at that school. The school is growing in numbers. It will go from 900 to 1200 very shortly with a middle school campus which is going to be located across the road at Booran Road, where there is currently a sports oval and a gymnasium at another precinct. If you have been to this school – and I know the member for Croydon has been to the school and others have been to the school – you will notice that not just during the lunchtime period but during just about every change of lesson time you can get up to 400 kids that are going across the road. It is a very narrow street, and there is not much

area for the kids to wait to cross the road. You only have to go out there to see these 400 kids literally crossing.

I have spoken to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety a number of different times through petitions and other things. The minister has allowed for the crossing to have an additional time period. We need more than that. We need a full overpass to ensure safety for these kids. I request that the Minister for Education come out with me, meet with the school and have a look. As I say, it is beyond roads. The minister for roads has done a good job in what they have been able to do with limited capacity. This needs funding. Back in 2017–18 we had the roads department come out, and they said it would cost about \$2 million for this overpass. That was a number of years ago. It would cost considerably more now. This cannot come out of the school budget. The school is strapped for cash, particularly with the middle school being developed at the moment. So can I get the Minister for Education to come out with me, meet with Sheereen Kindler and the school and the committee and the board, and let us get this done. Let us get this overpass finally done to ensure safety for all these kids in Glen Eira.

Lang Lang extractive industries

Jordan CRUGNALE (Bass) (17:18): (902) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Energy and Resources, and the action I seek is for the minister and the Earth Resources Regulator to meet with the Lang Lang community about the sand quarries around their local area. Currently consultation is open on the draft strategic extractive resource areas for the community to have their say and input. The SERA identifies areas that are most suitable for future quarry development and guides industry investment away from conflicting and sensitive areas. They consider proximity to townships, amenity, community, local environmental and cultural heritage values, existing land uses and access to transport networks when identifying areas to ensure any potential land use conflicts can be avoided. This gives both communities and industry important clarity about where resources may be developed in the future.

This community have a significant state resource literally in their backyard, and they do not get much in return or local benefit. Whilst the draft SERA is separate to infrastructure priorities, this engagement has been a mechanism to voice what is important and what is needed, including local projects, infrastructure investment that addresses road safety, community benefits and the need for a better relationship between community and the quarry operators. There are a lot of people in the Lang Lang community who have questions, not just about SERAs but about how these quarries are regulated and managed, whether it be environmental protections, noise and dust, watertables or rehabilitation. Another forum with the minister and the Earth Resources Regulator, I know, will help provide clarity on these processes and ensure that our community can have their say.

Transport Accident Commission

Tim BULL (Gippsland East) (17:20): (903) My adjournment is to the Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC, and the action I seek is a review of processes to deliver fairer long-term outcomes for those that are injured in motor vehicle accidents. There are some, we know, who take advantage of this system, but the crackdown on them should not unfairly punish those who genuinely need support, and I want to cite one example tonight.

In June 2020 Anthony York was stationary at a red light when his car was struck from behind by a drug-affected and unlicensed driver. He sustained very severe back and neck injuries. Mr York was a highly skilled worker in the construction industry, and his life was changed. He sustained severe spinal and neck injuries that required multiple surgeries, the first of which was unsuccessful. The significantly delayed approval for his second surgery came only through ministerial intervention. Surviving on modest but welcome support provided by the TAC, Mr York's weekly assistance payments were abruptly cut off in June 2023. Far from retirement age, he was forced to draw on his superannuation just to simply live. To rub salt into the wound, the individual who struck Mr York and also failed to render assistance by abandoning the scene of the accident was imprisoned for just five months. Mr York is unable to work and lives in pain daily.

But here is the kicker. Unable to afford to financially survive with his payments cut off, he was then forced to take the TAC to court, again having to draw from his superannuation to fight for a decent financial settlement. Now can you believe this? The agency is there and meant to help Mr York, but he actually had to take them to court to try and get an outcome that was fair. The court costs were \$190,000, and he was then advised to accept a settlement as to take it further would have incurred even greater costs. The settlement falls far short of what Mr York requires to live the rest of his life, just to simply survive. At age 58, living in great pain, unable to work and not having the funds to support himself, why has he had to fight the agency that is meant to be there to support him?

Whatever the reasons that are given by the TAC or the minister in this situation, any system that produces that outcome is simply flawed. There is no other way to describe it. Both the system and Mr York's case need review because he needs help.

Rental reform

Kat THEOPHANOUS (Northcote) (17:23): (904) My adjournment is for the Minister for Consumer Affairs, and the action I seek is for the minister to provide me with an update on how the renting taskforce is working to monitor the market and inspect properties in my electorate of Northcote. Around 40 per cent of residents in my community are renting, and under the Allan Labor government Victoria is now setting the standard nationwide for strong renters rights. This includes cracking down on rental providers and estate agents who do the wrong thing, because renters should not have to put up with conduct that is not only unfair but illegal.

