Tuesday, 9 December 1997

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. A. Chamberlain) took the chair at 10.03 a.m. and read the prayer.

ROYAL ASSENT

Message read advising royal assent to:

Alpine Resorts (Management) Act

Gaming Acts (Miscellaneous Amendment) Act

Gas Industry (Further Amendment) Act

Unclaimed Moneys (Amendment) Act

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Program

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) (*By leave*) — I wish to inform honourable members of the intentions of the government with respect to sitting hours for this week. As honourable members are aware, this is the final week of sitting and there is an important list of bills to be handled. It is the intention of the government that the Audit (Amendment) Bill will be debated today until its finalisation. Tomorrow, after opposition business takes precedence for 2 hours, debate on the Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill will commence. The remaining bills on the notice paper will be debated on Thursday.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) (*By leave*) — I want it on the record that this timetable was not discussed with the opposition. This proposal runs counter to other arrangements whereby the Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill was to be the last piece of legislation to be debated. At least that was my understanding. The government is trying to ram legislation through this house. The opposition can in no way guarantee that debate on the Audit Bill will be finalised today. It is a very important piece of legislation. There has been no discussion with the opposition, and it does not accept the timetable outlined.

I urge the government to reconsider and to have discussions with the opposition to effect a more reasonable timetable which will allow the opposition to debate a range of issues. The house may not be aware that the opposition intends to move 71 amendments to the Audit (Amendment) Bill. The traditions of this house require that the opposition be able to debate those amendments during the committee stage. If the government is suggesting the house should sit all night tonight to finish the debate on the Audit (Amendment) Bill I suggest it should rethink its program. The house should sit until a reasonable hour today and tomorrow and sit late on Thursday, if necessary, but it is unreasonable to suggest that we sit all night tonight. I indicate to the house that the guillotine has not been used in this house.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am simply offering to the government an opportunity to present a reasonable time frame so that we are able to complete debate of the audit bill. If debate on that bill is not finished today, how do we then proceed?

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) (*By leave*) — The government is happy to have discussions, as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, about how we will work through the bills on the notice paper. It was my clear understanding that the opposition was unable to give any undertakings with respect to the program for this week. If the Leader of the Opposition is now indicating that the opposition is prepared to give undertakings for the smooth transition of business over the next three days — as Mr Theophanous indicated, there are three days of sittings which provides adequate time for debate — I am happy to have such discussions.

The government has no intention of doing anything other than following the customs and traditions of the house. I am happy to proceed with debate on the Audit (Amendment) Bill given that debate on the measure commenced last week. I do not think there was any suggestion other than that that debate would continue today.

I am happy to enter into discussions in good faith with the opposition and to arrange a sensible program to bring about the orderly transmission of business. The government has no difficulty in facilitating debate at all stages, but that places a responsibility on all honourable members not to engage in tedious repetition or abuse the forms of the house in an effort to defer an issue rather than resolve it. As I said, I am happy for the government to enter into discussions in good faith with the opposition to facilitate the transmission of business

over the next three days. When that discussion is concluded. I look forward to informing the house accordingly.

PETITION

Middle Park intersection

Hon. P. A. KATSAMBANIS (Monash) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria requesting that the former T intersection at the corner of Canterbury Road and Armstrong Street, Middle Park, be reinstated and that modern traffic control and pedestrian safety measures be installed in the vicinity of the intersection. (883 signatures)

Laid on table.

MELBOURNE PORT SERVICES PTY LTD

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) presented financial statements for 15 months ended 31 May 1997.

Laid on table.

LEANNE POWER PTY LTD

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) presented financial statements for 13 March to 8 May 1997.

Laid on table.

SCRUTINY OF ACTS AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE

Redundant and unclear legislation

Hon. M. T. LUCKINS (Waverley) presented third report, together with appendix.

Hon. M. T. LUCKINS (Waverley) (*By leave*) — The third report continues the valuable work of the subcommittee which I have the pleasure of chairing and which began in 1994 to lighten the load of the statute books. In the past year more than 60 acts have been reviewed, and they are included in this report. Debate on the Hire-Purchase (Further Amendment) Bill, for example, was a direct result of recommendations of an inquiry held by the redundant legislation subcommittee. A draft Statute Law Revision (Amendment) Bill, which is annexed to the report, recommends the repeal of more than 250 acts.

I take this opportunity to thank Rowena Armstrong, the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, for her valuable work and advice to the committee over the past 12 months, and the executive officer, Nadia Krivetz, and previously Dominique Saunders, for their assistance and valuable service. I thank Mr Katsambanis, and Murray Thompson, Bob Cameron and Carlo Carli, the honourable members for Sandringham, Bendigo West and Coburg respectively in the other place, for their work.

Laid on table.

Ordered to be printed.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Australian Food Industry Science Centre — Report, 1996-97.

O'Connell Family Centre (Grey Sisters) Incorporated — Minister for Health's report of 5 December 1997 of receipt of the 1996-97 report.

Parliamentary Committees Act 1968 — Minister's response to recommendations in Law Reform Committee's report upon the Liability of the State of Victoria and Health Service Providers.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 — Notices of Approval of the following amendments to planning schemes:

- Melbourne Planning Scheme — Amendments L254, L290, L291 and L293.
- Moira Planning Scheme — Amendment L19.
- Morwell Planning Scheme — Amendment L48.
- Whittlesea Planning Scheme — Amendments L152 and L154.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament:

- Crimes (Confiscation of Profits) Act 1986 — No. 132.
- Lotteries Gaming and Betting Act 1966 — No. 136.
- Magistrates' Court Act 1989 — No. 133.
- Physiotherapists Act 1978 — No. 135.
- Supreme Court Act 1986 — Nos 137 to 139.
- Wildlife Act 1975 — No. 134.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 —

Ministers' exception certificates under section 8(4) in respect of Statutory Rules Nos 130, 133 and 137 to 139/1997.

Minister's exemption certificate under section 9(6) in respect of Statutory Rule No. 132/1997.

Proclamations of His Excellency the Governor in Council fixing operative dates in respect of the following Acts:

Fire Authorities (Amendment) Act 1997 — Sections 3, 5, 6, 10, 11(2) and 13 — 5 December 1997 (*Gazette No. G48*, 4 December 1997).

Law and Justice Legislation (Further Amendment) Act 1997 — Part 7 — 8 December 1997 (*Gazette No. G48*, 4 December 1997).

Port Services (Amendment) Act 1997 — Sections 6(1), 6(2), 7 and 8 — 9 December 1997; remaining provisions (except sections 6(3) and 6(4)) — 10 December 1997 (*Gazette No. G48*, 4 December 1997).

EDUCATION (STATE SCHOOLS) BILL

Second reading

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to authorise the making of regulations under the Education Act 1958 with respect to the age requirements of pupils attending state schools.

The Education Act 1958 in section 3 defines 'school age' as between the ages of 6 and 15. Section 53 requires the parents of 'school age' children to cause them to attend school. However, there is no section which authorises the exclusion of students from school based on age. This applies whether the proposed student is an infant, a child or an adult.

Reviews conducted by previous and current Victorian governments have determined the inappropriateness of the continued attendance of young adults at schools with much younger students. This conclusion was arrived at after consideration of a wide range of educational and operational issues (for example, age-appropriate curriculum and special schools staffed by primary-trained teachers).

A detailed report on the issue, entitled *Report of the working party on students with intellectual disability aged over 18 in Ministry of Education Office of Schools Administration Special Schools (report)* was handed down in April 1989. The working party was constituted by employees from the then Community Services Victoria Office of Intellectual Disability Services and from the then Ministry of Education. The working party stated that it was committed to the development of appropriate educational options for all people with intellectual disabilities. The report made the following two policy recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The Office of Schools Administration provide programs for students in special schools for students with intellectual disabilities up to and including the year in which they turn 18 years. This is in line with existing Ministry of Education policy that school programs should be provided for students with an intellectual disability from approximately five years to approximately 18 years of age.

Recommendation 2

The Division of Further Education take responsibility for the development of literacy, numeracy, special interest and leisure skills programs and take over those elements of school programs for these adult students.

Between 1991 and 1994 approximately 1000 students with disabilities aged over 18 years transferred from special schools to Department of Human Services administered day programs for people with disabilities.

On 13 November 1996, the Futures For Young Adults program was launched by the Minister for Youth and Community Services. The program was a joint initiative of the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services, and initially will enable nearly 1270 students with disabilities aged 18 years and over to move from schools to more appropriate adult education, training and support vocational settings. The Futures For Young Adults program is designed to provide young adults with disabilities appropriate options in employment, adult education or adult day programs geared to their individual needs. The primary intent of the program is to provide a pathway from school-age settings into post school adult options for young adults with intellectual disabilities.

The Futures For Young Adults program is consistent with the Department of Education's age-based policy governing the admission of students to all government schools in the state of Victoria. The Department of Education's age-based policy was announced at the same time as the Futures For Young Adults program in November 1996, and is as follows:

> Generally no student will be permitted to enrol at any school unless he or she will have attained the age of five years by 30 April of the year in which admission is sought.
>
> Generally no student who is aged 18 years or older on 1 January in any year will be permitted to enrol or remain enrolled in any government school after a prescribed date in that calendar year unless he or she is formally enrolled in VCE (units 1-4) in a secondary school. The prescribed date is 30 June for the calendar year 1997 and 31 December thereafter.

The Victorian education system expects that most students who commence school within the legal age range (6 to 15) will complete their Victorian certificate of education by the time they are 18. The Victorian Department of Education's Office of Schools is therefore primarily concerned with the education of students up to the age of 18.

In 1992 Berendale special school (a state school established under section 21 of the Education Act 1958) introduced the 18–plus transition program. The program was designed to assist mildly intellectually impaired adults transfer to the adult community by reaching independence in travelling, banking, purchasing food, communication skills and extended work placements. The 18–plus program at Berendale ran for five years and six months ending on 30 June 1997.

Under the Department of Education's age-based policy announced in November 1996, three students at Berendale special school were required to leave the school and had the option of enrolling in the Futures For Young Adults program.

The department relied on section 38 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 to introduce the November 1996 policy. That section states:

> 38. Exception — Educational institutions for particular groups
>
> An educational authority that operates an educational institution or program wholly or mainly for students of a particular sex, race, religious belief, age or age group or students with a general or particular impairment may exclude —
>
> (a) people who are not of the particular sex, race, religious belief, age or age group; or
>
> (b) people who do not have a general, or the particular, impairment —
>
> from that institution or program.

Nine students from Berendale special school commenced proceedings in the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal claiming direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of age. The matter was referred to the Supreme Court as a special complaint under section 126 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1995.

The Supreme Court handed down its decision on Friday 7 November 1997. It held that the Department of Education's age-based policy announced in November 1996 constituted both direct and indirect discrimination against the complainants.

The court made orders requiring the department to permit the complainants to return to Berendale special school; to reinstate the Berendale transition 18–plus program; and to include the complainants in Berendale's school global funding. Other orders were also made for legal costs. The department has appealed to the Full Court of the Supreme Court. However, given the uncertainties and time involved in legal proceedings, the outcome is uncertain.

The department needs to plan the commencement of next year with some certainty and therefore seeks to introduce legislative amendments to prevent similar court decisions. However, the present Supreme Court decision has placed in doubt age-based programs in the Department of Education and may encourage other complainants to issue proceedings.

It is not proposed in the legislation to overturn the Supreme Court's decision in respect of the complainants at Berendale. The Supreme Court's decision operates in respect of those complainants and, subject to the outcome of the appeal to the Full Court, the department will need to comply with the Supreme Court's decision in respect of those complainants.

To make proper provision for the administration and implementation of age-based polices within the Department of Education, the bill relies on the following approach:

(a) section 69 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 authorises a person to engage in an act if it 'is necessary to comply with, or is authorised by, a provision of' an act, or an 'enactment';

(b) an enactment is defined in section 4 of the Equal Opportunity Act as meaning 'a rule, regulation, by-law, local law, order, order in council, proclamation or other instrument of a legislative character';

(c) the bill will empower the making of regulations under the Education Act 1958 prescribing the age requirements for students to enrol, or participate in programs, in state schools; and

(d) the bill will not affect the rights of the parties in the recent decision of the Supreme Court.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla).

Debate adjourned until next day.

SNOWY HYDRO CORPORATISATION BILL

Second reading

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This legislation enables the corporatisation of the Snowy Mountains scheme. The process of corporatisation began in 1993 with the in-principle agreement by the states of Victoria and New South Wales and the commonwealth. Although the complexion of the other two governments has changed since 1993, the commitment to the corporatisation process has remained constant.

The various elements of corporatisation have developed over that period. The intent of the three governments was sealed on 1 May this year with the agreement of a set of principles to guide the corporatisation process. The principles are set out in an annexure to the explanatory note to the bill.

The aims of the corporatisation process are to:

establish a viable Snowy electricity generation business on a competitive commercial basis and thereby contribute to implementing national competition policy reforms;

improve the management of the Snowy Scheme;

simplify its governance arrangements and therefore maximise its capability to optimise electricity generation; and

refinance the commonwealth debt which was established to finance the construction of the scheme.

Additionally, the corporatisation process provides a once in a lifetime opportunity to address environmental issues associated with the Snowy scheme and thus the Snowy River itself.

Behind this bill lies a vision for a new company — Snowy Hydro Ltd. This will be a freestanding, electricity generator, subject to controls and regulation which neither advantage nor disadvantage Snowy Hydro as compared with other generators, and providing security for the company to operate as a commercial business, but with continuing significant environmental obligations, particularly in relation to the release of water. This bill reflects complementary legislation currently before the commonwealth and New South Wales parliaments. It provides the necessary authority for the various steps which are required to achieve corporatisation.

The bill, together with complementary commonwealth and New South Wales legislation, will terminate the existing legislative arrangements in relation to the Snowy scheme, including the existing government agreements, the Snowy Mountain Hydroelectric Authority and the Snowy Mountains Council. The bill provides for Victoria to hold a share in the new company — Snowy Hydro Ltd.

The bill provides for the transfer of assets and liabilities from the Snowy authority to the new company, except for the assets and liabilities of the transmission undertaking which will be sold to Transgrid, the New South Wales transmission grid operator. Equity in Snowy Hydro Ltd will be in the same proportions as the current entitlements to the electricity generated by the Snowy scheme. New South Wales will own 58 per cent equity, Victoria 29 per cent and the commonwealth 13 per cent. There is an existing debt of about $1 billion which the corporatised Snowy will repay to the commonwealth. The provisions of this bill, together with the complementary commonwealth and New South Wales legislation, will enable the restructuring

of that debt and provide for taxation arrangements between the governments.

The bill also provides for the transfer of people working within the Snowy scheme to be transferred to Snowy Hydro Ltd. Although we believe all former employees of the SECV working in the scheme have since been transferred to the employ of the scheme, we have included a specific provision for them to ensure that entitlements are maintained. However, that is not all that is being done.

All three governments have received various representations from environmental and community groups expressing concerns about the impact on the ecological health of the Snowy River. These representations have requested the release of water for environmental purposes, called environmental flows. Victoria has expressed its commitment to environmental flows.

In particular, the government has recognised that the Snowy corporatisation process provides an opportunity to address environmental flows. Under the existing Snowy arrangements, it would be very difficult to provide for environmental flows. The corporatisation process provides an opportunity to overcome this difficulty. The three governments have agreed to establish an open public inquiry to examine these issues. This will allow all parties to present their views in a public forum.

The inquiry is provided for in the New South Wales legislation, but provisions of that bill clearly recognise that it is a joint initiative of all three governments. Thus the NSW legislation expressly provides that the terms of reference of the water inquiry are to be approved by all three governments and that the person or persons appointed to hold the inquiry must be approved by Victoria. These important provisions help safeguard Victoria's position for the Snowy River.

Because of the complexity of the issues involved, the three governments have chosen an open public inquiry as the method of determining environmental flows for the Snowy. There are many competing interests for water from the Snowy scheme, including environmental flows for the Snowy River; water for irrigation west of the Dividing Range; water to address salination and loss of agricultural land along the Murray River; and water for electricity generation by Snowy Hydro Ltd.

The governments have decided to hold an open public inquiry so that all interested parties may express their views and so that they can take those views into account. The water inquiry will develop costed options and will report to the New South Wales and Victorian governments. The governments will then agree on environmental flows before corporatisation begins, taking into account expert advice from the inquiry.

The inquiry is expected to take about six months to produce its report. Governments will then take about two months to agree on the implementation of the inquiry. Corporatisation does not occur unless and until there is agreement on the outcome.

The Victorian government has treated the issue of environmental flows so seriously that it has insisted on this structure. Of course, our objectives can be met only if the commonwealth, New South Wales and Victorian parliaments all agree to the bills enabling corporatisation. Drafting and introduction of the bills has occurred in parallel and each bill is essential.

Corporatisation will establish Victoria as a shareholder in this new commercial electricity generator; encourage competition in electricity generation thereby keeping prices down; and secure a water inquiry leading to revised water arrangements and environmental flows.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned for Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) on motion of Hon. M. M. Gould.

Debate adjourned until next day.

CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

As members will be aware, sections 73 and 74 of the Constitution Act 1975 provide a statutory extension of parliamentary privilege in relation to the publication of parliamentary proceedings. Those provisions have long formed part of the law of Victoria, having been first enacted here in 1860; deriving originally from the Parliamentary Papers Act 1840 of the United Kingdom. However, since those provisions were first enacted, proceedings have been provided to the public by means which

were not envisioned in 1840, or 1860 or even, in relation to one method, in 1975.

These new forms of 'publication' of proceedings include the electronic provision of the *Hansard* record of proceedings by way of the Internet, as well as the sound and visual broadcast of recordings of proceedings. This bill arises due to the concern that sections 73 and 74 may not extend to these new forms of 'publication'.

As I am sure all members will agree, it is important, if not essential, for any doubts on this issue to be removed. The bill before the house ensures that those involved in the electronic 'publication' of parliamentary proceedings which has been authorised by Parliament — and this includes parliamentary officers and employees of media organisations — are provided with the same degree of protection as is currently provided to those involved in publication in 'paper' form. It does this by two amendments — amending sections 73 and 74 to ensure that they cover both electronic and written publication; and adding a new provision, which is based on section 15 of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946.

This provision protects those involved in the broadcast or transmission of the proceedings of either house or a committee with the authority of that house or committee. Honourable members will note that the amendments require a variation to section 85 of the Constitution Act which is achieved by the direct amendment to that section made by clause 5.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned for Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) on motion of Hon. M. M. Gould.

Debate adjourned until next day.

EPWORTH HOSPITAL (AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

For **Hon. R. I. KNOWLES** (Minister for Health), Hon. M. A. Birrell (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill amends the Epworth Hospital Act 1980, to enable the Epworth Hospital to develop a new corporate structure. This government has promoted private sector participation in the provision of public hospital services, and this initiative will present increasing opportunities for private sector involvement in the hospital industry.

In the current changing climate of health care provision in Victoria, the existing corporate structure of the Epworth Hospital has proven limiting. The hospital has not been able to compete on an equal footing with other private health care providers.

The Epworth Hospital, as an integral part of the Methodist Church of Australasia, operated as a private hospital in Erin Street, Richmond, from 1920 to 1980. After the creation of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977, the Epworth Hospital Act 1980 was passed by this Parliament to establish a body corporate to be known as the Epworth Hospital to carry on the provision of hospital and medical services at Erin Street.

The Epworth Hospital (Amendment) Bill will provide this highly regarded hospital with a flexible corporate structure which will enable it to compete for provision of health services in other arenas.