Since March last year the renting taskforce has been working to make sure rentals are being advertised fairly, that properties meet the mandatory minimum standards for safety and livability and that bonds are being lodged properly. They have worked with rental providers to make sure they understand and comply with their obligations but have also issued almost \$450,000 in fines for clear breaches – a strong signal to the market that bad-faith actors will meet consequences.

The taskforce is just one of Labor's suite of reforms designed to give renters the dignity of a safe, secure and stable home – something every one of us deserves. Along with increasing the minimum standards for safety, energy efficiency and comfort in rental homes, the Victorian Labor government will establish Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria to help renters resolve issues without the huge time, expense and stress of VCAT. We will make it easier when renters move properties with a new portable bond scheme; we will stop landlords making dubious bond claims without evidence or receipts for repair; we will ban no-fault evictions so you cannot be kicked out of your home for no reason; we will ban the extra fees that get charged when you pay rent, including on rent tech apps; we will ban rental providers from charging background check fees on rental applications; we will cap the cost of breaking a lease so no-one is burdened with exorbitant amounts in compensation when they need to move; and we will make it clear that if you need an extra key or fob for your apartment you get one.

In the inner north, where renting is widespread, the impact of these reforms is deeply significant. For so many people in my community it will mean the security of a stable, comfortable home. It will mean not paying more than they should, and should things not go to plan, it will mean keeping them out of court and in control of their rights. Coupled with our landmark announcements about building more homes, slashing stamp duty, ensuring developers contribute funding for public infrastructure, overhauling the Victorian Planning Authority and putting in stronger protections around building quality, we are creating opportunities for Victorians of every generation. I look forward to seeing the renting taskforce out in action in the inner north.

Montmorency train station

Matthew GUY (Bulleen) (17:26): (905) My adjournment matter tonight is for the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, and it concerns the rebuild of Montmorency station, which is about 12 months old. I raise this matter because, as members would know, I do not have a railway line in the City of Manningham – the only municipality in metropolitan Melbourne without a heavy railway line

into it. So most of my constituents, when we are talking heavy rail, will go to Blackburn station, or many of us in the northern half of Manningham will head to Montmorency, which is about 5 or 6 kilometres across Fitzsimons Lane over the Yarra River. Montmorency station was rebuilt by the government at some considerable cost, and blowout, and reopened around 12 months ago, although the claims before the 2018 and then the 2022 elections to duplicate the line to Diamond Creek have not eventuated. In fact they eventuated only to Montmorency. The station was rebuilt.

Growing up in Montmorency, I remember Monty station some years ago was a single-platform station on a curve. It had burnt down in the mid-1980s. It was a very small, very rickety station which was rebuilt a number of times. This time it has been rebuilt in what considerably many locals think is an overbuild, but that aside, my issue is around the rebuild of the station and the awnings of the station, which are quite high and on a pronounced angle. I understand this is becoming a feature of design for new station construction. The problem with the station construction is, though, that on hot days and then again on wet days it does not provide the cover from the elements that it is designed to do. Many residents who are getting the train are obviously an older demographic, particularly Montmorency, which is an older demographic in the City of Banyule. Many residents who go to use the station of course are standing, waiting for the train. The old platform had awnings up for most of the platform, and they were able to keep people protected from the elements – the new one does not.

A lot of money has been spent on rebuilding this station for a worse outcome. It now has the people using it, with patrons on both the down and the up platform, which is the city-bound and the Hurstbridge-bound, exposed to the elements where they previously were not. Again, I say a lot of money has been put into rebuilding this station for a very high, very pronounced awning that does not provide protection from the sun in summer and the rain in winter. I ask the minister to review that design standard and/or rebuild that awning and, if that is not financially possible, to rebuild that standard and to ensure that this does not happen again so I am not stuck with the failure that is now Montmorency railway station.

Carwatha P-12 College

Eden FOSTER (Mulgrave) (17:28): (906) My adjournment matter is for the Minister for Children in the other place, and the action I seek is for the minister to join me at Carwatha P-12 College to tour the school and speak with the principal, teachers and staff about their school being a future kindergarten site. Carwatha will be home to one of the Allan Labor government's onsite kinders by 2027, which will make early childhood education more accessible for families in my community. This is a great initiative that I know many people within our community are very excited for. I look forward to seeing the minister at Carwatha very soon.

Croydon Road, Croydon

David HODGETT (Croydon) (17:29): (907) My adjournment is for the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action I seek is for the minister to urgently repair the severe surface damage on the road along Croydon Road, Croydon, which has been caused by the use of heavy vehicles and trucks as part of the level crossing removal works. Minister, you would be aware that the Croydon station has just undergone the removal of the Coolstore Road level crossing. As a result of these works the local streets surrounding the station have been carrying extra loads of heavy vehicles and large trucks, in particular Croydon Road, as these vehicles are parked for hours at a time while waiting to be called to the works area near the station. This has gone on for many months, with some streets having multiple large vehicles parked at all hours of the night and day waiting for their allocated time to unload or reload. These local roads were not designed to accommodate these many large and heavy trucks for these large amounts of time.

Prior to winter this year Croydon Road was in relatively good condition. However, now with increased traffic use by these vehicles and trucks it has been left with extensive damage, with large sections having major undulations and potholes. I am informed that large pieces of bitumen are coming loose causing more dangerous holes. These are not merely surface damage issues; the road base has become

damaged as well and the road needs some major repairing. Croydon Road is a busy road that carries large volumes of traffic daily, and this damage is dangerous for drivers, particularly for those who swerve to miss the potholes, which can cause fear and anxiety for oncoming drivers. Minister, I again ask that you urgently repair this road which has been severely impacted by the government's own Level Crossing Removal Project.

Cost of living

Anthony CIANFLONE (Pascoe Vale) (17:31): (908) My adjournment matter is for the Treasurer, and the action I seek is for the Treasurer to provide an update on the Victorian Labor government's real actions to support households in my community of Pascoe Vale, Coburg and Brunswick West with the cost of living. We know the biggest challenge facing many Victorians over recent times concerns the cost of living.

As many Victorians are acutely aware, many of these issues have been largely driven by a number of international, national and external factors, including international geopolitical conflicts and tensions, which continue to impact demand and confidence across parts of our economy, supply chains and, especially, global energy markets; the ongoing effects of a one-in-100-year global pandemic, which continues to impact economies and levels of inflation around the world and Australia; the 13 interest rate hikes that have been unfairly imposed on local households by the Reserve Bank of Australia; the inaction, resistance and opposition by many councils, namely those of Liberal, Greens and socialist pedigrees, to increase housing supply by building new homes in their communities, which they oppose regularly; the ongoing disregard by the big supermarkets, banks and energy and insurance companies in providing families with any form of meaningful hip pocket relief; and of course a decade of underinvestment and Victoria not receiving its fair share from the previous Abbott, Turnbull and Morrison Liberal governments. Each have played roles in creating and compounding today's cost-of-living challenges for Victorians.

That is why I am very proud to be part of a Victorian Labor government that has been taking the real action necessary to help Victorians with the cost of living and day-to-day life, including through payroll tax relief for small businesses; the creation of a record number of jobs – over 860,000 created since 2014; the nation-leading rollout of free kinder for all three- and four-year-olds, saving families up to \$2500 per year per child; ongoing investments to deliver the Education State and improve our local schools for teachers, students and families; the new \$400 school saving bonus to help families cover the cost of school supplies ahead of the 2025 school year; the free school breakfast program; free glasses and free vision screening programs; the free dental in schools program through the Smile Squad; free TAFE courses, with over 80 free TAFE courses now available; new free teaching degrees to support more people to become teachers; making degrees free for studying nursing and midwifery; backing our nurses and midwives with a 28.4 per cent pay increase; establishing urgent care clinics; and providing free learning and probationary driving permits for young people. There are the \$200 Get Active Kids sports voucher for community sport; the new Victorian energy default offer, which is saving on average \$100 on household energy bills; providing ongoing rebates for solar panels, solar hot water, battery rebates and homes to electrify; rolling out the container deposit scheme, the cash for cans scheme; and of course the numerous incentives and concessions we have for pensioners and concession card holders as well as our council rate cap to keep downward pressure on council rates.

Yesterday's ABS data showing inflation at its lowest level in almost four years at 2.8 per cent was welcomed by many across our community, but many are continuing to do it tough. That is why continuing to deliver more cost-of-living measures will be important for local families and households.

Water safety

Sam GROTH (Nepean) (17:34): (909) My adjournment is for the Premier, and the action I seek is more action from her government to prevent more tragic drownings on the Mornington Peninsula. On 31 August 2024 a young man passed away in the waters off Rye Pier. Tonight I want to use this

opportunity to read some words provided to me by Lincoln Harris's family. The first letter is from Bridget Styles, who is Lincoln's mother.

No Mother should ever bury a child, the night I heard my Lincoln had passed away will always be the worst night of my life. Then I asked how? To find out it was through drowning but to hear how it happened just devastated me. I was told by his partner Jiwon that he had jumped in to get her bag as it had fallen in the water but he then let go of the bag as he realised the water was stronger than him. She told me he cried out for help twice and others on the jetty tried to grab him with their fishing lines or whatever was there but it was too late. I believe if there had been life buoys on the jetty this may of saved his life.