The present Epworth Hospital Corporation will be known as the Epworth Foundation. A new subsidiary corporation, to be known as Epworth Hospital Ltd, will be created to own and operate the existing Epworth Hospital in Erin Street, Richmond. The Erin Street hospital will continue to contribute medical and surgical services to the community.

The Epworth Foundation will operate as a research, development, and hospital and medical services foundation. The foundation will have broader charitable objects including:

promotion and funding of medical and health care research;

promotion, advancement and funding of medical and other health care education;

provision of financial and other assistance to enable persons in Australia to obtain medical or health care services which they could not otherwise afford;

conduct of a hospital or hospitals in Australia;

provision of medical and other health care services of any kind in Australia;

provision of funds or other assistance to another entity which does not seek to secure pecuniary profit for its members to provide medical and other health care services; and

promotion and provision of funds in Australia, including the provision of funds and assistance to other trusts or entities for other broad charitable purposes in Australia.

The powers of the foundation are expanded in keeping with the broader objects contained in the bill. The bill provides for continuity of the board of management of the foundation, with the Uniting Church in Australia retaining the power to appoint a majority of the members.

The Epworth Hospital has been and no doubt will continue to be the beneficiary of significant donations, gifts and trusts. The bill ensures that any such donations, gifts and trusts are applied to the purposes intended by the benefactors. The subsidiary will be incorporated under the Corporations Law, with the Epworth Foundation initially holding all shares in the subsidiary. The foundation will then be at liberty to raise equity capital by selling some or all of the shares in the subsidiary, by floating the subsidiary, or through participation in joint ventures with other players in the health care service industry.

The assets and liabilities of the existing Epworth Hospital will be transferred to the subsidiary corporation. The bill provides for the transfer of the hospital property without incurring stamp duty, taxes or back payment of local government rates. This is in keeping with the objects and purposes of the Epworth Foundation. The exemptions also avoid the imposition of financial penalties upon the corporation for what is essentially an internal restructure.

Section 6 of the present act provides for the Treasurer of Victoria to guarantee the debts of the Epworth Hospital. The bill will have the effect of repealing section 6. The Epworth Foundation will therefore be in the same position as other private hospital operators with regard to security for borrowings.

The bill provides for the entitlements of the staff of Epworth Hospital to be preserved, including the existing superannuation entitlements of hospital staff. I am confident this bill will contribute to the continuing provision of competitive high quality health services to the Victorian community.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla).

Debate adjourned until next day.

ACCIDENT COMPENSATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill represents a further stage in the development of the Victorian Workcover scheme. It gives full effect to one of the key objectives enunciated when the Kennett government came to power in 1992 — namely, to develop a workers compensation system which provided fair and comprehensive protection for injured workers, but did so at premium rates which were internationally competitive. This vision required a massive shift in culture and was dependent upon a dramatic improvement in workplace safety and more effective rehabilitation and return to work strategies.

Workcover's achievements are dramatic. Workplace injuries have been reduced by 40 per cent and return to work has become the cornerstone of the scheme, with over 90 per cent of injured workers returning to work. The unfunded liability of $2100 million inherited from the previous scheme has been extinguished and Victoria now boasts the only major Australian workers compensation scheme to be fully funded and at the same time has the lowest premium rate of any state in Australia. But to maintain Workcover's leadership position requires constant surveillance, and earlier this year when a concerning cost trend began to emerge the government initiated a comprehensive review of the scheme.

The key stakeholders were invited to participate in that review on the basis that any changes should:

(i) not reduce overall benefits paid to workers; and

(ii) secure the financial stability of the program while preserving the scheme's competitive premiums.

This bill is the result of the most extensive consultation process in a decade. The government has received and very carefully considered the views of a wide range of stakeholders and has looked at best practice both in Australia and overseas. The review process confirmed that while Victoria has the best workers compensation scheme in Australia, our advantage was being eroded and that the underlying cost of the scheme was now running ahead of premium levels and demanded urgent attention. The issues of common law, serious injury classification, as well as the overall level of disputation emerged as the most obvious factors in the cost shift and became the focus of further very detailed and extensive research and analysis.

The need to change the scheme — and to do so urgently — is compelling. The government, as the ultimate custodian of the scheme, is acting for two reasons. First, the government must make certain that the basic legislative structure of the scheme continues to encourage workplace safety, rehabilitation and the efficient delivery of compensation and that it is not compromised by those who would abuse the scheme for their own enrichment. To fail to act to protect the scheme in the interest of Victoria's workers and employers would be irresponsible.

Secondly, the government must move quickly to protect Workcover's long-term financial health. Too often in other jurisdictions, changes to workers compensation schemes do not occur until the system reaches crisis point. We have seen this most recently in New South Wales where, in just three years, that scheme has moved from a surplus of $1.2 billion to a deficit of $1 billion, while the average premium rate has risen from 1.8 per cent to 2.8 per cent of payroll. We must not allow that to happen in Victoria.

Obviously, the most profound effect of the bill is to delete the remaining rights of an injured worker to recover any damages in a common-law action. The question of whether, and to what extent, common-law rights should be included in a 'no-fault' workers compensation scheme has been debated for many years, and indeed it can be fairly argued that it was the shortcomings of the common-law process that led to the development of 'no-fault' systems in the first place.

For a common law action to succeed the worker must establish fault on the part of the employer. Depending on the circumstances, that may be difficult to prove, is likely to be contested, and a defence of 'contributory negligence' may result. The outcome thus becomes something of a lottery, and settlements may vary dramatically even for similar injuries. The process is protracted and costly, and can be harrowing for the parties. Worse still, it is anything but conducive to a successful return to work, the outcome which should remain the primary focus of the scheme.

It was against this background that, when Workcover was introduced in 1992, a compromise was struck, that while workers would be protected under a compulsory, no-fault scheme, those workers who had the misfortune to be 'seriously injured' (as strictly defined) would have the added right to take action at common law, on the basis that any settlement awarded by the court would expunge both their statutory right to compensation for the physical injury (under the table of maims) and any future entitlement to weekly benefits. The logic of that compromise was that for the profoundly injured, with little or no prospect of returning to work, a common-law settlement may represent a reasonable basis of 'capitalising' their weekly entitlement over the long term.

Due primarily to the creative efforts of plaintiff lawyers, this compromise based upon a 'gatekeeper' of 'serious injury' has not been allowed to work, and the government has been required to return to the Parliament three times since 1992 with amendments designed to restrict common-law entitlements to the profoundly injured for whom it was originally intended.

The facts we face are indisputable:

(i) while aggregate claim numbers (and traumatic injuries) have fallen dramatically, the numbers being assessed as 'seriously injured' continue to climb.

(ii) based on the data then available, Workcover was designed in 1992 on an expectation of up to 500 common-law writs per year. The volume has now reached 1000 per year — and continues to climb.

(iii) Workcover common-law payments have risen from $17.9 million in 1995–96 to $139.7 million in 1996–97, and continue to grow.

These facts, and their obvious impact upon the viability of the scheme, forced the focus of the review back to the fundamental question of

including a common-law component in a no-fault scheme. Several further issues were then considered:

(i) another cost of the common-law process flows from the attraction of the lump sum, and the 'all-or-nothing' culture which it brings. In some cases, the prospect of rehabilitation and successful return to work is put on hold, even actively discouraged.

While it is impossible to quantify the extent of that cost, it must be acknowledged by all that the best possible outcome is for an injured worker to return to worthwhile employment, and that the lump sum 'culture', to the extent that it frustrates that objective, becomes an important underlying cost consideration.

(ii) One argument commonly advanced by those favouring the inclusion of common law is that it provides the best sanction against a negligent employer, and thus that its removal will lead to unsafe workplaces.

The government does not accept that argument. In the first place, it is quickly dispelled by the data coming from other jurisdictions where common law has been deleted. In addition, it should be understood that employers are insured against common law damages, and in any event, only about 3 per cent of common-law claims ever reach court.

The appropriate remedy for employer negligence in relation to health and safety is under statute health and safety law, not common law. Financial penalties, met directly from the employer's pocket, and adverse publicity, to say nothing of imprisonment, directly punish negligent employers much more effectively than an action at common law.

(iii) More fundamentally however, the government has concluded that no injured worker should have to initiate legal proceedings as the basis upon which their entitlement to compensation is determined.

Given all of this, the government has decided to move to a workers' compensation system where generous comprehensive statutory benefits replace common law. These arrangements are universal in Canada, the United States and New Zealand and in the other Australian jurisdictions of South Australia, the Northern Territory and, with some small exceptions, the Federal government's Comcare scheme.

The new Workcover arrangements will offer the most comprehensive and progressive set of no-fault benefits for injured workers in Australia. The savings from the deletion of any damages in a common law action will be redirected into meeting that commitment.

Objects of reform

This bill will improve the operations of the Workcover scheme in a number of fundamental respects.

First, the right to recover any damages in a common law action will be eliminated for all work-related injuries arising after the date of commencement. Workers injured before that date will be able to continue to bring forward common-law claims for up to three years.

Second, penalties for breaches of health and safety requirements will be increased to at least five times their current maxima. Negligent employers will be liable to penalties of up to $250 000 for a first offence.

Third, statutory death benefits will be increased substantially. The present lump sum will be increased and there will be an entirely new and additional system of ongoing income support for a dependent spouse and children dependent on a deceased worker.

Fourth, compensation for permanent impairment (non-economic losses) will be expanded and modernised to reflect workplace conditions of the 21st rather than the early 20th century. In recognition of the elimination of common law, the statutory maximum will be increased from the current $161 000 to $300 000, almost double that of any other jurisdiction in Australia, including those which have already abolished common law.

Fifth, permanent impairment assessments will be conducted using the fourth edition of the American Medical Association's *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* developed in 1993. The guides will be modified to take account of Australian best practice in evaluating psychiatric and hearing impairments.

Sixth, in line with contemporary disability management principles, the weekly benefits system, which compensates for lost earnings, will be restructured to focus on work capacity rather than on injury or incapacity and thus improve rehabilitation and return to work prospects. The payment system will be simplified. Workers will be streamed to one of two payment rates on the basis of whether they have, or do not have, a current work capacity and, after two years, whether the lack of

current work capacity is likely to continue indefinitely. In addition a new long-term benefit category has been established to support injured workers back at work and working at their maximum capacity in defined circumstances.

Seventh, a number of changes will be made to improve the efficiency of the dispute resolution process. Opinions of the medical panels will be made final and conclusive irrespective of by whom and when the medical question was referred and must be adopted and applied by the courts and all other decision makers in the scheme as the answer to the medical question. There will be a new, free service to assist workers and employers as an alternative to expensive legal advice. Conciliation Officers' powers will be extended, and disputes over entitlements to medical and like benefits not resolved at conciliation will be heard in either the Magistrates or County courts rather than at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Eighth, superannuation payments will be included in the remuneration base for calculation of Workcover premiums, making this definition consistent with that in the Pay-roll Tax Act 1971. The average premium rate will also be increased to 1.9 per cent of payroll. This increase is necessary to fund the run-off of common law and ensure the financial stability of the scheme.

I turn now to the major features of the bill.

Common law

A worker injured on or after commencement will not be entitled to recover damages of any kind in a common-law action. However, the dependants of a deceased worker will continue to be able to recover damages of up to $500 000 under the Wrongs Act 1958.

Workers who were injured before the date of commencement will have up to three years to commence proceedings to recover damages. If, however, the incapacity arising from such an injury becomes known only after commencement the worker will have three years from when the incapacity became known to bring proceedings for damages.

Injured workers will not be able to recover damages against third parties. However, the authority will continue to be indemnified in respect of compensation paid to the worker under the statute by third parties who would otherwise have had a legal liability to the worker. Third parties who have failed to comply with their duties under occupational health and safety laws will also be liable to prosecution by the authority.

Health and safety penalties

Maximum penalties for offences under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985 and the Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994 will be increased, for a body corporate from $40 000 to $250 000 and for an individual from $10 000 to $50 000. The authority will also be given power to issue general guidelines for or with respect to the prosecution of offences under health and safety legislation. These guidelines must be published in the *Government Gazette*.

Death benefits

Statutory compensation payable to any dependent spouse and children dependent on a deceased worker whose death was work-related is to be significantly increased. For some families, this will be double the amount of the present statutory lump sum, depending on the number and ages of dependants and the worker's pre-injury average weekly earnings.

The existing lump sum for a family will be increased from about $150 000 to $175 000 to be apportioned between dependent spouses and children or, if there is no spouse, between the children. These lump sums will continue to be free of tax, although income from investing them would be taxable as currently applies. In addition, there will be an entirely new payment of income support pensions to dependent spouses and children. This payment will be related to the worker's pre-injury average weekly earnings.

For a spouse, the payment for the first 13 weeks will be at 95 per cent of the worker's pre-injury average weekly earnings and will reduce to 50 per cent thereafter. The payment will continue for three years and will not be means tested against any personal earnings of the spouse. If there are dependent children, they will each be eligible for 5 per cent of the worker's pre-injury average weekly earnings to a maximum of 25 per cent if there are more than five children. This pension will be paid after 13 weeks until the child reaches 16 years of age or, if a full-time student, until he or she ceases to be a student or the end of the calendar year in which he or she turns 21 years of age, whichever is earlier.

These payments will be assessable for income tax to the person for whom they are paid. In the case of a minor, however, the pension will be taxed at normal income tax rates rather than the higher tax rates that normally apply to the income of a minor. The government has also retained the existing right of dependants (who may not be spouses or dependent children) to seek damages under the Wrongs Act.

Permanent impairment non-economic loss benefits

Compensation based on permanent impairment for non-economic losses will be significantly expanded and based on a modern scientific concept. The current table of maims, which has remained virtually unchanged since 1914, and is based on the outmoded concept of loss of industrial use, will be abolished. A no-disadvantage test will ensure that no worker suffering a total loss specified under the present table of maims will be paid less than they would have received under the new arrangements and a specific loading for pain and suffering has been included. Importantly, the new system will cover a great many injuries for which no compensation is currently payable, particularly industrial diseases.

Compensation will be calculated on the basis of whole person impairment with a threshold of 10 per cent whole person impairment for physical injuries — the level currently applying under the TAC and Comcare schemes. The non-economic loss amount will be calculated by reference to a formula, with payments ranging between $5000 for 10 per cent impairment, $45 000 for 30 per cent impairment, $175 000 for 70 per cent impairment and $300 000 for impairments of 80 per cent or more.

In line with the government's commitment, compensation for severe permanent psychiatric impairment, not currently covered in the table of maims, will be provided. This non-economic loss amount will be assessed by a separate formula, with a threshold being set at 30 per cent whole person impairment, the level which would currently entitle a person to pursue damages at common law. The scale will be from $10 000 at 30 per cent impairment to $300 000 at impairment of 80 per cent or greater.

Impairment assessments will be carried out by doctors who have passed an approved training course and will be made using the fourth edition of the American Medical Association's *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* as modified in three areas by the act.

On the advice of the medical panels, there will be a revised method for assessing and ascribing permanent impairment percentages to psychiatric conditions. Hearing losses will be assessed using current National Acoustic Laboratory methods converted to a whole person impairment percentage. The chapter of the guides dealing with pain will be excluded because it provides no workable methodology for ascribing a percentage impairment to the assessment of chronic pain. However, each individual chapter on a body system includes a component for pain.

Until the new guides become effective, on 1 September 1998, any impairment assessments which are required for the purposes of this new form of compensation will be made using the second edition of the AMA guides. On and after that date, all such assessments must be made using the fourth edition, modified as indicated above.

Impairment assessments for the run-off of common law and the table of maims and the weekly payment 'grandfather' provisions will continue to be carried out using the second edition of the AMA guides.

It is intended that non-economic loss benefits up to $10 000 be paid by way of a lump sum. Non-economic losses between $10 000 and $30 000 will be paid by an initial lump sum of $10 000 and instalments of capital thereafter. The non-economic loss amount will be converted to a number of payments (after deduction of the initial $10 000) which will become the person's compensation entitlement.

If the non-economic loss amount is greater than $30 000, one-third will be paid as an initial lump sum with the remainder paid by instalments. The instalments will be paid at $600 a month (indexed annually to the consumer price index) until the sum is exhausted, or at an instalment level that would exhaust the payment over 10 years.

The government continues to argue that an impairment payment remains a capital sum whether paid as a lump sum or by instalment. This has been accepted by the commonwealth in relation to taxation. The government is continuing to press the commonwealth to treat instalments as having no effect on any social security entitlement. Until such time as the government receives a favourable response to this request, all payments will be made as a single lump sum as currently occurs.

Weekly payments

On the recommendation of all major stakeholders, injured workers will no longer be classified for weekly payments by their injury status.

The 'serious injury' category of benefits was not intended to mean that people with quite high impairment levels could not also have a work capacity. However, it has been used by claimants to secure high benefits and then assumed to conclusively demonstrate that they have no capacity for work.

The new benefit structure will classify workers as having either a 'current work capacity' or 'no current work capacity' for up to two years. In line with modern disability management practices, these changes are intended to send a strong message to workers, employers and insurers that getting the injured worker fit and back to work will provide the best possible financial and social outcomes.

This is also the reasoning behind bringing the step-down in weekly benefits forward to 13 weeks. Most injuries have healed by this time, and about 70 per cent of workers are back at work. By 13 weeks the likely course of a claim is apparent. It is the latest appropriate time for insurers to identify those claims which are at risk of becoming long term and to manage their rehabilitation actively. Setting a decision point at 13 weeks, improves the prospect of a better outcome.

Benefits levels will be kept at 95 per cent of pre-injury earnings for the first 13 weeks of payments. However the cap on benefits shall be lifted from average weekly earnings to 125 per cent of average weekly earnings, that is from $680 a week to $850 a week.

After 13 weeks of payments, benefits for those workers who do not have a current work capacity will be based on 75 per cent of pre-injury earnings. Workers with a current work capacity will be paid at 60 per cent of pre-injury earnings less 60 per cent of notional earnings (as is the current basis).

After 104 weeks, benefits will be paid to those people who do not have a current work capacity and who are likely to continue indefinitely to have no current work capacity. The government has consciously moved away from the terminology of 'totally and permanently incapacitated' on the grounds that it sends negative messages to workers about their longer term prospects for eventual recovery and return to useful work or activity. We expect insurers to continue to review these beneficiaries regularly and to provide appropriate support to them. Benefits beyond 104 weeks will be paid at 75 per cent of pre-injury earnings.

There will also be an entirely new long-term benefit category for injured workers who have returned to work at the maximum of their physical and mental capabilities, but at a level which is not equivalent to their pre-injury position and for whom, therefore, ongoing income supplementation beyond 104 weeks is appropriate.

If these workers meet the criteria of working at their maximum capability for at least 15 hours a week (and earning $100 or more) and will continue to do so indefinitely, they can apply to the authority or self-insurer to remain on payment at the benefit level applicable to people with a current work capacity, that is, at 60 per cent of pre-injury earnings less 60 per cent of current earnings. The authority or self-insurer cannot refuse an application based on the worker's capabilities without the matter being referred to a medical panel for an opinion.

Grandfathering of current claimants

The government has given a commitment that workers currently on the system will not be disadvantaged as a result of the changes. Workers who have lodged a claim and are either on or are subsequently determined to have been entitled to weekly payments on commencement of these provisions will continue to be paid at their existing rate but will be classified in accordance with the new classifications and progressively assessed under the new classification requirements.

Workers classified as seriously injured will continue to receive weekly payments based on 90 per cent of pre-injury earnings for as long as they continue to meet the 30 per cent impairment threshold. Current seriously injured claimants who are entitled to claim common law, but have not yet done so, will retain this right for up to three years from the date of commencement.

The provisions allowing people currently classified as 'seriously injured' who can provide evidence of an income-producing project to apply for a settlement under section 115 remain available. However, that section shall be amended so that a person's ongoing entitlement to compensation for medical and like services under section 99 cannot be the subject of a settlement.

Rehabilitation and return to work

The bill also makes it clear that failure to comply with any of the provisions of the act relating to occupational rehabilitation, return-to-work plans and risk management constitutes an offence. The penalties relating to these offences will be increased fivefold to over $10 000 for employers and maintained at their present levels for workers.

Dispute resolution

The government considers that doctors, not lawyers, are the best qualified people to offer medical opinions. Currently, the opinion of a medical panel on a medical question is binding only when a court has referred a medical question to the panel. This gives rise to 'duelling experts', which becomes an obstacle to the resolution of disputes, leads to their escalation and drives up costs unnecessarily.

Therefore, and in line with the practice in other jurisdictions, the act will require that the opinion of a medical panel on a medical question be final and conclusive irrespective of by whom and when the medical question was referred and must be adopted and applied by the courts and all other decision makers in the scheme as the answer to that question.

As well as those changes to the act, which will remove sources of dispute, a number of other changes are proposed which will improve dispute resolution procedures. It will not be possible to commence proceedings in the Magistrates or County Court until the conciliation officer is satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken by the claimant to settle the dispute and has issued a certificate to this effect.

Parties to a conciliation may be requested to bring forward to the conciliation any documents or information relevant to the dispute. If this request is refused or the party fails to produce the document or information, they will not be allowed to tender it in any subsequent proceedings relating to the dispute.

Conciliation officers will be able to make a direction for up to 24 weeks of payment (currently 10 weeks) during a period before the direction is given. This should remove the need to take court action to recover small amounts of outstanding weekly payments after a matter is resolved at conciliation. In addition, conciliation officers will have a power to give general directions in relation to liability to pay reasonable medical and like expenses provided during the period of a direction on weekly payments.

If a dispute is solely in relation to the liability to pay reasonable medical and like expenses, the conciliation officer may also give a general direction for payment up to a total of $2000 in respect of the relevant injury.

The act will also be amended to clarify the meaning of 'no genuine dispute'. There is a genuine dispute if the conciliation officer is satisfied that there is an arguable case in support of the denial of liability and no genuine dispute if there is not.

The act will be amended so as to transfer the existing jurisdiction of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal to hear and determine matters which relate solely to medical and like compensation to the courts in keeping with other compensation matters under the act.

In addition, the government intends to establish a new Workcover Advisory Service. This service will be available free of charge to both workers and employers as an alternative to expensive legal advice. Consistent with this, the ability to obtain legal costs relating to a referral to conciliation will be abrogated.

Premium

The act will also be amended to bring the definition of remuneration into line with that in the Pay-roll Tax Act 1971 by including superannuation benefits as wages. This amendment will come into effect from 1 January 1998. The average premium rate will also be increased to 1.9 per cent of payroll to fund the run-off of common law and ensure the financial stability of the scheme. The new premium rate will apply from 1 July 1998 and will be effected through the premiums order.

Work for the dole

At the request of the commonwealth government, we have also amended the definition of 'worker' to exclude participants in the commonwealth 'work for the dole' program which requires certain adult unemployment beneficiaries to undertake community service in return for their social security payment. The Occupational Health and Safety Act is also being amended so as not to include these people as employees. However, the government will not proclaim these provisions until it is satisfied by the commonwealth that program participants are

adequately insured and the employers are protected from legal action arising out of an injury to a participant.

Constitution Act 1975

Clauses 11, 45, 46, 47, 48 and 49 of the bill necessitate amendments to section 63 of the Accident Compensation (WorkCover) Act 1992 and the Constitution Act 1975. However, as these involve direct amendments to the Constitution Act 1975, a statement for the purposes of section 85(5) of that act is not required.

Commencement

The major provisions of this bill abolishing recovery of any damages in a common-law action and implementing a new system of statutory benefits shall take effect from 12 November 1997.

Conclusion

This bill will position Workcover for the 21st century and ensure that the hard won gains for Victoria's workers and employers are preserved.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika).

Debate adjourned until next day.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Program

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) (*By leave*) — Earlier today the Leader of the Opposition indicated a willingness to enter into discussions about the week's program. Those discussions have been held and by agreement I can advise the house that we will debate the Audit (Amendment) Bill today until conclusion. After opposition business tomorrow, we will debate and conclude other bills except the Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill, which will be debated from 10.00 a.m. on Thursday and concluded on that day, after which the house will rise.

AUDIT (AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 3 December; motion of Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance).

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The legislative changes to the Audit Act the government has brought to the house are unnecessary and uncalled for and, in the opposition's view, represent the greatest attack on public accountability in the history of parliamentary democracy in this nation.

Since 1828 public administration in Australia has had an Auditor-General. The office of Auditor-General is older than democracy itself. The government prides itself on the tough decisions it has made which have changed fundamentally the way Victoria functions. The opposition has bitterly opposed many of those initiatives because of their adverse effect on ordinary Victorians. I accept that many in the community respect the government for its determination, but today the government has shown that that determination is not tempered by wisdom.

The single-minded, dare I say bloody-minded, approach of nobbling the Auditor-General's Office has been breathtaking. In fact, the only thing that surpasses it is the capitulation of government members, one by one, to the will of the Premier. The people of Victoria and members of this chamber know that the only consistent critic of all governments, whether Labor or Liberal, has been the Auditor-General. The opposition does not oppose these changes because of some personal affection or support for the current Attorney-General, who was just as critical of the former Labor government as he has been of the present government, if not more so.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — He had more right to be.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Perhaps. The fact is we did not seek to nobble him in the way the Kennett government is proposing to nobble him. The opposition opposes the legislation because it is bad policy and will leave the door open for corruption.

The changes to the Auditor-General's Office have nothing to do with improving the office's efficiency. In fact, the act is being amended because the Auditor-General has been too efficient and effective in criticising the government.

Before I go into the reasons for the opposition's belief that the legislation should be rejected I shall make a fundamental general observation about the function of this house. This chamber is supposed to be a house of review. It is the place where legislation can be scrutinised in depth, clause by clause to ensure Victoria gets the best legislation Parliament can deliver. It is not supposed to be a rubber stamp. The opposition intends to move 71 amendments during the committee stage to try to improve the legislation, given that the government is determined to proceed with it.

The opposition believes government members will find it difficult to disagree with many of the opposition amendments. The opposition is aware that the government has consistently refused to entertain the notion of bringing back the Legislative Assembly to adopt amendments made in the upper house, even when such amendments have been sensible and necessary and have later been adopted by the government. That approach leads only to the perception that the upper house is a rubber stamp. The opposition urges the government not to rule out deferral of the legislation or at the very least, to be prepared to commit itself to changes to individual clauses where those changes are sensible, logical and practical.

I also put on the record that the opposition intends to approach the debate sensibly and constructively. It wants its amendments debated and seriously considered. It will not persist with divisions where reasonable explanations or assurances can be given. If the government allows full and proper debate of these important issues the opposition will not deliberately disrupt the proceedings, but I make it clear that the opposition will vigorously oppose the legislation and, in particular, the way it proposes to leave the Auditor-General of this state with no power and no resources to enable him to audit. The opposition will show that the legislation will create an Auditor-General whose time to sign off audits is guillotined and whose capacity to protect the public purse is nobbled. In a very real sense he will be a rubber stamp.

The bill will be the final nail in the coffin of public accountability. It is the latest in a long line of actions deliberately designed to silence the government's critics. In 1992 the Kennett government sacked the judges of the Accident Compensation Tribunal. On 30 July 1992 Mr Kennett said there was no suggestion from the coalition of any judges being removed. He said, 'We regard as essential that confidence in the independence of the judiciary from the executive is maintained'. Just months after making those comments the Kennett government sacked the judges of the Accident Compensation Tribunal and members of the Industrial Relations Commission of Victoria. Those actions heralded unprecedented attacks on the judiciary and quasi-judicial office-holders in this state.

Since October 1992 independent public officials have raised issues of concern at their own peril. There is a long and growing list of independent office-holders who have been attacked, sacked or hounded from office by the government. I have mentioned the sacking of judges of the Accident Compensation Tribunal, which finished up costing the state approximately $30 million in compensation and was a measure of the determination of the government to remove independent arbitrators.

Hon. Pat Power — It cost $30 million to pay them out!

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Approximately $30 million. Then Victoria had the sacking of the law reform commissioners, the state industrial relations commissioners and the Equal Opportunity Commissioner, Moira Rayner — disgraceful incidents in this state's history! Individuals were also forced to pay costs if they lost their cases at the Equal Opportunity Board — another erosion of Victorian's rights!

Then the senior magistrate of the Children's Court, Greg Levine, was hounded from office. Also, the Equal Opportunity Board was threatened because of its decision to allow the re-opening of Northland Secondary College — another disgraceful action by the government! The Premier threatened to again change the equal opportunity legislation because the new board dared to rule against the government. It is a disgrace that the rights of Aboriginal Australians whose children were being educated at Northland Secondary College have been totally denied.

Hon. Pat Power — And in our electorate.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, Mr Power, in our electorate. They fought all the way to the Supreme Court and, in the end, they won.

Hon. Pat Power — Money was no object.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Money was no object for the government. What did the government achieve through that action? A further erosion of people's confidence in being able to get a fair go.

Will the Supreme Court judges be the next cab off the rank after Victoria loses the Auditor-General?

In March 1994, and without any justification, three members of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal were removed from that tribunal. The even more disgraceful act by the government was its hounding of the then Director of Public Prosecutions, Bernard Bongiorno, QC, from office. The government passed legislation designed to greatly reduce his powers and remove his ability to commence contempt proceedings. It created the position of Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, the occupant being required to report directly to the Attorney-General and having the power to override decisions of the DPP — a precedent applying nowhere else in Australia. At the time government backbenchers did not have the guts to stand up and say to the Premier, 'Hang on, this is not right'.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Jellybacks!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They showed themselves to be absolute jellybacks during that episode and on this legislation. At that time, as reported in the *Age* of 19 March 1994, Mr Bongiorno described the draft bill as an appalling attack on the independence of his office. However, even after a public outcry of protests, amending legislation was passed in May 1994. The revised DPP legislation was less severe than the original, but it still effectively removed the DPP's control over his office and led to his eventual resignation. Mr Bongiorno and a lot of others have had a gutful of this government.

The DPP legislation effectively caps the budget of the DPP's office, thereby making it difficult for his officers to get the best legal minds to prosecute the most important and/or complex cases. The DPP has been silenced — and the Auditor-General is next!

In addition to office holders, other officers in the public service have been silenced. Teachers have had their rights to freedom of speech removed: the same pattern has been followed. In July 1993, the Kennett government introduced teaching service order 140 under the powers vested in the ministry by the Teaching Service Act. That order forbids any teacher to make public comment on the government or the Directorate of School Education without the express permission of the minister or the director. What a disgrace! Imagine a government silencing the people at the fore in providing our children and our community with notions of fair debate and public criticism of democracy!

Hon. Pat Power — Not even Henry Bolte did that to teachers.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Not even Henry Bolte, who certainly looks now, on reflection and compared with the Kennett government, as a libertarian and a man of principle. I never thought I would be able to say that.

If approval is given to teachers to make public comment, the guidelines state that they should ensure their comments are consistent with and reflect the policy, practices and directions of the government and/or the directorate. One expects that kind of attitude in totalitarian countries, in Pinochet's Chile or countries where people in the public service are afraid to speak, where they are given a directive not to say anything other than to agree with the government.

Many of us who have travelled overseas have seen the effects such directives have had on ordinary people. That type of governmental rule was the fundamental reason for the breakdown in the Eastern bloc where, in many instances, similar directives were issued to the public service. The system was controlled from above; nobody could say anything out of turn. Such directives have no place in our Victorian democracy.

The restriction on freedom of expression is intolerable and unacceptable, as Peter Fitzpatrick, associate professor at Monash University and a member of the Campaign for Public Education, wrote in the *Age* of 5 July 1994:

> Education, for example, you'd think should be a subject of universal interest and healthy debate. But there are places where even teachers are not allowed to enter that debate. Soviet Russia, until recently, was one such place. Another is Victoria, Australia.

Professor Fitzpatrick is not some person unfamiliar with the issues. He is drawing an analogy, saying there are two places where teachers are not allowed to enter into debate or to speak: Soviet Russia, until recently; the other — Victoria, Australia!

Hon. Pat Power — An observation even Mr Forwood would agree with.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mr Forwood is one of those we gave up on quite some time ago. He has done so many backflips we are unsure where he stands on anything nowadays. Individuals, bureaucrats and the community have been silenced.

The next disgraceful episode has been the use of the constitution to limit the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The denial of one's access to that court should be implemented in only the most judicial way. It should not be abused or overused. Yet since 1992, 150 bills that have been passed through Parliament have contained clauses that limit access to the Supreme Court.

Hon. Pat Power — They are automatically inserted in the legislation.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They are in virtually every piece of legislation this government has brought before Parliament, including the Melbourne City Link Act; the Australian Grand Prix Act; the City of Melbourne Act; the Teaching Service Act — we have talked about teachers; the Gas and Fuel Corporation Act; the Public Sector Management Act — another disgraceful piece of legislation; the Police Regulation (Discipline) Act and the Electricity Industry Act. These are only a few of the 150 pieces of legislation in which the limitation clauses have been inserted.

The Supreme Court itself has become concerned about this issue. In its 1993 annual report it noted the trend 'with disquiet' and 'as a departure from the established tradition of judicial review'. The Supreme Court itself is saying, 'You are going too far. You are removing too much of people's rights'.

The Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee, an all-party parliamentary committee, reported in its first report in May 1994 on the use of what is now called the ouster clauses because they allow the government to get out of being subjected to the Supreme Court. The report states:

> The danger is that section 85 clauses are now becoming the norm rather than the exception. There is therefore the possibility that the Supreme Court's jurisdiction may be eroded.

The Supreme Court agreed with the committee. It was one of the rare occasions that a committee of this Parliament criticised the government's position. That certainly does not happen in the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee.

Hon. Pat Power — Who is the chairperson of that committee?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The chairperson is Mr Forwood.

Hon. Pat Power — I hope the government members are not leant on.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I shall go into that in a bit more detail later. The government has also politicised the public service. On 7 September 1992 the Premier said:

> The coalition has no plans for immediate change or abolition of the Public Service Board or the [Public Service] Act itself.

However, within weeks of coming to power the Kennett government had abolished the Public Service Board and the Public Service Act. The latter was replaced by the Public Sector Management Act, which gave the Premier extraordinary powers over public servants and independent office-holders. That represents a further erosion of accountability and democracy in this state.

The Fitzgerald inquiry into corruption in Queensland specifically warned against these types of measures. Its report states:

> When a government creates a bureaucracy peopled by its own supporters, or by staff who are intimidated into providing politically palatable advice, the government is effectively deprived of the opportunity to consider the full range of relevant factors in making decisions.
>
> As a result, wrong decisions are made.

That act is an example of wrong decisions and poor decisions. It is an example of where not enough people on the government side have been prepared to stand up to the will of one man. The state should not be run by one man. The once-great Liberal Party should not be run by one man, and it is about time that some people on the government back bench actually had the guts to go to Jeff Kennett and tell him, 'Jeff, you are wrong on this occasion. Enough is enough'.

The Public Sector Management Act gives the Premier the power to appoint and dismiss departmental heads without the approval of the Governor in Council. It paves the way for the payment of exorbitant salaries to departmental heads. Honourable members have seen how the government has been prepared to do this with all sorts of lurks. When ministers have come before the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee they have been asked, 'How much does your departmental head get, what is in his contract regarding performance targets, and what does he have to

achieve in order to get his bonus?' — which is often more than the salary. Minister after minister has said, 'I do not know. It is not up to me; it is up to the Premier'.

The Premier negotiates with each departmental head a contract that contains a set of performance criteria. For instance, in the case of Workcover, it might say something to this effect: 'If you get rid of X number of workers off the Workcover system you get a certain amount of money'. Or, in the case of education it may say, 'Get rid of another 2000 teachers and your salary is doubled'. The problem is that not even the responsible ministers know what is in the contracts. That is the extent to which the government has gone in this state and it is another example of the disgraceful way the Premier has grabbed control of the public service by putting his own people into all the ministries as departmental heads and making them responsible not to their own ministers but directly to the Premier via the contracts signed with the Premier's department. That represents more erosion of public accountability.

Of course, the latest episode relates to the death of the independence of the Auditor-General. The beginning of the end dates back to November 1996 when the Kennett government secretly began a process of review of the Auditor-General. The review was undertaken under terms of reference that virtually determined the outcome. For example, the government wanted to remove the current restriction whereby the Auditor-General may authorise other persons to undertake financial audits and extend the provisions so that some or all financial and performance audits could be conducted by private auditing firms or, alternatively, so authorities could select their own auditor, enabling them to choose between the Auditor-General and private auditors. The opposition revealed that secret plan — it was secret at the time — by which, in an unprecedented move, the Premier, under the cloak of a review of the Audit Act and allegedly in accordance with national competition policy was trying to nobble the Auditor-General.

As I have pointed out in previous debates, the members of the National Competition Council are not saying, 'We desperately need the Auditor-General's office to be reviewed because it is inefficient, ineffective and uncompetitive' — or whatever. In fact, the National Competition Council's legislation review compendium lists the review of the Audit Act as a low priority. It says that the legislation should be dealt with between June 1998 and August 1998.

Hon. Pat Power — So we were misled; the community was misled.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Unfortunately, Mr Power, the government has misled the community throughout this sorry affair. That is part of the government's pattern. We saw it in the way the former Director of Public Prosecutions was treated, and it is being repeated with the Auditor-General. Why not deal with some of the other 400 bills in the review compendium, some of which are listed as requiring urgent, top priority examination under the national competition policy?

Hon. Pat Power — Obviously they are not politically urgent.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They are certainly not politically urgent so far as the priorities of the government are concerned. I would say the opposite is true: the government prefers to avoid the hard work involved in reviewing some of those pieces of legislation, instead having as its no. 1 priority getting rid of the Auditor-General — under the cloak of national competition policy.

The opposition has tried to debate the matter in the lower house. In November 1996 the Leader of the Opposition moved a motion to do so, but the Kennett government not only rejected the motion outright but immediately halted any debate on that fundamental pillar of democracy. That is the contempt in which the government holds the Parliament and the people of Victoria.

The community's initial reaction was one of horror and opposition. In its editorial of 25 November 1996 the *Herald Sun* says:

> Electors, whatever their political allegiance, should not tolerate any attempt by the ruling coalition to censure or subvert the Auditor-General's role.

The *Sunday Age* editorial of 24 November 1996 states:

> The faithful watchdog must remain free, unchained and unmuzzled to do his job. It is the government's arrogance on this issue that needs restraining.

Even back in 1996 the newspapers were opposed to it. In December 1996 the Victorian Council of Civil Liberties said:

> Together with changes to a variety of statutory authorities and judicial bodies this latest move undermines Victoria's commitment to the rule of law and thereby the capacity of the government to deliver services in the public interest and in a manner consistent with procedural justice.

On 21 November 1996 the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants said:

> Any proposal to interfere with the independence of the Auditor-General should set alarm bells ringing amongst the wider population because an independent auditor is one of the pillars of a democratic society and one of the very few ways of ensuring proper accountability.