Whatever the cost of life buoys does it matter when it comes to people's lives. Those of you listening to this letter just think to yourselves how you would feel if you had a child that lost his life to drowning, who was fit, young and strong and had an entire life ahead of him. If there had been just one life buoy this would have changed the sequence of events where he would have gone home that afternoon and lived his life and we all would have not buried our beautiful son, brother, partner and friend.

The second letter is from Mark Harris and Sharron Dorrian, Lincoln's father and stepmother:

On the Saturday night of 31/08/2024, the eve before Father's Day, we were out celebrating an early Father's Day dinner with both our fathers when Mark received a telephone call that no parent would want to hear. That his second and middle son Lincoln Harris had died, accidentally drowned that afternoon.

It was such a shock and with disbelief. To see the reaction of the news on Lincoln's grandparents' faces was heartbreaking. Father's Day never to be the same, will be bittersweet for the rest of our lives.

Since that day we have so many thoughts, questions, what ifs.

We visited Rye Pier the morning of Lincoln's funeral, which was held last Wednesday, 11/09/2024, afternoon. We went to see where Lincoln spent his last hours and to try and understand the situation on that fateful day.

Our major concern is the lack of life saving devices on the pier. We do believe if there had been a lifebuoy available on the pier Lincoln would have been given a chance to be with us today and the witnesses would not have experienced a tragedy, or hold the traumatic memory for the rest of their lives, especially Lincoln's girlfriend Jiwon.

I know it is too late for Lincoln but with the feelings and experience of what we have suffered over these last few days I implore that lifebuoy be compulsory items on all piers and jetties, to be akin with Australian law requiring Safety of Life at Sea.

If 'Lincoln's legacy' can be to avoid such a tragedy as drowning for even one life in the future it shall be well worth it.

Premier, please do not let Lincoln's life be just a number. Do something to stop the next tragic drowning.

Cranbourne electorate schools

Pauline RICHARDS (Cranbourne) (17:37): (910) My adjournment is to the Deputy Premier in his capacity as the Minister for Education. The action I seek is that he visit one of the topnotch Cranbourne schools to hear firsthand how the school saving bonus is responding to cost-of-living pressure. Of course my students are the best in the nation, and whether you are a state school family or someone with a healthcare card in a Catholic or independent school, this key investment is greatly appreciated. I look forward to the minister's response.

Responses

Mary-Anne THOMAS (Macedon – Leader of the House, Minister for Health, Minister for Health Infrastructure, Minister for Ambulance Services) (17:37): The member for Caulfield raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education, and the action he seeks is that the minister join him at Glen Eira Secondary College to discuss road safety concerns. The member for Bass raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Energy and Resources. The action that she seeks is that the minister join her and meet with the Lang Lang community to discuss their concerns regarding the sand quarry. The member for Gippsland East raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for WorkSafe and the

TAC, and the action he seeks is a review of the process for those who are injured in motor vehicle accidents.

The member for Northcote raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Consumer Affairs. The action that she seeks is that the minister provide her with an update on how the rental taskforce stands to benefit around 40 per cent of her constituents who are renters and to have the opportunity to discuss other nation-leading rental reforms that are being driven by the Allan Labor government. The member for Bulleen, who is here, had a matter for the attention of the Minister for Transport Infrastructure, and the action he seeks is that the minister review the design standards and/or rebuild the awning at Montmorency station. The member for Mulgrave, in a very concise fashion, had a matter for the attention of the Minister for Children, and the action that she seeks is that the minister join her at Carwatha P-12 College to discuss plans for the kinder that will be built onsite, which will be a huge benefit to families in the hardworking member for Mulgrave's electorate.

The member for Croydon had a matter for the attention of the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, and the action that he seeks is that the minister urgently repair Croydon Road, Croydon. The member for Pascoe Vale had a matter for the attention of the Treasurer, and the action that he seeks is that the Treasurer provide him with an update on the actions that the Allan Labor government is taking to support the cost of living, responding directly to the needs of the members in his community. The member for Nepean had a matter for the attention of the Premier, and the action that he seeks is that the Premier look to provide lifebuoys, particularly on the Rye Pier jetty, following the tragic drowning that was described by the member. The member for Cranbourne had a matter for the attention –

Pauline Richards interjected.

Mary-Anne THOMAS: The hardworking member for Cranbourne had a matter for the attention of the Minister for Education. I am sure the Minister for Education very much looks forward to visiting the member for Cranbourne at one of the many government schools in the member's electorate to hear firsthand how the school saving bonus is delivering, again, cost-of-living relief to the constituents of the member for Cranbourne.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The house stands adjourned until Tuesday week.

House adjourned 5:41 pm.