On 21 November 1996, the Auditor-General himself, Mr Baragwanath, said:

> In my eight years of reporting in the public interest without fear or favour I view this government action as representing the greatest threat to the independence and even the very existence of my role, and to the Parliament's and community's right to know.

The conservative-dominated Australian Council of Public Accounts Committees said on 11 February 1996:

> The Auditor-General should not be subject to any direction on how to carry out audits ...

Hon. Pat Power — Would Mr Forwood have been at that meeting?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am afraid Mr Forwood was at that meeting, Mr Power, and I will go into that in some detail later. When one looks at those responses one has to say that the difference between the way government members have put their views about the Auditor-General in the past and the way they have put their current views on the record is pretty disgraceful.

Hon. Pat Power — A bit like FOI.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is a good analogy, Mr Power: it is a bit like what happened with the FOI act. Members of the coalition such as Mr Hallam, the Minister for Finance, and Mr Birrell, the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, who had used FOI to the maximum extent while in opposition, did a complete backflip in government by removing important provisions from the act and increasing the cost of FOI requests so that they became prohibitive for most members.

Let us look at what members of the then opposition said in 1990 during the debate on the Audit Bill, which the Cain government introduced not to nobble the Auditor-General but to increase his powers. I will quote from the audit legislation that was subsequently passed. The 1990 Audit Act contains section 48A(1), which clarifies the performance audit powers of the Auditor-General:

> The Auditor-General may, at such intervals as he or she thinks fit, conduct any audit he or she considers necessary to determine whether a department or public authority is achieving its objectives effectively and doing so economically and efficiently and in compliance with all relevant acts.

So the specific power to conduct performance audits was given to the Auditor-General by a Labor government. No matter what Mr Forwood or any other member of the government say, in the end a government decides whether or not legislation is passed, and the Cain government passed that legislation.

What did members of the coalition say at the time? They supported the Auditor-General carrying out performance audits — something the bill seeks to remove. This is what Mr Hallam had to say.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — He is not in the house.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He is not in the house; he is not interested in the debate. He has decided to take a rest, Mr Nardella, because — —

Hon. K. M. Smith — On a point of order, Mr President, the minister is unfortunately absent from the chamber because some people came in to meet him and he had to leave, albeit briefly. He will be back. Mr Theophanous is trying to score cheap points, which is not appreciated.

The PRESIDENT — Order! That is not a point of order.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is typical, isn't it!

Hon. K. M. Smith interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — We will see whether the government is prepared to have a serious debate about the legislation. It would have

been good had Roger Hallam been in the house to hear what he said back then. One of the things politicians do not like is to have their hypocrisy pointed out; and, believe me, the hypocrisy of Mr Hallam and Mr Forwood, as we will see later, is breathtaking. This is a nice quote because it applies equally today as it did back then. Mr Hallam said:

> So a clear question mark is raised in respect of the Auditor-General's powers. That question mark could not have come at a worse time in this state's history. If ever we needed an independent, competent, fearless and authorised watchdog, it would have to be now.
>
> The bill is designed to remove that question mark to ensure that the Auditor-General does have the authority to undertake efficiency and effectiveness audits.

Mr Hallam says he is supporting this bill because it gives the Auditor-General that power. His next statement makes interesting reading:

> We cannot expect to get value from our watchdog — and that is what he is — if we keep him on the chain, no matter how long that chain is.

With this legislation the chain is so long it is impossible to see the other end. Mr Hallam further stated:

> It must be made clear that there is no restriction on the powers of the Auditor-General. Honourable members and indeed individual members of the community would be relieved to know that we have the independent and competent authorised Auditor-General carrying out his role of supervision of the financial management of the state.

Is he talking about the same Auditor-General as the one we have today? He is. It is the same person in the same job. Today, however, Mr Hallam is in government and wants to nobble the Auditor-General.

Further on he said:

> I have the same objective which the government says it has: namely, to remove all restrictions, whether real or perceived, to allow the Auditor-General to carry out the role which we all presume him to have, including what is commonly known as a performance audit and not just the narrow definition of financial compliance ... there is a far greater benefit to be derived from the audit process than the mere question of financial compliance.

On page after page Mr Hallam makes comments in support of the Auditor-General. Not only that, he even supports the Cain government and Mr Cain as the Premier. Referring to the Auditor-General having exceeded his powers in the past Mr Hallam said that the question was academic:

> ... given the Premier's unequivocal commitment to ensuring that performance audits fall within the Auditor-General's authority.
>
> I say here and now that the National Party commends the Premier for making that commitment and supports it without qualification.

Mr Hallam commended the then Premier John Cain. It is a pity the Minister for Finance is not in the house to hear some of the comments he made back then.

The National Party ought to listen to what Minister Hallam had to say back in 1990. I repeat:

> ... the National Party commends the Premier for making that commitment and supports it without qualification.

I look forward to hearing what Mr Forwood will say about this legislation and how the then opposition supported the legislation.

We agree; the then opposition supported the legislation. The trouble is that it does not do so now. Government members have done a massive backflip and unfortunately Mr Forwood is a part of that massive backflip.

To pick up on what Mr Power said previously in relation to FOI, in the same speech Mr Hallam talks about information not having been provided at the level he wanted. He said:

> Parliament has seen the government go to court to protect documents that it deems to be sensitive.

I do not know on how many occasions the Cain government went to court over documents, but I can tell you that the number would pale into insignificance when compared with the number of times the Minister for Finance and his government have gone to court over documents under the FOI system, not to mention the way they nobbled the whole FOI process.

Mr Hallam stated further:

> ... it is unthinkable that the Auditor-General should be shackled in any way.
>
> Protection that will come only from the knowledge that his independence, competence and authorisation are put beyond doubt is necessary. To the extent that the bill supports that role, the National Party wholeheartedly supports it.

Hon. Pat Power — He probably had Bill Baxter come in and say that as leader of the Nationals. He would have repeated it word for word.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He may well have done that, but unfortunately I don't think so. The now Leader of the Government and Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, Mr Birrell, also spoke on the debate back then and said the following:

> There is a vital need to clarify the rights and powers of the Auditor-General, who is the financial watchdog of the state of Victoria. The Premier has no personal interest in doing so because the natural outcome of the Auditor-General having reasonable powers is that he would expose who was responsible for the losses incurred by various bodies ...

He said that the Premier at that time did not have an interest in extending the ambit of the Auditor-General. However, notwithstanding that fact the Premier of the day did precisely that, so despite the fact that on narrow self-interested criteria the then Premier had nothing to gain, he nevertheless proceeded with this legislation and passed it.

Mr Birrell then referred to the Auditor-General carrying out:

> ... the rigorous pursuit of mismanagement and the rigorous assessment of the need for efficiency and effectiveness in government administration.

He concluded by saying:

> If the Auditor-General does not do this, who does?

The PRESIDENT — Order! Can you remind me of the date?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — This is 10 April 1990. Finally, he says:

> The question becomes: should there be performance audits in Victoria? The Liberal and National parties do not hesitate in reaching a conclusion that there must be, and we are prepared to suffer them in government.

Apparently they are no longer prepared to suffer them by the Auditor-General in government. They are no longer prepared to suffer performance audits. He continues:

> This is not something we want to impose specifically on the Cain government, we want to impose it on every government because we believe all governments should be subject to those standards.

That is what Mark Birrell said in 1990. If one looks at what the two lead speakers had to say in 1990 one can see that they had very strong views in support of the Auditor-General. Mr Birrell finished his contribution by saying:

> His role should be extremely vigorous. As a servant of the Parliament he is independent in that he acts on behalf of us all in keeping finances in order, and independent in that, acting on behalf of us all, he acts in the public interest and not on behalf of the government, any minister or indeed any individual member of the general public.

Back in 1990 Mr Birrell was pointing to the fact the Auditor-General serves the Parliament — that is, he serves us as parliamentarians and serves the public. The Auditor-General does not serve the government; that is not his task. Of course, it was not only the front bench, it was also the back bench — —

Hon. Pat Power — Who was on the back bench?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mrs Varty decided to contribute to the debate. She had this to say in 1990:

> The Auditor-General is one of the most important independent statutory officers in this state, and that independence must be protected at all costs.

She went on to say:

> It is no good the government or the opposition approving additional scope for the Auditor-General unless the Auditor-General's office is adequately resourced to carry out those tasks.

I wonder whether Mrs Varty will apply the principle about adequate resourcing when she votes on this bill to slash the resources of the Auditor-General.

Hon. Pat Power — She will oppose it, I'm sure.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — She would have to if she is to stand by what she said in 1990, but I'm afraid, Mr Power, that I cannot agree with you. I do not have your confidence that she will stick by the principles she enunciated in 1990.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — She is a woman of principle.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — She may well be, but we will wait to see how she votes on the bill. She went on to say in 1990:

> My final comment is a plea to the government not to hamstring the Auditor-General, as is happening now through lack of resources ...

That is typical.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — She could say the same again this time round.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — She could. The quote continues:

> ... and to assure that he is able to carry out the functions Parliament has given him in the past and will further extend through this bill.

Hon. Pat Power — I think we should call a quorum so people can hear this speech.

It is indicative of the contempt in which members of the government hold this place that they do not even take this debate seriously. Effectively only one member of the government has been sitting in on the debate — one person has been here since the debate began, and that is Mr Forwood. At least he has been prepared to sit and listen to the debate. The rest are nowhere to be seen. They are hiding away somewhere summoning up the courage to vote for principles that back in 1990 they spoke against. I am sure Mrs Varty is one of those members who is steeling herself for the inevitable vote that she will cast on behalf of the government in direct contradiction to the comments she made in 1990 in support of the Auditor-General.

One word describes this piece of legislation being pushed through by the government — —

Hon. Pat Power — Shame?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Shame is one word.

Hon. Pat Power — Outrageous?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Outrageous is another. The word that best describes today's debate and the debate in 1990 is 'hypocrisy' because the speeches of members of the coalition mae in 1990 could be given by members of the Labor Party today. In fact I would go so far as to say that if one of the members of the opposition simply stood up and read the 1990 speeches of Mrs Varty, Mr Birrell or Mr Hallam nobody would pick up the fact that it was a speech made by a member of the coalition. They would say it must be a speech by a member of the opposition opposing the Audit (Amendment) Bill. The comments that were made by members of the coalition in 1990 stand in stark contrast to what they are saying today. This is one of the most hypocritical episodes we have seen in this place.

Hon. Pat Power — Shame!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is shameful. As I said, Mr Forwood is one of the members of the government who has sat through the debate.

Hon. Pat Power — The only one.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, the only one. Of course, Mr Forwood found himself in an unfortunate situation.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — What, getting an extra 9 grand a year! Is that unfortunate?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I do not want to be that unkind. If the government were considering changing the Audit Act and the role of the Auditor-General, one would have thought that the first person it would consult would be the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee, Mr Forwood.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — If it was worth its salt, that is right.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Even if it were not, one would expect that a government would go to the Chairperson — their chairperson — of the Public Accounts Committee because he is the person who interfaces with the Auditor-General. One would expect the government to say, 'This is what we intend to do. What do you think?'

Hon. D. A. Nardella — You're not suggesting the Premier would bypass Mr Forwood?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mr Forwood is on the record as having said that he knew nothing about it. He was caught on the hop, without any knowledge of what the Premier's department was doing in trying to nobble the Auditor-General. Such is the contempt in which the Premier holds Mr Forwood. Rather than saying, 'Hang on a minute, Jeff, who do you think you are to treat the chairperson of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee in this way?', Mr Forwood meekly and mildly capitulated.

As chairman of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee (PAEC) Mr Forwood had written a very good letter to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts of the House of Representatives. Unfortunately it was written on 23 September 1996 — before Mr Forwood discovered the Premier's intentions — and he was then on the side of the Auditor-General, of course. He thought he would big-note himself with the Joint Committee of Public Accounts by saying how strongly he supported auditors-general. The letter states:

> This committee endorses the broad thrust of the papers prepared by the Australasian Council of Auditors-General with the following additional comments.

First he endorsed what was said in the paper prepared by the Australasian Council of Auditors-General about the need for independence of the Auditor-General, including operational independence. Under the heading 'Mandate and scope of independence', the letter states:

> This committee believes there should be no external or organisation impairment to restrict the Auditor-General in discharging his or her audit functions.

In September 1996 Mr Forwood wanted to even strengthen what had been said by the Australasian Council of Auditors-General.

Hon. Pat Power — He just agreed with what Mr Hallam and Mr Birrell said when in opposition!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He probably agreed with them in opposition, but unfortunately he is not prepared to carry that through in government.

In the letter of September 1996 he referred to making the Auditor-General an officer of the Parliament, which the government has made a big song and dance about, and stated that it would guarantee the independence of the Auditor-General. The letter further states:

> This committee understands there are a number of legal and operational consequences which would arise out of the proposal to make the Auditor-General an 'officer of the Parliament'. Rather than pursue this option, the PAEC support the inclusion in legislation of a provision which gives explicit recognition to the Auditor-General's functional and audit independence.

So back in September 1996 he did not make too big a song and dance about making the Auditor-General an officer of the Parliament, yet now he says that it is the major reason why the proposed legislation is so good. We all know it is just a symbolic exercise.

What did Mr Forwood do at the biennial conference of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees held on 10 and 11 February 1996? Of course by that time he knew what was happening.

Hon. Pat Power — He was starting to smell a rat?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — By this time he had been pulled into line. He did the first of a number of backflips. The trouble was that back in February of 1996 Mr Forwood did not know what the eventual outcome would be of the review of the Audit Act. He knew a review was taking place, but he did not know what conclusions would be reached because they were not available until April.

At the biennial conference in February 1996 Mr Forwood was keen to establish some credibility by, on the one hand, supporting the Auditor-General and, on the other hand, suggesting there was nothing wrong with undertaking the review. Mr Forwood is indicating now that he agrees with that assessment of his position at that time.

As to the first part of his position, he decided to second the following motion:

> The Auditor-General should have the sole power to carry out, or designate an auditor to carry out, the external audit on all agencies which are owned, controlled or substantially responsible to government.

The motion was moved by Tasmania and seconded by Victoria — that is, by Mr Forwood. I need to read the first part of the motion again — and honourable members must remember that it was supported by Mr Forwood in the context of his not knowing what

the conclusion of the review would be. The motion states:

> The Auditor-General should have the sole power to carry out ...

I am sure Mr Forwood will say that by 'the sole power to carry out or designate an auditor to carry out' an audit he meant that it is must be one or the other, that it cannot be both.

Hon. Pat Power — Are you suggesting this is the point at which Mr Forwood started to go to water?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — No, Mr Forwood agreed with the motion because he did not know then that the Auditor-General would be given absolutely no power to audit. He thought that the Premier, even with his track record, would see the some sense in allowing the Auditor-General at least some scope to carry out a limited number of audits. He thought, 'I shouldn't have any problem with this, as it says "to carry out or designate"'.

Back then the debate was on the question of competition and whether the Auditor-General should be competing with the private sector by having a process that involved the contracting out of audits. Mr Forwood agreed that the Auditor-General should have the sole power to carry out or designate an auditor to carry out an audit. Now he has dropped the first part of that — he does not agree the Auditor-General should have the sole power to carry out an audit — but he agrees with the second part of the motion. It is another backflip on a motion he seconded in February 1997.

Mr Forwood was a bit concerned about all this, and when debate on the motion neared conclusion he decided he would move an amendment to the motion. Before I go into what happened in this grubby little episode I shall quote the motion that had been moved and was later agreed to unanimously by ACPAC in February 1997. Honourable members should remember that ACPAC comprises representatives of all Australian public accounts committees. I also I remind the house that in February 1997 Mr Forwood did not know that the Premier planned to remove entirely the operational independence of the Auditor-General.

I have already indicated the part of the motion that relates to the sole power to carry out or to designate an auditor to carry out external audits of all agencies that are owned and controlled or substantially responsible. With regard to the minimum requirements for the independence of the Auditor-General, under the heading 'Operational independence' the motion states:

> The audit mandate should be extensive and include financial statements and controls; compliance with legislation; the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of public moneys, as approved by the Parliament in each jurisdiction ... The Auditor-General should not be subject to any direction in how to carry out these audits; the Auditor-General will be free to determine the audit program, including the bodies to be audited, the nature and scope of audits, who will carry out the audits and the priorities for audits ... The Auditor-General should have access to all information necessary to carry out audits. This access should be subject to strict confidentiality requirements to ensure that all information is used only for purposes set out in the Auditor-General's legislation ... The Audit Office should be either a statutory authority or established by separate legislation. The Auditor-General should be responsible for the resourcing decisions within the office ... In cases where the Audit Office does not raise revenue, the resourcing decisions of the Audit Office should be by means of a parliamentary allocation ...

The motion refers also to the Auditor-General being responsible for the resourcing decisions within his office. The motion was passed unanimously by ACPAC, but Mr Forwood did not know then the extent to which the Auditor-General was to be nobbled by the Premier, and that is why he supported the motion on the operational independence of the Auditor-General. In order to lick the boots of the Premier for his own advancement, Mr Forwood moved a disgraceful three-point amendment to the motion, which noted that an Independent Commission of Review of the Victorian Audit Act was under way and was examining Victorian legislation relating to competition policy. The third point states:

> ACPAC endorses the Victorian review as a legitimate process and notes that any proposed alterations to the Audit Act 1994 arising from the review will be subject to consideration and approval by the Victorian Parliament.

What a suck-up job! Mr Forwood put this before ACPAC. He managed to get another representative of a Liberal government — in this case it was the commonwealth — to second the motion. The chairman told Mr Forwood that there was a problem with the suggested amendment because it related to a specific state and that the motion dealt with the

overall issue of accountability. As a result the seconder of the amendment, Mr Somlyay, decided to walk away from Mr Forwood stating:

> My colleague from Victoria may not agree with me but as the seconder of the motion I have difficulty with incorporating it.

The chairman then said:

> If the seconding of the motion is withdrawn and it is not otherwise seconded, its present status, which is an amendment to the substantial report, will lapse.

Of course, Mr Somlyay, the commonwealth representative, then said:

> I no longer second the motion.

He pulled the rug outfrom under Mr Forwood and the amendment was withdrawn. The motion supporting the operational independence of the Auditor-General was then passed unanimously. That was not enough for Mr Forwood. He then decided to have a second go! After the committee dealt with the first motion Mr Forwood moved another motion, which was challenged by a number of people, including me. When raising a point of order I stated:

> The review in Victoria is about considering whether the Auditor-General should have this power. To endorse that review is to endorse a notion that we should bring into question whether the Auditor-General should have the sole power to carry out these external audits. As a group the council has already ruled on that and, therefore, this particular motion is out of order. I submit that you should rule it out of order.

The chairman subsequently ruled it out of order.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — He was saved the embarrassment, wasn't he?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — No, he wasn't. Mr Forwood had to be able to tell the Premier that he had done everything he could for the outrageous changes the Premier had not even told Mr Forwood about in the first place. Mr Forwood then moved dissent from the Chair.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Did he? He went to the extent of moving dissent from the Chair!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, he did.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Not only did the commonwealth do him in; his own people did him in!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The chairman asked Mr Forwood whether he would move dissent from the ruling of the Chair and Mr Forwood said, 'I move dissent'. Who did he get to second that dissent? By this time almost everyone at the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees had had enough of Mr Forwood, but he managed to get the Northern Territory to second his dissent motion.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — A further embarrassment.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It was a further embarrassment. It is the same Northern Territory the government points to as an example of the public auditing it believes we should have in Victoria. The chairman put the motion and declared:

> On a show of hands I declare the motion for dissent from the ruling of the chairman in respect of the closure of this debate lost.

After the Premier had not had the courtesy to tell Mr Forwood what he was up to, Mr Forwood went off to do the Premier's bidding at the ACPAC meeting in Sydney, but he could not even get the support of Liberal conservative governments around Australia. The house should remember that the council is based on one vote per jurisdiction: Victoria has one vote; New South Wales has one vote; and so on. At the time the meeting was held there was one Labor government in Australia — in New South Wales — and conservative governments in the commonwealth, the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia.

One would think Mr Forwood would have been able to get up his motion to attack the Auditor-General and to indicate that Victoria should have the green light to nobble him. What did those other conservative governments say? They said, 'No, we don't agree with you'. Mr Forwood should have had the guts to stand up to the Premier.

On a personal level I have a great deal of respect for Mr Forwood. I understand that he was and continues to be in a difficult position. At some stage we have all had to endure that difficult position; we have all been there.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — You have been there!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — In the past I have been chairman of the public accounts committee and I recognise that there are real pressures from a government that, in the end, does not want to have all the scrutiny that might be available. As a member of a government one has an obligation to that government. However, the role of the chairman of the public accounts committee is to protect the interests of the public and all members of Parliament, not just the interests of the government. I understand that all member of the house want a future and that we have self-interests. I have urged Mr Forwood to consider the fact that sometimes when you bring your own side back from the brink it is not detrimental to your political future; in fact, it may well help it.

I take the house back to the period when I was chairman of the public accounts committee. I do not suggest that as a committee back then we did things any better or any worse, but it is possible for public accounts committees with a common goal — such as public accountability — to produce reports that are critical of government; it is possible to engage the Auditor-General in healthy debate while at the same time supporting him; it is possible to do those things together.

During the early 1990s reports were produced on matters arising from the Auditor-General's report on ministerial portfolios. The first report I was involved in as chairman was produced in May 1990. It states:

> The accountability mechanisms which have evolved in the public sector are unique. The most important of these accountability mechanisms is the electoral process itself. There are, however, a number of other crucial links in the chain of public sector accountability. Auditor-General review is one of these, and closely associated with it is the role of parliamentary public accounts committees ... Public sector audit is very different from private sector audit —

the committee well understood this important point then —

> The scope of the audit report provided by private corporations to their shareholders is usually exceedingly limited. Commonly, it is confined to the mere attestation of the financial statements and compliance with the companies code. Moreover, because corporate management normally initiates the appointment of auditors, and because accounting firms compete vigorously for audit work, the independence of audit is sometimes questionable.

The public accounts committee certainly understood that there was a big difference between public sector and private sector auditing. The then Economic and Budget Review Committee also understood its role in creating a balance. It is for that reason that its May 1990 report states:

> The committee is not, however, a mere cheer squad for the Auditor-General. There are issues where there are legitimate differences of opinion between the Auditor-General and agencies under audit in respect of appropriate reporting or management practices. Moreover, it is no criticism of the office to say that the Auditor-General does not invariably 'get it right'.

The committee understood that it was all right to criticise the Auditor-General but recognised that he should be supported.

A subsequent report in November 1990 makes a number of points about the Auditor-General's processes. The report was put together in the context of strong opposition to the Auditor-General from within the government of the time and is very critical of him. For instance, in relation to a number of claims the Auditor-General had made in his report on ministerial portfolios, it states:

> The Auditor-General's estimate of $7.8 million in irregular payments on works and services within the Ministry of Education was subsequently determined —

by the committee —

> to be only $2.3 million. This represents an error rate of 239 per cent.

The committee also disagreed with the Auditor-General on school cleaning costs. The report states:

> ... based on a larger sample of schools and the payment of award rates to school cleaners, the $34.6 million potential savings identified by the Auditor-General were overstated by as much as $24 million.

In 1990, in the heat of political debate, the committee criticised the Auditor-General, yet in conclusion the report states:

> Despite these criticisms the Auditor-General has an important role in raising concerns which are of public importance regarding the administrative and financial performance of agencies.

Despite its criticisms the committee supported the Auditor-General's right to make his findings. The process I have described is part of the healthy debate in Parliament and in the community. In the same report the committee was also critical of the government. At 4.3.3 the report states:

> The committee finds that there were clear breaches of Treasury regulations within the Ministry of Education in that documents were erroneously endorsed to suggest that goods and services had been received, when in fact they had not. This enabled prepayments to be made from 1988–89 Office of Schools Administration works and services allocations.

At that time the committee was prepared to be critical of both the government and the Auditor-General. The report further states:

> However, as referred to above the extent of these prepayments was not as great as the estimate provided by the Auditor-General.

That is balanced reporting by the public accounts committee. If the Auditor-General was wrong he was told he was wrong, yet his right to do his audits was vigorously defended, even in the context of his being wrong in the committee's view.

I address these comments specifically to Mr Forwood. I was in a similar position to Mr Forwood's when the Economic and Budget Review Committee produced its 30th report to Parliament — I was chairperson of the committee. The committee was asked by the government to examine issues raised by the Auditor-General in relation to the implications of the 1989–90 consolidated fund $35 million interest-swap transaction.

At that time membership of the public accounts subcommittee included the Honourable James Guest, a former member of this house, and Mr Clark and Mr Steggall, the honourable members for Box Hill and Swan Hill in the other place. Mr Honeywood, the current Minister for Tertiary Education and Training, and Mr Hallam, the current Minister for Finance, were members of the full committee. The committee had the benefit of considerable expertise on both the government and opposition sides.

The issue before the committee was that in September 1990 the Auditor-General had issued a notice under the provisions of the Audit Act to the Treasury to show cause why expenditure of $35 million on financial charges should not be disallowed, because in the opinion of the Auditor-General it had been incurred without parliamentary authority. Without going into the detail of the $35 million swap transaction, both Labor and the conservative members of the committee were prepared to bring down a report critical of the government at that time. All of the committee's members were under pressure, but in the end the committee came through for the public good. The introduction to the report states:

> The Public Accounts Subcommittee's inquiry confirmed that $35 million has been spent without parliamentary authority and members from both sides of politics were prepared to say that this had occurred. In the best traditions of public accounts committees, members believed that protecting the interests of the public account was paramount.

I ask no more than that of Mr Forwood as chairperson of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, of Mr Hallam, who was on the committee at that time, and of all honourable members. Anyone who read the recommendations of the committee would say, 'Well, that committee obviously had the courage to get up and criticise the government despite the fact that it was controlled by the government'. I know the cheap shot from the government side will be, 'You had more to criticise back then', or something along those lines. The fact is that the scrutiny of public accounts is something that goes across governments and eras. We ask the government simply to apply the standard we applied then. I do not expect Mr Forwood to do everything on his own. I know it is tough when you are in government and you have a Premier who is determined that his will will prevail. You have to balance your personal interest, your desire to make a contribution to the community and notions of public accountability.

I also know that Mr Forwood fought within his party to moderate some of the clauses, perhaps with some success, although I do not know. That is a role I would have expected him to play as the chairman of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. However, it reaches a point where what you are being offered is not enough to guarantee that the public accounts will be properly scrutinised and where you can no longer say, 'It is better that I accept some of the changes that at least moderate the worst effects of the legislation than take a final stand and oppose it'. Mr Forwood made the judgment that it was better to get some changes that moderated the government's initial stand, modest though they

were, than to say, 'I am opposing this outright' and running the risk of ending up with a bill that was worse than the one we are debating. I understand the logic, but the trouble is that the bill we now have is not good enough. Somebody on the government side ought to be prepared to say it is not good enough.

Hon. Pat Power — Mr Forwood will.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I live in hope that Mr Forwood might be prepared to say it is not good enough. This is not just about Mr Forwood, because he is not the only government member of the committee. The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee had the opportunity to take a lead on this. If all the members of the committee had said in unison, 'We do not agree with the legislation', I do not believe even the Premier would have been prepared to continue with it in its current form — but that did not happen.

We come back to the question of why the changes are being made. I have already pointed out that the changes are not urgent so far as national competition policy is concerned. That is clear from all the information we have, including the government's agreements with the National Competition Council. The legislation is also unnecessary when one examines whether the Auditor-General has been doing a good job. When you are reviewing something the natural thing to say is, 'If it is not working, maybe we should consider changing it'. The first question that should have been asked is: is the Auditor-General doing his job efficiently and effectively?

Hon. Pat Power — You would want to see whether it was broken.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The trouble is the government had already tried that little trick on three separate occasions, with three separate reports.

Hon. Pat Power — It came unstuck.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Each of these three independent reports came up with the same conclusion, that the Auditor-General was doing his job efficiently and effectively. The first report, entitled *Report on Performance Audit of the Auditor-General of Victoria Pursuant to Section 48B of the Audit Act 1958*, was conducted by Fergus Ryan, who said, in part:

> In Victoria, the central agencies (Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Department of Treasury, Ministry of Finance, and the Public Service Board) have primary responsibility for system-wide risk identification, monitoring and control. Consequently, my evaluation of the Auditor-General's planning process commences with a review of the role of the central agencies.

He went on not only to strongly support the view that the Auditor-General was doing a good job but also to say it was imperative that the Auditor-General be the auditor of those central agencies and the risk management they undertake.

The next important question is: does the Auditor-General do his job in a way that minimises any risks to Victoria? I notice that the Premier has again shot his mouth off on the matter, as have other government members, saying that the Auditor-General was at fault for not picking up the problems with, for example, the State Bank and Tricontinental. Of course he did not — because he was not the auditor! If it was anybody's fault, it was ours as members of Parliament because we allowed a situation to develop where the Auditor-General was not the auditor of some of those bodies.

It is worth recalling what happened on that occasion. Private sector auditors audited Tricontinental and the State Bank but did not pick up the risks involved. They did not do their job properly, so much so that the government was able to sue them and recover millions of dollars in damages. I cannot recall the exact amount, but I believe more than $100 million was recovered from the private sector auditors of Tricontinental. That was the result of one occasion on which we put the auditing function into the hands of the private sector. Do you know what is different about this legislation, Mr Nardella, which people may not have picked up?

Hon. D. A. Nardella — What?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The legislation will lead to worse situations than the Tricontinental situation, because if a private sector firm makes an absolute mess of an audit, it will not uncover the corruption, waste and poor use of resources. As a result of Tricontinental millions of dollars of government money was lost. Under this legislation it would not be possible to sue those auditors, unlike the situation with Tricontinental where the legal action involved more than $100 million. The reason they cannot be sued is that they do not sign off the audit; the Auditor-General has this monstrous stamp

to wield when he says, 'This is all right', because he has no staff to look at the audit. The responsibility for audits is taken by the public, through the Auditor-General. I look forward to the government producing a legal opinion showing that what I say is not correct and that private auditors will be taken before the courts.

Mr Deputy President, you were a member of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee when it produced its second report in November 1993. At that time the committee was chaired by Mr Graeme Weideman, who opposes these changes to the Audit Act. Mr Weideman has the guts to say the government's amendments are not right. In the chairman's introduction to the report Mr Weideman states:

> Overall audit conclusions were very favourable. Mr Ryan concluded that the Auditor-General is meeting his objectives effectively, economically and efficiently and that the direction and momentum of the Audit Office are positive and constructive. This represents a substantial achievement for any Audit Office and on behalf of the committee I congratulate the Auditor-General and his staff on this achievement. The findings of this inquiry provide further support to Mr Ryan's overall conclusions.

In 1993 the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee congratulated the Auditor-General on doing a good job, and Mr Hall was a member of that committee and therefore a party to the congratulations.

In the summary of major findings and conclusions, under the heading 'Risk Assessment', the report states:

> The Auditor-General is best placed to assess the adequacy of risk management within the central agencies given his legislative responsibilities and the collective knowledge of the Victorian public sector within the Audit Office.

Under this legislation the authority of the Auditor-General to assess central agencies will disappear, yet the report says the Audit Office is best placed to assess the adequacy of their risk management. I do not think many things have changed since 1993 when Mr Hall and other members of the committee supported the Auditor-General's Office.

Recommendation 3.1 of the committee's report states:

> The Auditor-General, in accordance with the recommendations outlined in Mr Fergus Ryan's report on the performance audit of the Auditor-General, should review the critical objectives of the central agencies each year in order to determine whether the agencies are achieving those objectives.

I was a member of the committee at that time and I have not changed my position. Mr Hall was also a member of the committee but he must have changed his views because he apparently supports the proposed legislation. The report supports the Auditor-General and says he is doing a good job.

Mr Alan Talbot, who produced the Price Waterhouse report of September 1995 entitled *Auditing in the Public Interest*, in stating his opinion and conclusions said:

> Overall the office is conducting performance audits effectively and efficiently. The quality of performance audits is good, especially taking into account the limited resources available. Better performing offices such as the Office of the Auditor-General of Canada and the National Audit Office in the United Kingdom have far greater resources and are generally ahead of the Victorian office in the development and practice of performance auditing, while Australian state and Canadian provincial audit offices are generally well behind Victoria.

In other words, only the largest and best resourced offices are ahead of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, and provincial Canadian audit offices and state audit offices in Australia are behind the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

Mr Talbot also concluded that the Auditor-General was being nobbled, although he did not use that word, because of a lack of resources. He states:

> It is my personal view that progressively increasing the resources for performance auditing by 30 per cent a year towards the same level as financial statement auditing is practical and desirable, and together with some changes in approach, would ensure a greater coverage than the modest level now obtained.

Mr Talbot supports the notion of an increase in the level of resources for the Auditor-General's Office. Mr Talbot conducted two surveys, one of members of Parliament and the other of auditees around the state.

Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.02 p.m.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Before the suspension of the sitting I was discussing one of three reports on the operations of the Auditor-General. The latest report — it is dated September 1995 — *Auditing in the Public Interest*, by Price Waterhouse states that 'Australian state and Canadian provincial audit offices are generally well behind Victoria' in the efficiency and effectiveness of their audit offices.

On behalf of Price Waterhouse, Mr Alan Talbot conducted a survey of members of Parliament to gauge their level of satisfaction and support for the Auditor-General. The results of the survey make interesting reading:

> The overall assessment of the Auditor-General's Office by parliamentarians responding to the survey was very positive; 69 per cent of respondents were very satisfied, rating their satisfaction 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale and view the Auditor-General's Office as a valuable resource to the state of Victoria.

I do not know how many government members responded to that survey but the majority of members who did respond said the Auditor-General's Office was a 'valuable resource' for Victoria. Yet, now government members intend to vote in support of the proposed legislation. They should be ashamed of themselves. That survey is yet another example of government members being prepared to reply to a confidential survey — to say that the Auditor-General is doing an excellent job and that his office is a valuable resource — but when it comes to standing up to the Premier on this issue they go to water.

Mr Talbot also conducted a survey of auditees — that is, the people audited by the Auditor-General — to evaluate the performance of the Auditor-General. It is not surprising that of the 60 auditees surveyed, only 28 per cent reported that overall they were 'very satisfied'. I remind the house that 69 per cent of parliamentarians said they were 'very satisfied'. One would expect that to be the case; after all is said and done, the Auditor-General audits government business enterprises and ministries. One would expect government agencies would not like being audited by the Auditor-General but members of Parliament would be keen to ensure such organisations were properly audited. I repeat for the benefit of government members that the level of support for the Auditor-General is higher among parliamentarians than it is among those organisations the Auditor-General audits and criticises, year after year, for wasting money.

It is rather bizarre that the Premier should say that his departmental heads support the changes contained in the legislation and do not support the Auditor-General. The Premier has said, 'Even the heads of departments support the changes'. Why wouldn't they? Of course they support the changes, because the legislation will lead to less scrutiny of their operations.

Another interesting aspect of the response by auditees to Mr Talbot's survey is contained in his report:

> auditees were more satisfied with the engagement team, technical knowledge, and sensitivity of the Auditor-General's Office ...

Basically the findings were that although only 28 per cent of auditees supported the Auditor-General, they had respect for him because of his technical knowledge and the effectiveness of his engagement teams.

The survey asked for comments about the competence of auditing teams. Those being audited thought the Auditor-General was doing a good job. The conclusions section on page 3 of the report states:

> I have formed the view that, in relation to performance audits, the Victorian office is well to the forefront amongst smaller audit offices.

The report confirms the point made in the two earlier audits: that the Auditor-General is doing his job well. Mr Talbot goes on to say at page 4:

> The office of the Auditor-General is well placed to meet the challenges of the next few years after two years of major restructuring. The corporate plan and business plans are adequate and appropriate to the stage of development of the office. The people are highly motivated, the methodologies are basically sound and the management processes satisfactory.

He concludes with the following comment:

> The Auditor-General and the office are to be commended on their achievements in a difficult period of change.

That third report makes the same fundamental point: the Auditor-General is doing a good job, runs the office efficiently and effectively and is at the forefront of public accountability and audit by world and interstate standards. It is an office of which we in this state should all be proud, not one that we

should be trying to nobble, as the current government is attempting to do.

Much has been made of the point that the Auditor-General actually contracts out a great deal of his work already. In fact, the government keeps putting around the figure of 75 per cent, but it is 75 per cent of the audits by number, and many of these are very small. They are certainly not the major audits of the central agencies and so on, which the Auditor-General has always done. The Auditor-General has always audited the Premier's department, the Treasury and other major central agencies.

At page 18 of the report Mr Talbot says in relation to the use of agents:

> Whereas it has been appropriate and successful for the office to contract out to agents audits such as hospitals and universities, in my view it will continue to be important for the Auditor-General's office to audit at least the central agencies which are key to the management of public sector risk and where it is essential for the auditor to be totally independent of conflicts that might be seen to arise in the private sector.

It is not only the opposition and the public accounts committee that identified the problem of conflict of interest with the use of private sector auditors; in his review Mr Talbot of Price Waterhouse also identified it as a problem. Notwithstanding that Price Waterhouse is itself a private company, Mr Talbot was prepared to say in his report that it is essential for the auditor to be totally independent of conflicts that might be seen to arise in the private sector. He goes on to say:

> In my view it is also important for the office to retain some practical auditing experience and skill base in order to be able to effectively manage agencies and fulfil its mandate.

The recommendations of this highly respected auditor, Alan Talbot from Price Waterhouse, have been thrown out of the window and totally disregarded. At page 56 he states:

> The Auditor-General should be nominated auditor for all entities controlled by the state.

He even seeks to extend the ambit of the Auditor-General's role to companies that are controlled by the state so that the circumstance does not arise as it did in the past where the Auditor-General was not able to audit the State Bank or Tricontinental and the Auditor-General has overall coverage.

Finally, Mr Talbot believes the Auditor-General ought to be appointed by the Parliament and not by the executive. That is something the opposition has supported strongly. However, notwithstanding the fact that the Auditor-General has been made an officer of the Parliament, the Speaker and the President will not be given the power to appoint the Auditor-General. The next Auditor-General will be appointed by one man — Premier Jeff Kennett. He will appoint whomever he wants, and we are likely to get the same calibre of biased individuals that we got for the conduct of the Maddock committee inquiry — people who have conflicts of interest in their own right. Report no. 3 again supports an independent Auditor-General. It says the present Auditor-General has been doing his job well, that he is efficient, effective and competitive, and that he is comparable to Auditors-General from around the country and the world.

Many people have come out in support of the Auditor-General — unfortunately to no avail, it appears, because this Premier and this government have not taken notice.

I have already mentioned the all-party parliamentary committee on public accounts of the House of Representatives. It states in a letter dated 23 September 1996:

> This committee believes there should be no external or organisational impairment to restrict the Auditor-General in discharging his or her audit functions.

It wrote to governments requesting that a suitable government representative appear before it to explain why the Auditor-General should be included in the national competition policy review and to request the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to seek and provide independent advice in relation to whether the current review is ultra vires to the relevant competition policy legislation.

In addition, the executive director of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants attacked the proposed changes in a media release on 21 November 1996, in which he declared:

> Any proposals to interfere with the independence of the Auditor-General should set alarm bells ringing amongst the wider population because an independent auditor is one of the pillars of a democratic society and

> one of the very few ways of ensuring proper accountability.

The society has maintained that position. It has tried to engage the government in debate. It has made propositions to the government, some of which the government took on board. However, notwithstanding the fact that the government tried to claim that the society supported the bill, the society has made it clear that its fundamental concern about removing the Auditor-General from control of Audit Victoria and therefore from the capacity to conduct audits in his own right has not been addressed, and as a consequence the society cannot support the bill.

The New South Wales Auditor-General, Tony Harris, has also supported the Victorian Auditor-General, citing the Fitzgerald and WA Inc. royal commissions into corruption, both of which emphasised the importance of having an independent Auditor-General. They listed as one of the most important things the need to have an Auditor-General who was not only independent in name but also had the capacity to examine corruption in detail. Unfortunately, this bill removes that capacity from the current Victorian Auditor-General, and for that reason it ought not be supported by members of this house.

In November 1996 Mr Peter Costello announced his intention of enhancing the independence of the federal Auditor-General. The President of the Law Institute of Victoria, James Syme, attacked the proposals, arguing that the changes completely misconceived the role of the Auditor-General. The Honourable Graeme Weideman, who chaired the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee between 1992 and 1996, said it was vital that the Auditor-General maintained total freedom. He said:

> I cannot overstate the great importance placed by the committee and myself on ensuring the continuation of an independent and strong office of the Auditor-General.

Mr Weideman cited the 1995 independent review into the office of the Auditor-General, which I have quoted from, as proving that the office ran effectively, economically and efficiently. Mr Baragwanath's immediate predecessor, Richard Humphry, who is now the managing director of the Australian Stock Exchange, has been reported in various articles, particularly one published in the *Sunday Age* of 24 November 1996, as defending the need for an independent Auditor-General.

A number of prominent Victorians have stood up for the Auditor-General in various articles published in the newspapers. They include Andrew Smith, the executive director of the National Institute of Accountants; Stephen Harrison, the executive director of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia; and Professor Bill Russell, the director of the Monash University Graduate School of Government — just to name a few. We have also read editorial after editorial on the matter in the *Herald Sun*, the *Age* and the *Australian* newspapers.

In its editorial of 22 November 1996, the *Age* expressed its contempt for the government's proposed changes, declaring it to be a seditious idea that should go no further. Another article in the *Age* published a week later on 29 November says:

> Mr Baragwanath is just the sort of troublesome priest that an autocratic government might be pleased to be rid of. And one that the public desperately needs.

People from all walks of life have come out to defend the Auditor-General. Survey after survey has shown that the majority of Victorians do not agree with or support the changes. That has not stopped one man from continuing to exert his will — in a way reminiscent of totalitarian dictators.

Despite all the criticism and concern, the review panel gave the Premier what he asked of it. Its findings, which were published in April 1997, surprised absolutely no-one. The panel recommended a model that in every sense delivered the blows to the Auditor-General's independence the Premier had asked it to deliver. The model was designed to strip the Auditor-General of his powers, staff and resources. The role of the Auditor-General was to become symbolic: he would be forced to wander Parliament, unable to properly audit the government, looking for something to do.

Hon. Bill Forwood interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is not a quote. The review panel delivered what the Premier wanted — and no wonder, because he hand-picked them. Not even the Chairman of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee was consulted or told who they were. The panel recommended that the role of the Auditor-General be limited to signing off the audits that were conducted by his former department, which was to become known as Audit Victoria. It recommended that he lose access to that body and its resources altogether.

This is part of the sad litany of events that has led to the erosion of democracy in this state over the past five years. There is a history of continual hypocrisy and backflip after backflip. As I have said, in 1990 the speeches on the Audit Bill by the present Minister for Finance, Mr Hallam, the present Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, Mr Birrell, and the present Secretary to the Cabinet, Mrs Varty, could have been made by members of today's opposition. Anyone on this side of the house could have given Mrs Varty's speech or Mr Hallam's speech. They both defended the Auditor-General and argued passionately not just for his retention but for the retention of his powers — and Mrs Varty even argued for an increase in his resources.

Hon. Pat Power — What did Rosemary say?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mrs Varty said — —

Hon. R. I. Knowles interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — She is probably not interested in what she said back in 1990, and Mr Hallam will not remember what he said then, either. However, both of them made the sorts of points that will be made by members on this side of the house today.

Hon. Pat Power — What, supporting the Auditor-General?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Absolutely supporting the Auditor-General. As I said, Mrs Varty not only supported him but argued for an increase in his resources. Now Mrs Varty is about to vote for a bill that will savagely cut his resources.

It is no wonder the government has attempted to silence the critic. The Premier has become increasingly intolerant of his independent stance and his criticisms of the government's performance. He has decided the Auditor-General is the next cab off the rank after the former Director of Public Prosecutions, the former Commissioner for Equal Opportunity and the former judges of the Accident Compensation Tribunal, as well as a host of others who have been nobbled over the past five years.

The Auditor-General is the big-ticket item. In report after report he has uncovered a growing list of the Kennett government's failures, mismanagement and incompetence. That is the reason why the Auditor-General is being nobbled: he is too efficient and too effective, and he uncovers things. During the past few years the Auditor-General has found that, for example, the government's contracting out of ambulance services:

> ... at best involved serious mismanagement, at worst constituted corrupt activity.

Hon. Pat Power — No wonder they want to shut him up.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The Auditor-General is doing his job as he should. In his own words, he is 'uncovering mismanagement and corrupt activity'. Why wouldn't a government such as this want to silence such a critic?

In his contribution to the 1990 debate on the Audit Bill Mr Birrell said that Premiers did not like Auditors-General and that they were all subject to criticism — and he agrees with that even today. The difference is that the former Premier, John Cain, Jr, introduced legislation that strengthened the role of the Auditor-General. That legislation, which was passed by both houses, gave the Auditor-General the power to conduct performance audits. The opposition will outline a range of ways in which the Auditor-General has criticised the government, after question time.

Debate interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Geelong Hospital: hotel accommodation

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — I refer to the Minister for Health the announcement by Geelong Hospital CEO Stan Capp that public maternity patients in that hospital will be transferred to a hotel shortly after giving birth. I ask the minister whether he supports the use of hotel accommodation for hospital care, given that it does not have oxygen or emergency facilities and specialists are not on site.

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — Members familiar with the Geelong Hospital will be aware that the government is involved with the hospital management in a major redevelopment of the hospital, including the establishment of new obstetric services, which will not be completed until about October next year.

Part of the major redevelopment is the establishment of a private hospital in what was formerly Baxter House, and that development is proceeding. It was believed that both obstetric and palliative care services could continue to be provided from the site while the redevelopment continued. However, concern has been raised about the level of noise associated with the redevelopment. The hospital has therefore looked at how that problem can be alleviated and has reached the conclusion that the best way of providing maximum patient comfort as well as high quality services is to enter into an agreement with a hotel which, I think, is the Ambassador.

Hon. M. M. Gould — So it is okay?

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — The issue is that patients have welcomed the development.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — They have no choice!

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — They do have choices, and they have chosen to have high-class care in pleasant surroundings where they will be cared for by hospital staff, including doctors and nurses. Therefore the high standard of care they have previously experienced will continue to be provided while even better facilities are established in the longer term.

In addition, palliative care patients will be cared for in the Chesterfield Private Nursing Home so that those with terminal conditions can — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — It is not booking into the nearest hotel. Women will be delivering their babies in hospital. We are talking about palliative care and maintaining a high quality of care for those patients. As I said, that is a short-term development by the hospital overwhelmingly welcomed by patients as delivering a much better level of care than would otherwise be available.

Melbourne Airport: international flights

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON (Koonung) — In view of the economic benefits to Victoria of international flights coming directly to Melbourne will the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology advise the house of the outcome of the Victorian government's latest efforts to attract more international flights to Melbourne Airport?

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) — I am very pleased to outline the latest statistics that have been put together on international flights into Tullamarine airport. An additional 51 scheduled international air services arrive in Melbourne every week in comparison to the airport traffic figures of five years ago, which means the equivalent of an additional 40 Boeing 747s arrive in Melbourne each week, giving a significant boost to the Victorian economy.

We are witnessing the greatest increase in direct flights and international operating capacity to Tullamarine airport in its history. Obviously we are delighted with that. Five new carriers have begun service to Melbourne, including Emirates Airlines, Vietnam Airlines, Merpati Nusantara from Indonesia, Mauritius Air and Eva Air from Taiwan. I am pleased to advise that next year those services will be increased when Egypt Air begins a new service between Cairo and Melbourne, initially planned on a twice-weekly basis.

The new flights to Melbourne are certainly a positive result of efforts to ensure that more traffic comes into Melbourne Airport. I give particular praise to APAC, the new owner of Tullamarine airport, for having put competitive airport pricing mechanisms in place to ensure that Melbourne gets extra flights.

Importantly, there has also been an increase over the past five years in the number of services to Melbourne by existing carriers, including Malaysian Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Gulf Air, Lauda Air, Philippine Airlines, Air China and Qantas. This means that Victoria is seeing the greatest increase in the number of direct flights to the airport, and for the first time since Sir John Gorton opened Tullamarine airport in the early 1970s Melbourne has the standard of international airport it deserves and the number of direct flights it has long deserved.

Another sign of the clear confidence shown in Victoria over the past year has been the decision of carriers to introduce into Melbourne the new wide-bodied Boeing 777s and Airbus A340s. They have been introduced because of the increase in demand, which has boosted capacity for both tourist flights and air freight.

The state government is currently negotiating to get more direct flights and is focusing particularly on closer links with the Republic of Korea, which historically has always been poorly linked with the Melbourne marketplace.

The increase in flights is certainly good news for Victorians. It means more investment and employment and improved market access, especially for agricultural produce. Most importantly, it will raise the international profile of Melbourne in the Asia-Pacific business region. It establishes once again Melbourne's credentials as an international destination, and it is the direct flights that make that a reality.

Workcover: publications

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I ask the Minister responsible for Workcover whether anyone in his department or in the Victorian Workcover Authority assisted in the production of the Workcover pamphlet entitled *What Workcover changes mean to you and your family* authorised by Peter Poggioli and distributed to every household in the Mitcham electorate. I further ask the minister whether he condones the use by the Liberal Party of Workcover political propaganda in the pamphlet without once referring to the Liberal Party in an attempt to deceive Mitcham voters.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The first part of the question is in order.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — My response to Mr Theophanous is: so far as I am aware, absolutely not.

Retail tenancies: ministerial conference

Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern) — I direct the attention of the Minister for Small Business to the matter of retail tenancies. I understand that on Friday the minister attended a meeting of commonwealth, state and territory ministers to discuss that issue and that the meeting was productive. Will the minister outline to the house the outcome of the deliberations?

Hon. LOUISE ASHER (Minister for Small Business) — On Friday a range of commonwealth and state and territory ministers and parliamentary secretaries met to discuss retail tenancies. For the first time agreement was reached regarding a series of minimum standards to be abided by in all jurisdictions. Even the New South Wales Labor Party agreed to those minimum standards. The commonwealth had established benchmark principles and was seeking agreement from all states and territories on those principles.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. LOUISE ASHER — Mr Theophanous says it is to bring the rest of us up to standard. My previous announcement regarding retail tenancies referred to the Retail Tenancies Reform Bill, which covers such areas as dispute settlement, compensation and the like.

It will interest Mr Theophanous to learn that on the same day the government made its announcements regarding extensive retail tenancies reforms I received a letter from the so-called shadow minister for this portfolio, the honourable member for Yan Yean in another place. I was surprised to receive it because it is the first letter he has written to me since he was appointed to a shadow ministry position.

Interjections from gallery.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I suggest the people in the gallery desist from that activity. They should either put the banner away or hand it over.

Hon. LOUISE ASHER — The honourable member for Yan Yean wrote to me on the day I made my announcement regarding extensive retail tenancies reform.

Interjections from gallery.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I request that the banner be handed over. Visitors to the gallery are here on the invitation of the Parliament. If they behave according to the rules they can stay.

Hon. LOUISE ASHER — I was surprised to receive this letter, not only because it was the first letter the honourable member for Yan Yean had written to me but more importantly because he had not shown a great deal of interest in residential tenancies during his period as the relevant shadow minister. In fact, I am told that when a journalist rang him regarding his comments on the fair trading report, which is probably the most significant report on retail tenancies, he said he had been far too busy to read it. That was three months after the report was issued!

In his letter to me the honourable member for Yan Yean said he was most upset that the government had not drafted an appropriate bill and that it should not take too much effort to do so. He said he already had a private member's bill which included virtually all the things the government claimed to want to include in its bill and more. He went on to say, 'Please feel free to plagiarise it'.

In the context of the commonwealth, states and territories meeting on Friday, I am very sorry to advise the house that the ALP bill the honourable member for Yan Yean advised me I was free to plagiarise is seriously deficient, as one would expect, because it meets only five of the eight commonwealth benchmarks. The ALP has managed to underperform every other state government on the issue of retail tenancies. Firstly, the ALP bill is band-aid legislation; it is not a new bill. It includes limited compensation mechanisms, which the government bill far exceeds. Its dispute-settling provisions are narrow and in some circumstances would require enforcement in the courts, something from which the government desires to deviate. Most importantly, the ALP bill does not provide for market rents to ever go down, which is a serious deficiency. It does not address urgent repairs, nor areas such as disruption to small business trade.

The government will not impose the ALP bill on small business. It is exactly what I would have expected from the honourable member for Yan Yean, but I find it appalling that the shadow cabinet has endorsed this seriously deficient bill.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. LOUISE ASHER — You agreed with the bill and shadow cabinet agreed with the bill. It would create the worst possible position anywhere in Australia. It is interesting that the opposition's first stated policy position, its first draft bill, is deficient by commonwealth standards and would create the worst position in Australia. It is a betrayal of the small business community. I am happy to advise that the government will not be plagiarising the ALP bill because, so far as small business tenants are concerned it will move forwards, not backwards.

Workcover: common-law access

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I refer the minister responsible for Workcover to the government's appalling decision to abolish the common-law rights of workers injured in road accidents. How does the minister justify the fact that in the event of a collision between two interstate buses, one driven by a Victorian and one driven by a Queenslander, the Queensland driver will have full common-law rights, as will the passengers of both buses, and the only person without any such rights will be the Victorian bus driver?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The question makes a whole range of assumptions regarding the passengers.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Is it true or not?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Let me go back one step and make the reverse point, which I know you understand, Mr Theophanous — that is, that the Victorian driver would be the only one who did not have to establish negligence with respect to the accident. You are actually saying that everybody else — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Rubbish. It is a lie.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — You are actually saying that you acknowledge everyone else on the bus — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You don't like the workers here, do you?

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Mr Theophanous is acknowledging that he understands that everyone on the bus apart from the Victorian driver would have to establish a case of negligence before they could mount any claims.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — It is not true.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It is true — and that, I suggest, should be a cause for celebration.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I should rest my case, but I cannot help but correct the honourable member: the passengers and the other driver would be entitled to common-law claims if they could establish negligence. That is what Mr Theophanous is demonstrating, more than anything else — that is, he understands the difference. He understands that in this case, the Victorian driver would be the only person on the bus who would not be required to establish negligence. Therefore, he would have the advantage of knowing he would be entitled to statutory benefits without having to establish negligence. I think that puts him ahead of the rest of the people on the bus.

Blood-borne viruses

Hon. R. A. BEST (North Western) — Will the Minister for Health advise the house of recent

initiatives to improve access to information regarding blood-borne viruses, including HIV/AIDS?

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — I am pleased to advise the house of the establishment of the information access centre at the Alfred Hospital. Honourable members who are familiar with the former Fairfield Hospital and its operations will be aware of the Vivian Bullwinkle Resource Centre, which played a very important role in developing an AIDS strategy and providing information about investigations into HIV/AIDS, particularly in the early days.

Following the closure of Fairfield and the relocation of most of the HIV/AIDS services to the Alfred, the inner and eastern health care networks agreed to establish the information access centre. The information provided is much more comprehensive than the information previously provided at the Alfred. It covers not only HIV/AIDS but other blood-borne diseases, including hepatitis C and sexually transmitted diseases.

The centre has established an Internet home page so that the available information can be much more readily accessed. The concept is to help people who have blood-borne diseases to access accurate information that will help them manage their own health as well as acquaint them with the wide range of treatment and support services available to them.

The centre also has an important role to play in educating health care workers, education workers and others about issues involved in blood-borne diseases. I have previously explained to the house that given the threat of a significantly increased incidence of hepatitis C the government is faced with a very significant challenge in making an effort comparable to the effort conducted a few years ago in containing the HIV/AIDS epidemic. A similar commitment is needed to tackle hepatitis C. The establishment of the information access centre is a small but important component of helping to achieve a much broader understanding of the diseases in the community.

Hon. B. T. Pullen — A pitiful budget is applied to dealing with that issue.

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — I think the issue is much more significant — it is about getting the focus on the issue. It is not just a matter of budget, it is a matter of getting a stronger public — —

Hon. B. T. Pullen — Four million dollars nationally — it's a disgrace!

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — The commonwealth government has indicated its desire to broaden the funding for HIV/AIDS services because many of the strategies that will reduce the risk of hepatitis C are consistent with the strategy that was put in place to contain HIV/AIDS. All of the advice to government is to head down that path. The reference to the ministerial advisory committee has been broadened to cover all blood-borne diseases, and people with expertise in that area have been added to it. I am confident that we are developing the framework.

The one difference between hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS is in articulating the challenge and the need for a comprehensive strategy. It is hard to get the same advocacy for hepatitis C as was evident in the HIV/AIDS strategy.

Questions interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT — Order! Before calling the next question, I acknowledge the presence in the lower gallery of guests of the honourable member for Malvern in the other place. Mr Harold Cecil Stiffe, a veteran of the First World War, was a member of the Royal Navy and served on HMS *Obdurate*. He is accompanied by his wife, Mrs Stiffe, who served in the Second World War as part of 2 Lines of Communication Signals Regiment and was seconded to the Far Eastern Liaison Office.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Questions resumed.

Workcover: administration costs

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — I refer the Minister for Finance to the outsourcing of the Victorian Workcover Authority's information systems in December 1993 and to the fact that the authority has subsequently re-employed more than 40 staff to duplicate the outsourcing service at an ongoing cost of $2.5 million. Will the minister now admit that this once again demonstrates gross mismanagement by the Victorian Workcover Authority, which has resulted in a blowout of administrative costs to $183 million?

Interjections from gallery.

The PRESIDENT — Order! This house operates on the basis that the galleries are always open to the public. People in the gallery may not take part in debate or in any way intimidate members of the house. I have been tolerant to date. Visitors in the upper gallery in particular are on notice that if there are any more interjections I will clear the gallery.

Interjections from gallery.

The PRESIDENT — Order! You are on your final notice. Any more interjections and I will have the gallery cleared.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I do not accept the premise on which the question was based. Miss Gould was effectively reinforcing the fact that the Victorian Workcover Authority was leading the pack on administrative reform. I do not dispute her facts, that back in December 1993 it was among the first of the agencies to embrace the concept of outsourcing and gained enormous advantage as a result of doing so.

I have responded to similar implications and innuendo in the past. I simply say to the honourable member that the best thing she could do would be to read the annual report. If she is not satisfied with that she should refer to the report by Arthur Andersen, which was directed to look at precisely the issue she brings to the house — namely, the administrative efficiency of the Victorian Workcover Authority. The conclusion is very clear: by any measure the Victorian Workcover Authority is certainly administratively efficient.

I say by way of an aside, given the keenness of the Leader of the Opposition to quote the Auditor-General, that in its confirmation of the efficiency of the Victorian Workcover Authority, Arthur Andersen referred to something like 13 efficiency audits undertaken by the Auditor-General since 1992.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That's not true — financial audits.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I am pleased to be corrected. It refers to 13 financial audits undertaken by the Auditor-General, whom Mr Theophanous is delighted to hold up as the answer to every issue in this context. That does not change the conclusion drawn by Arthur Andersen that the Victorian Workcover Authority is a very efficient organisation. I might say as a further aside that if the honourable member is still not convinced he should look at the cost of administration of the previous system and take in the comparison there, because on that basis the Victorian Workcover Authority is extraordinarily efficient. It is running at something like about half the cost incurred under the previous system.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — We spent less on lawyers than you did. That is how inefficient you are!

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — The last thing that concerns me is for the Auditor-General to conduct an audit of the Victorian Workcover Authority. Based upon the last 13 audits he has done, I have no doubt that the authority will be given a very big tick. I look forward to that audit in the normal course of events.

Eastern Freeway: extension

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — Will the Minister for Roads and Ports inform the house of the benefits to Victorians from the opening of the Eastern Freeway extension from Doncaster Road to Springvale Road, which took place on Sunday?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Minister for Roads and Ports) — I thank Mr Forwood for his question and place on the record the support and input from local members of Parliament, who have shown a great deal of interest in the project, as have the people from the eastern suburbs. On Sunday the Premier opened the $250 million extension of the Eastern Freeway from Doncaster Road to Springvale Road. This milestone creates a most important freeway link for Melbourne and fulfils a 1992 election commitment by the government.

Interjections from gallery.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I ask that the upper gallery be cleared.

Persons escorted from gallery.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — In 1992 the coalition government made a commitment to extend the Eastern Freeway from Doncaster Road to Springvale Road, and it has fulfilled that commitment. The people of the eastern suburbs can be encouraged by the infrastructure investment the government has made. Page 30 of the Australian Labor Party 1988 transport policy states that:

[It will] undertake the following major projects ... commence the eastern arterial to Springvale Road and Ringwood Bypass.

That demonstrates that the Labor Party once again intended building an arterial road with traffic lights. Not only did it fail to deliver its commitment, but on two occasions it tried to prevent the extension going ahead. This government's project is a real success story that integrates not only road infrastructure for motorists but also paths for cyclists and pedestrians. It has an integrated park-and-ride facility with 350 spaces to accommodate cars, buses and taxis as well as facilities for cyclists. The 7-kilometre extension provides — —

Hon. Pat Power — How much did it cost per metre?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — The project cost $250 million overall. The extension will carry 90 000 vehicles a day. The ALP wanted to introduce tolls on the freeway. That was clearly demonstrated in the other place by the honourable member for Dandenong North, Mrs Wilson, when she asked, 'Why aren't they paying tolls?'. Not only did the ALP not want to build the extension and try to scuttle it; it also wanted to introduce tolls!

The extension will reduce travelling time by about 10 minutes and halve traffic on Doncaster Road, which currently carries 60 000 cars a day. The freeway will dramatically reduce the number of cars travelling on arterial roads and residential streets.

Hon. Pat Power interjected.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — You are getting worse than Theo, and that is a real credit to you! I was going to say 'than Monica', but that is really something else! Those two examples show the government's commitment to road infrastructure.

Eastern Freeway: noise levels

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — Can the Minister for Roads and Ports assure residents that the noise from the Eastern Freeway, including the extension and its overpasses when measured outside bedroom windows will not exceed World Health Organisation standards?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Minister for Roads and Ports) — Mr Power has already had one serve about noise levels. I should have thought he would have understood it the first time around.

Hon. Pat Power interjected.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — Obviously I know a lot more about this issue than you know! There are no accepted World Health Organisation standards, and there never have been.

Hon. Pat Power — No, exempted!

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — You got it right. There are no exempted standards.

Hon. Pat Power interjected.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — You tried before and you failed. I don't know why you don't give up! The Victorian standard of 63dB(A) on the L10 scale far exceeds the standards throughout the rest of Australia. Victoria has the best standards in Australia and is equal to or better than most countries, including England and the United States of America.

I assure Mr Power that a gentleman whose second-floor bedroom window is 150 metres from the freeway telephoned today — obviously he is not the same person who contacted Mr Power — to say that he has heard no noise whatsoever, although he was listening for it. He went outside and he even went to his upstairs bedroom window. I assure honourable members that Victoria meets the standard 63dB(A) on the L10 scale, which is a superior noise standard and far exceeds standards in other states. I assure local residents that the government continues to monitor noise along the freeway.

Following a representation by the same person who spoke to Mr Power about the crossover roads and associated noise, the government has introduced a noise attenuation policy. Noise barriers have been constructed to ensure people are not exposed to noises any higher than the 63dB(A) on the L10 scale. Clearly, the government has met world best practice in respect to noise attenuation, and Mr Power will be judged by his inability to understand noise issues.

Government procurement and contracting services

Hon. B. C. BOARDMAN (Chelsea) — Recently a conference on the vital issue of government purchasing was held in Melbourne. I ask the Minister for Finance to give the house some background to that conference, including its purpose, aims and outcomes.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I thank Mr Boardman for his question and for his continuing interest in developing efficiencies across the public sector. The meeting to which he referred was organised by the Victorian Government Purchasing Board to launch a new and exciting independent training and research organisation, the Procurement and Contracting Centre for Education and Research (PACCER).

Before an audience of 200 senior purchasing executives representing all Australian states, the commonwealth and Papua New Guinea, I had the pleasure of co-launching PACCER with the Western Australian Minister for Works and Services, the Honourable Michael Board. I was delighted that Michael Board was able to join me for that occasion because he is the chair of the Australian Procurement and Construction Ministerial Council, a federal body of responsible ministers, which has acknowledged the PACCER development as nationally significant.

The nature of purchasing has become more complex as governments have moved to outsource more services to the private sector. It is therefore important to lift the skills of staff to best manage this change. PACCER will broker procurement training and related courses to meet user demand and will operate at world best practice to ensure that we get the greatest possible skills improvement. The trend to increase outsourcing to the private sector will also be enhanced by the establishment of PACCER. More and more interest is being shown by leaders across the private sector. Research presented at the conference showed that about two-thirds of employers prefer such training to be undertaken outside their organisations. After an extensive process seeking expressions of interest, the Victorian Government Purchasing Board will outsource its own procurement training requirements to PACCER for three years. I say with pride that the commonwealth government also supports the PACCER initiative and has indicated an interest in purchasing some of its services from the same source, as have major private employers.

PACCER will broker approved courses from major established providers. RMIT, Monash and Deakin universities have developed a suite of courses designed to meet PACCER requirements. All courses will be competency based and will be able to be used as credits towards established post-secondary courses throughout Australia. The courses will be offered in a range of delivery modes to suit the requirements of students and employers. Initially PACCER will be co-located with Open Learning Australia at 30 Collins Street, Melbourne. With the effects of the Hilmer competition reforms increasingly beginning to bite, we expect PACCER to generate even greater interest. I am proud that again Victoria has taken the lead in an important area of public sector reform.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — By leave, I move:

> That so much of the standing orders as require answers to questions on notice to be delivered verbally in the house be suspended for the sitting of the Council this day and that the answers enumerated be incorporated in *Hansard*.

I have answers to questions on notice 2514, 2515, 2529, 2531, 2532, 2533 and 2631.

Motion agreed to.

AUDIT (AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The Premier has become increasingly intolerant of the Auditor-General because of the reports he has brought down criticising the government. By way of example I cite the report into the contracting out of ambulance services in which the Auditor-General identified, at best, serious mismanagement and, at worst, corrupt activity.

The Auditor-General is concerned with, among other things, uncovering corruption and mismanagement. He criticised the government's failure to demand up to $174 million more from Crown Casino for an additional 150 gaming tables. When that report was introduced into Parliament I well recall how the Minister for Gaming sought to defend the indefensible: The Auditor-General identified that Crown Casino had been given a free kick to the tune of $174 million by being allowed to have 150 gaming tables above and beyond its quota. Again, there was criticism of the government — and good auditing!

Hon. R. M. Hallam interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The minister laughs either because he does not like it or is critical of the government's administration of the Community Support Fund. I do not intend to refer in detail to all of the Auditor-General's reports, but I will cite the ones that identify government mismanagement and waste.

The report on the activities of Victorian rural ambulance services identifies, among other things, that without performance benchmarks the community is not in a position to assess the standard it can expect of its ambulance services. The report identifies mismanagement and shortfalls in the operation of Victoria's rural ambulances. I have already indicated that the Auditor-General identified mismanagement — if not corrupt practices — in the Metropolitan Ambulance Service.

In his report the Auditor-General said:

> Despite gradual improved performance by Intergraph, it has not been able to comply with performance measures specified by the service requiring it to dispatch 90 per cent of emergency vehicles within 150 seconds.

The report continues:

> There was a high incidence, on average almost 6 per cent, of all emergency cases during the period December 1996 to April 1997, of Intergraph dispatchers unable to locate nearby available ambulances to attend emergencies.

That is criticism of government activity by the Auditor-General in the best traditions of public accountability. A report on the Metropolitan Ambulance Service refers to:

> ... appointment without tender of a private company which, according to advice received from the service's administrator, had previous commercial associations with Mr Firman.

Again, the Auditor-General was reporting on the failure to have proper contractual controls in place. The Auditor-General's report of April 1997 entitled *Major civic projects: Work in progress* states:

> The absence of an audit trail prevented an assessment of how certain projects included in the $980 million were ranked ahead of others and whether the Treasurer's recommendations to the government in relation to new capital works reflected statewide funding criteria.

The report further states:

> Three of the four projects examined were not subject to a feasibility study demonstrating that benefits would exceed the costs involved.

That report is again in the great tradition of the Auditor-General — finding out what is wrong and reporting on it to this place. A report of December 1996 entitled *Vocational education and training: a client perspective* states:

> Only a few institutes had formally obtained the views of employers on an institute-wide basis regarding their satisfaction with training provided to students.

The report also states:

> A national survey designed to assess student satisfaction with support services and amenities revealed a high level of dissatisfaction.

In a report of November 1996 entitled *Building Better Cities: a joint government approach to urban development* the Auditor-General again reported extensively on what had gone wrong. The report states:

> Under the program, there has been significant progress towards the state government's aim of providing community care facilities for psychiatric and intellectual disability clients previously located within large institutions in the Plenty Road area. However, little emphasis has been directed, to date, to the important aspect of measuring qualitative outcomes such as the impact of deinstitutionalisation on the quality of life and care of clients.

I am sure the Minister for Health is very interested in that in relation to psychiatric services. A report of October 1996 entitled *Timeliness of service delivery: A customer's right* states:

> Between October 1994 and September 1995 Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) was not as efficient as its counterparts in other states and territories, with approximately half processing a substantially higher rate of claims either on the same day or within five days of application.

A report of June 1996 entitled *Arts Victoria and the Arts 21 strategy: Maintaining the State for the Arts* states:

> There is a need for a more structured approach by Arts Victoria to the monitoring of funded non-government organisations, including the progress made by such

> organisations towards achievement of outcomes under Arts 21.

That was constructive criticism. A report of May 1996 entitled *The Community Support Fund: A significant community asset* states:

> It was only from early 1995, around two and a half years after the commencement of gaming operations in the state, that the direction of research into the social impact of gambling began to equate with the major significance placed on such research by the legislation.

Finally, a report of March 1996 entitled *Marketing government services: Are you being served?* is critical, stating:

> Only 44 per cent of organisations surveyed by audit had developed some form of marketing strategy.

> In some cases, marketing activities examined were not clearly linked to key government policies or organisational objectives.

I would have thought the government would have been pleased to have found out some of these problems. The report continues:

> Examples of deficiencies in accountability procedures included a lack of documentation to support key decisions and the absence of required approvals.

I could spend hours going through the recommendations of the Auditor-General in all the special reports he has put before Parliament, which have allowed the government to operate more effectively and efficiently. Each of the reports provides not only criticism of and insight into what is going on in and what is wrong with the management of the state but also constructive proposals for rectifying the problems.

The Auditor-General reports on the government's annual financial statement each year and he has been able to identify deficiencies. As an example, the 1995–96 report states:

> While the development of the Northcote bus depot was completed in June 1990 at a cost of $12.5 million, the total proceeds from its sale only amounted to $2.7 million.

It is important that those details be put on the record. The report continues:

> The unfunded liabilities of public sector superannuation funds at 30 June 1996 totalled $15.6 billion, representing an increase of $506 million since the previous year.

Time and time the government has said what it has done for superannuation in Victoria, yet it was the Auditor-General who found out those things and said, 'Hang on a minute, you have actually blown out superannuation by $500 million in one year'. He reported to Parliament so that members would know exactly what was going on with the state finances.

The Auditor-General's report on the financial statements for 1996–97 states:

> Inefficiencies in the administration of motor vehicle stamp duty identified by audit in 1991 continue to exist.

The report also states:

> A competitive process was not established for the disposal of the state's remaining interest in HRL Ltd as, according to SECV management, the disposal was complicated by the pre-emptive rights to the shares of other shareholders, which made it difficult to sell the shares to parties other than the company or a buyer approved by the other shareholders.

Again, the Auditor-General identified improper processes. They are rife throughout the public sector, including in bodies as far abroad as Gippsland Water, in respect of which the Auditor-General's report states:

> Serious deficiencies were identified in the processes established for the letting of contracts in relation to the engagement of external service providers.

> The failure to specify clear measurable deliverables within certain contracts with external service providers ...

The Auditor-General identifies problems in state administration and public auditing, particularly in respect of ministerial portfolios. The 1996 report on ministerial portfolios contains seven pages of findings that identify things that have gone wrong. In referring to the City Link project, the Auditor-General said:

> Evidence was not produced to audit in the form of a detailed model, comparing project costings on the basis of private sector financing versus government borrowings ... The obligations of the state in relation to

> the City Link project are not sufficient to constitute, or support the recognition of, the financing of the project as a debt of the state.

That is another example of the Auditor-General informing members of Parliament — and criticising the government. Referring to the Urban Land Authority, he said:

> Due to the disappointing level of sales associated with a joint venture at the Lynbrook Estate, the project incurred a deficit in the 1994–95 financial year of $284 000 ...

So from the smallest amounts to the largest amounts, the Auditor-General identifies waste and deficiencies. His audit of the Department of Justice found that at 30 June 1995:

> ... outstanding fines and costs totalling $289.1 million was payable to the state. Of this amount, $85.1 million has been written off as bad debts and the collection of $116.9 million is regarded as doubtful.

They are important matters for members of Parliament and the public to know about. The Department of Premier and Cabinet does not like to be criticised by the Auditor-General. However, in his 1996 report he says:

> Payments of $70 581 were made to a former senior public servant in excess of contract entitlements ... In my view, the provision of a gift valued at $9500 to a senior public servant upon departure from the Victorian public service was extravagant.

That is criticism of the Premier. No wonder the Auditor-General has to be nobbled; no wonder he has to be got rid of. In his 1996 report he identified dead rent of $12 million in the Department of Treasury and Finance. On and on the 1996 report went, identifying waste and mismanagement.

The same is true of the 1997 report on ministerial portfolios, in which we find more revelations. The Auditor-General had this to say about the so-called voluntary contributions that schools are supposed to levy:

> Despite the voluntary nature of these contributions, some schools, among other things, issued monthly invoices to parents until payment was made.

Again, that is important to know, and it is something that needs to be identified. The Auditor-General found:

> ... that 10 per cent of schools did not have a member on the council with an appropriate finance or business background.

He said this about the Department of Natural Resources and Environment:

> During the 1995–96 financial year, water loss due to inaccurate customer meters cost the retail water companies in excess of $10 million.

This is a beauty. In his report on the Department of Treasury and Finance, he found that the unfunded liability of the Local Authorities Superannuation Board:

> ... totalled $329.1 million at 30 June 1996, an increase of $111.5 million over the previous year.

That unfunded liability, which the government created, was identified and brought to the public's attention by the Auditor-General. About Workcover he says:

> While the Workcover scheme has remained fully funded, its funding level decreased from 102.9 per cent at 30 June 1995 to 100.6 per cent at 31 December 1996.

He had this to say about state government corporate cards:

> Almost 1000 corporate cards had not been cancelled for up to 12 months after respective public sector agencies had been sold or abolished, unnecessarily exposing the state to financial risks.

We know of one famous corporate card that was not cancelled. If the Premier's wife had followed the guidelines identified by the Auditor-General — or more precisely, if the Premier had followed the guidelines, because it was the Premier's responsibility — maybe there would not have been a problem.

The Auditor-General found that some of the $130 million the government spent on marketing and promotion was used for totally inappropriate party political advertising, but that has not stopped the government. He reported that the Leeds Media contract was awarded after a flawed and inappropriate tender process. He released a damning report on the government's administration of the child protection system. The Auditor-General made a report which was critical of the administration of the Children's Court but which the

government would not allow to be tabled in Parliament.

He reported on state education, criticising the government's handling of school amalgamations. He found that the government had failed to follow its own guidelines in allocating funds for capital works and had given questionable priority to a number of projects over more needy ones. The Auditor-General is worth supporting he is somebody who keeps raising important issues and reporting on matters of government administration in the public interest.

The Premier hated the Auditor-General bringing up his government's problems with mismanagement, waste and inefficiency time and again. Mr Kennett asked himself, 'What is wrong with him? Why does he keep doing his job? How can we stop him?'. He decided the answer was to change the Audit Act, to use any excuse and whatever devious means he could to nobble him.

Almost every community organisation in Victoria, including the state council of the Liberal Party, has rejected the Kennett government's changes. Despite that, the Premier has arrogantly pushed into Parliament reforms that privatise the office of the Auditor-General. Because they take away the Auditor-General's operational control over his office, they make his position simply symbolic.

The Premier has allowed Parliament only two weeks to debate the legislation, which will be passed this week, when there is no urgency for it to be passed. It is being pushed through despite the attempts of the Liberal member for Frankston East in another place to move amendments in the party room. I do not know whether Mr Forwood supported him, although he probably did not.

Of course, the former member for Mitcham, Roger Pescott, resigned from Parliament because of this legislation. After his resignation, Mr Pescott sent an open letter to the Premier, saying:

> In reality you have hijacked the coalition from many of the enduring principles on which it was founded — and because you do not encourage discussion you are not always getting sound advice. How amazed would the community be to learn that the large majority of members in the Liberal Party room had not seen the draft legislation on the Auditor-General when they approved it? I was unable to get a copy myself until fully three days later, which was a day after the press reported something not even discussed in the party room, viz that Audit Victoria was to be privatised.

That shows the contempt with which this Premier treats his own government backbenchers. It is a contempt born of arrogance and a notion that he was born to rule. Mr Pescott went on to say:

> The auditor's office needs power to make the independent role effective — not just power to decide in consultation with a government-dominated parliamentary committee, but power to act without the barrage of hurdles the government will be able to put in the way before an audit even starts.
>
> We have a duty to future generations not only to retain but enhance the transparent auditing of government excesses. No-one in government has even attempted to point out how the new audit system will be an improvement. No-one has said that the old system did not work ... As you know I have put trust in your word in the past. That is why I find resignation from Parliament the only effective protest I can make. Like many other Liberals, I wish there were another way.

Mr Pescott resigned from Parliament over this issue. In talking about the arrogance of the Premier he referred to the hijacking of the coalition and said these matters were not discussed in the party room and coalition members did not have access to the legislation before they approved it. After Mr Pescott's resignation and public comments there was a public hanging by his former colleagues in the Liberal Party. Under the protection of Parliament, the Treasurer got stuck into Mr Pescott and made some vicious remarks about his reasons for entering Parliament and his contributions to the Liberal Party. The Treasurer had never condemned Mr Pescott in the past, and he did so on this occasion for one reason only — Mr Pescott stood up to the Premier and said enough is enough.

The undermining of the Auditor-General places the Victorian democratic model under threat and puts it in a new category. The Westminster system has been built partially on the independence of the Auditor-General and on his or her ability to scrutinise the operation of the executive on behalf of the Parliament and the community. No state in Australia or anywhere else in the world that operates under the Westminster system has attacked this fundamental principle, which has existed in Victoria for more than 150 years. The fact that this is the only upper house in Australia where the conservative government has a majority makes this a dangerous cocktail. It means that the government and Parliament are in danger of becoming inefficient and ineffective and will not have access to the

proper information and the sorts of reports I have referred to during my contribution to this debate.

The Auditor-General wrote to members of Parliament on 17 November, saying in part:

> My reading of the bill currently before the Parliament clearly indicates to me that my freedom to independently audit the affairs of government on behalf of the Parliament and taxpayers will be seriously compromised ... In the second-reading speech, the Premier indicated that the Auditor-General will be able to 'undertake such further work as he sees fit'.

One of the amendments the opposition will move during the committee stage will seek to insert the words 'undertake such further work as he sees fit' to test whether the government is serious about allowing the Auditor-General to undertake whatever work he sees fit. I look forward to Mr Forwood's response to that amendment.

The Auditor-General further states:

> On 11 July 1997, I provided the Premier with suggested provisions which could be incorporated in the current legislation which would require the Auditor-General to apply contestability principles in consultation with the Parliament ...

The Auditor-General's criticism was constructive, and he sought to find a way through this awful mess to enable the principles of contestability to apply, if that was what the government was seeking, but his recommendations were rejected. The Auditor-General ended his letter with a plea to members of Parliament:

> I reiterate my call for your support, as a member of Parliament, in defending the integrity of the institution of the Parliament.

The Auditor-General is not calling on us as ministers or shadow ministers, but as members of Parliament and representatives of the people. He asks us to defend the independence of the institution of Parliament, of which the Auditor-General is a crucial part. That is what the opposition is putting today.

A range of matters apart from that principal issue arise. Members of the opposition do not believe conflict of interest issues have been addressed. We believe there is a potential for conflict of interest to arise if private audit firms undertake performance audits. I remind honourable members that performance audits have only ever been undertaken by the Auditor-General. The Price Waterhouse report prepared by Mr Talbot identifies the potential for conflict of interest where private sector auditors are used.

The Department of Treasury and Finance has contracted out $22 million worth of consultancies with five of the big six accounting firms. In effect, only one of those six accounting firms would not have at least a potential conflict of interest if it were to audit the Department of Treasury and Finance. Private sector accounting firms have done a range of work for government departments. What confidence could anyone have in Arthur Andersen doing an audit of the Victorian Workcover Authority, given the fact that it has just completed a report into the operations of the authority in which it reported favourably. Which members of Parliament would have confidence in saying, 'Let us send in Arthur Andersen to do an audit of the Victorian Workcover Authority on behalf of members of Parliament'. Certainly not me, and I do not believe anyone in this house could have that confidence.

A range of other issues need to be addressed. For example, the Liberal Party benefits from donations given by the big six accounting firms.

KPMG, Ernst Young, and Coopers and Lybrand donate to the Liberal Party. Mr Ross Herron, the vice-chairman of Coopers and Lybrand, is the treasurer of the 500 Club. Mr John Harvey, the chief executive of Price Waterhouse, is the accountant of the Higgins 200 Club. Both organisations have given hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Liberal Party.

Parliament cannot be confident that those private companies will audit government businesses and departments in the fearless way the Auditor-General has acted in the past. That is but one reason why the opposition is so concerned about the effect of the changes on democracy in Victoria.

The New South Wales government does not believe it needs to make changes of the sort proposed in this legislation. Its Treasurer, Michael Egan, rejected as nonsense:

> ... claims by the Victorian government that New South Wales is considering privatising the functions of the state Auditor-General.
>
> Mr Stockdale might think privatising the Auditor-General is a top idea. We don't. We are

> reviewing the state's financial administration legislation, including the legislation governing audits.

Mr Egan rejects the notion that the Auditor-General legislation must be subject to competition under national competition guidelines.

The Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service and the Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace are concerned about what is happening. They have written a number of papers and published press releases. They raise concerns about the Auditor-General, democracy and the public interest. In one press release they jointly state:

> The Catholic Church believes that democratic participation in decision making is the best way to respect the dignity and liberty of the people and that government and its institutions must work for the common good of the community. The Auditor-General has an important function in enabling the community to be informed and in maintaining a proper check and balance on government activity and accountability.

The churches support the Auditor-General, but the Premier's response is to attack the churches and the Governor-General, who dared to say that the churches had a right to speak on behalf of the disadvantaged in our community. According to the Premier, the churches have no right to speak on behalf of the disadvantaged nor to raise questions of democratic participation in our society.

The Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants has published press releases including an open letter to CPA public practitioners in which it sets out the professional view of accountants. It identifies their three fundamental concerns:

> The proposal to separate the Victorian Auditor-General from Audit Victoria, which the review recommends ought to be controlled by a board of management appointed by the government.
>
> The proposal that the Auditor-General co-signs audit reports indicating he is satisfied with another auditor's work. This is in conflict with professional auditing standards and does not make it clear which auditor is responsible to Parliament.
>
> The proposal the performance reviews replace performance audits.

Hon. Bill Forwood — All those three things were rejected. None is in the bill.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is not true.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Not one is in the bill.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is not true. In fact, the bill separates the Victorian Auditor-General from Audit Victoria. If Mr Forwood wants to say that is not so, I will be happy to hear his argument. The bill will ensure the Auditor-General is separated from Audit Victoria.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Then they will privatise.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, the government will sell it off altogether. What a nonsense from Mr Forwood!

The Auditor-General is not allowed to conduct performance audits let alone performance reviews. How many organisations have to protest before gutless government backbenchers are prepared to stand up to one man? Only one man in this state wants this legislation and his will is being imposed on everybody. The central argument of our opposition to the bill is that certain people will not stand up to him.

On 30 April Liberty Victoria stated:

> ... the attacks to the independence of the office of the Auditor-General represented by the recommendations in the report of the Audit Act review are a serious threat to the functioning of Parliament and democracy in Victoria.

People are expressing their concern. The Associate Professor of Law at Melbourne University, Professor Geoff Lindell, states:

> The state government had not learnt from the excesses of the 1980s when various state governments failed to identify corruption.

A reason for that failure was that the Auditor-General did not have the capacity to audit organisations such as the State Bank or Tricontinental. Had the Auditor-General had such capacity, perhaps the subsequent events would not have occurred and Victorians may well have been better off. The government is attempting to remove the capacity of the Auditor-General to audit anything to do with the $15 billion of government money expended each year.

In its editorial of 26 April the *Age* states:

> Under these proposals the Auditor-General's formal independence from the processes of executive government would be emphasised but in a way that effectively removes any real content from his or her role in the scrutiny of those processes. What the Auditor-General would be seen to do would not be what the Auditor-General does.
>
> A watchdog independent in name only.

The list of protesters against the legislation goes on and on. Dr Neville Norman from the University of Melbourne states:

> Kennett's plan would markedly diminish the Auditor-General's powers.

The Auditor-General is under threat from the government. Professor Barry Cooper, head of the Department of Accountancy at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, is but one of the many Victorians with standing in the community, a person involved in accountability and accounting in Victoria whose views should be respected. On 15 July Professor Cooper said:

> I think it is appropriate that I commence my comments by reference to an article by Professor Rodney Maddock, chairman of the Audit Act Review Committee, in which he claimed ... that: 'Whipped up by the *Age* and other anti-Kennett interests, the public response to the review of the Victorian Audit Act has been full of emotional heat over supposed threats to democracy. But it's clear that few of the commentators have bothered to read the committee's report'.

Professor Cooper's response was:

> These comments are totally unfounded. It appears that by being constructively critical of the committee's report, the *Age* is accused of 'whipping up emotional heat' and that others who happen to believe that Mr Kennett is not infallible and has got it wrong this time, are anti-Kennett! It might also be a surprise to Professor Maddock that most commentators, myself included, have in fact bothered to read the report and have serious reservations about a number of its recommendations.

Again, those are remarks from a prominent and respected member of the community. Mr James Guest, a former member of this place and of the former Public Accounts Committee, took the trouble to write a submission to the Audit Act Review Committee in which he stood up for accountability in this state.

I have put on the record in a substantive way the opposition's views and concerns and those of a wide range of Victorians and Australians who are concerned about the bill and its future effect on the state. The bill should be opposed by members on both sides of the house because it goes beyond political partisanship. It goes to the heart of the notion of the Westminster system of responsible government. In nations across the Western world that have inherited this form of government the concept of an independent financial auditor responsible to Parliament and not the executive has underpinned and fostered parliamentary democracy.

The opposition believes we live in an age when the divine rule of kings is an outdated and obsolete philosophy of governments, a forgotten reminder of the ancient regimes of 18th century France and England. Yet with this one decision by a power-drunk Premier we are thrust back to that age, which denies more than 200 years of parliamentary democracy and negates the trend that began in this country in 1828 with the appointment of the first Auditor-General.

Since this government was elected five years ago there have been three reviews of the Office of the Auditor-General, and I have gone through them in detail. Each supports the Auditor-General and finds that he is doing his job efficiently and effectively and that his office is comparable to other offices throughout the world and better than those in other states or provinces in Canada.

A more cynical observer would probably contend that the government has conducted such regular and thorough inquiries into the office to see whether it could catch the Auditor-General out. The fact that the government has not been able to do so and that time and again the reports come back saying the Auditor-General is doing a good job attests to the integrity of not only the office but of Mr Baragwanath himself and gives credence to the view that the proposed changes to his office, justified on the ground of the government's competition policy, are merely an excuse to get rid of the Auditor-General.

Although members of the government may oppose the opposition's view on these matters, I shall round off my contribution by saying again that I strongly believe this issue transcends political allegiances. Sooner or later we will all be in opposition and

sooner or later we will all rely on the Auditor-General. We have a responsibility that goes even beyond that to our own parties. That is our responsibility as members of Parliament representing the people who elected us, and that responsibility dictates very strongly to us here today that we support the Auditor-General.

If government members, particularly those outside the executive, analyse what is being said — what the opposition and the commentators have said — it will be apparent, on the weight of the logic of the argument, that this issue of taking a party-political stance is insignificant compared with the longer term and broader issue of public accountability for us and our children. All members of this house know that as members of Parliament they have responsibilities and obligations to their constituencies and to the broader community which they now need to discharge.

I remind all honourable members of a judgment handed down in the High Court in the case of *Horne v. Barber*. It made the following assertion, which I believe is salutary for us all:

> One of the duties [of a member of Parliament] is that of watching on behalf of the general community the conduct of the executive, of criticising it and, if necessary, of calling it to account in a constitutional way ... that is the whole essence of responsible government, which is the keystone of our political system, and is the main constitutional safeguard the community possesses.

Through that statement the High Court of Australia is appealing to members in this place to discharge their duty as members of Parliament of watching on behalf of the general community the conduct of the executive. That duty goes across the political parties. As individual members of Parliament we all have the opportunity to consider the issues both during the second-reading debate and in committee.

The opposition invites government members to put to one side, reconsider and defer this proposed legislation. After all is said and done, the bill will not come into effect until June next year. The only part that comes into effect immediately is the group of provisions that establish Audit Victoria, but the legislation will not come into full operation until June next year. There is no urgency to do this. It is a mistake, and in their heart of hearts I believe most members of the government backbench know it is a mistake. It will have to be reversed by a future Labor or conservative government — and it will be reversed by a future government. During the course of that reversal people will ask, 'Why did they do it? Why didn't people stand up and defend the Auditor-General during the debate back in 1997?'.

Members of the opposition intend to move a range of amendments during the committee stage because we believe the legislation is fatally flawed. It should not be passed on one ground alone — that it allows the Auditor-General only one week to rubber stamp all the financial audits.

Anybody who thinks the Auditor-General will be able within the space of a week to examine hundreds of financial audits and decide whether or not they have been done properly and whether further work needs to be done on them is kidding himself. Not only will he not have the power to do them himself, he will be required to pass the financial audits within one week.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Report on them — he is not required to pass them.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He is required to get out his big rubber stamp, Minister, and stamp them: he is required to say they are okay. I do not know about you, but if I were the Auditor-General I would not want to sign off a financial statement unless I had had a good look at it and had satisfied myself that it was appropriate. The opposition thinks the legislation is flawed in a number of key areas, and during the committee stage it will argue strenuously for the amendments it will propose.

I conclude almost as I began more than 3 hours ago by appealing to all members in this place to discharge their responsibilities not as Liberal Party members or National Party members or Labor Party members but as representatives of the people of Victoria.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — Mr Theophanous just pointed out that he spoke for more than 3 hours. In fact, he spoke for 3½ hours, and in that time I do not think he once mentioned the bill or the act. The issues before us, which are of vital interest to Parliament and to the people of Victoria, have been the subject of debate since the process started in November 1996. However, during that debate the clauses of the bill and the sections of the act have rarely if ever been mentioned. Instead, we have heard the usual comments about this being the death of democracy and about the Auditor-General being nobbled because he is too efficient or effective. We have been told that the

government wants to silence him because he has been a constant critic.

We have been told that the bill will permanently nobble him and that he will become a rubber stamp. We have been told we are opening up opportunities for corruption. We have heard that this is a conspiracy and that the Auditor-General is being silenced and hounded from office. However, not once in 3½ hours did Mr Theophanous say how those things are happening or would happen.

In the interests of the house I will describe how the arrangement will work. I start by referring to proposed section 4A, which will make the Auditor-General an independent officer of the Parliament, particularly proposed section 4A(6), which states:

> Subject to this act and to other laws of the State, the Auditor-General has complete discretion in the performance or exercise of his or her functions or powers and, in particular, is not subject to direction from anyone in relation to —
>
> (a) whether or not a particular audit is to be conducted;
>
> (b) the way in which a particular audit is to be conducted;
>
> (c) the priority to be given to any particular matter.

The Auditor-General will have absolute discretion about what can be audited, how it can be audited and when it can be audited. There is a provision involving Parliament in the process, but both the bill and the second-reading speech make it clear that no directions can be given to the Auditor-General concerning what he wants to do or how he wants to do it.

The bill goes into some detail about the competitive model and the mechanism for bringing contestability to the process. However, it is clear that the tender process will be run by the Auditor-General himself. It is also clear that, if necessary, he can bypass the process and appoint an auditor without going to tender. The bill makes even clearer the process the Auditor-General, as principal auditor, is to follow when audits come back to him.

As defined in the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants guidelines, an auditor is:

> The person with final responsibility for the audit or audit related service engagement. The term 'auditor' is used throughout the AUSs. Such reference is not ... intended to imply that a person performing an audit or audit-related service need necessarily be the auditor of the entity, nor that the service being provided is an audit. The term is used to indicate that the work is required to be performed by persons who have adequate training, experience and competence in auditing.

It further defines 'principal' auditor as:

> ... the auditor with responsibility for reporting on the financial report of an entity when that financial report includes financial information of one or more components audited by another auditor.

Not only did Mr Theophanous not talk about the act or the bill, he also did not refer to the CPA guidelines. The act and the bill both make it clear that all audits will need to be done in accordance with established and existing guidelines. This is not a mickey mouse system. It is a robust system that is built around the guidelines already established by the CPAs — and that is reflected in the bill and the act.

I also make the point that the Auditor-General will have the capacity to be involved in the process the whole way through, not just at the end when he signs an audit off. If he wants to do the job properly, of course he will be involved the whole way through.

Many of the complaints made by Mr Theophanous could be construed as criticisms of the Auditor-General for the way he has conducted his business to date. Some 75 per cent of financial audits already go out to the private sector. He will remain involved in those in exactly the same way that he is now.

Proposed new section 9 makes it clear that, when the audits come back, having been done by the persons who won the tenders, the Auditor-General will be the only person who can report on them to Parliament. Before he makes a report he will be able to use his existing powers under section 11 of the act. Proposed new section 9A(2) says that before making the report, the Auditor-General:

> (a) may require the authorised person who made the report ... to provide a further report; and
>
> (b) may exercise powers under section 11 to obtain such further information as he or she thinks fit.

Section 11 contains the power that says the Auditor-General may require persons to appear before him to produce documents in their possession or custody, may cause searches to be made, and may examine persons under oath. No-one is taking those

powers away from the Auditor-General. He will still have the power to go where he wants to get whatever information he wants whenever he wants to get it.

Those provisions apply equally to performance audits. When performance audits come back to — —

Hon. Jean McLean interjected.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — Mrs McLean says, 'If they are done'. The choice of audit will be entirely up to the Auditor-General; no-one will tell him what audit to do. If he wants to do a performance audit, that is what he will do. No-one will have the capacity to tell him what to do or what not to do.

At the moment Parliament gives him $4.1 million to conduct performance audits. But in future, his financial audit budget will also come from Parliament — not from the executive. So not only will he be an independent officer of Parliament, his budget will come from Parliament and he will be the only person who can report to Parliament. No other auditor will be able to do so.

The robustness of the system means that the Auditor-General will have all the powers he needs to do whatever work he wants to do on any audit he chooses — a financial audit, a performance audit, or even a ministerial portfolio report under section 15 — and to report the findings to Parliament. No-one else can report to Parliament.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — With no staff.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — Let me pick up the interjection. I will round this out by saying that one of the great complaints was that the Auditor-General would be put in the ivory tower and given no staff. I refer to new section 24 inserted by clause 22 of the bill which says that the staff in the Auditor-General's Office will be provided after consultation with the Public Service Commissioner, an independent statutory officer. The new section headed 'Determination of staff to be transferred' states:

> The Public Service Commissioner, after consultation with the Auditor-General and the Board, must designate in writing the officers and employees of the public service who are employed of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office who are to become officers and employees under section 25.

A complaint was made that the executive was trying to nobble the Auditor-General and give him no staff. The solution to that is to isolate the executive from the process of allocating staff. The staff the Auditor-General will have will be the staff required to do his job as decided between him, the board of Audit Victoria and the Public Service Commissioner. It will not be decided by the executive because in that regard the government wants a robust audit system — it always has wanted it and always will.

Hon. Jean McLean — Why doesn't one person in this community except you believe that? Not one other person believes that.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Apart from the minister.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — When this government came into power in 1992 it was faced with a con accounting system that enabled next year's revenue to be pulled into this year, this year's expenditure to be pushed on into next year and funny-money deals to be done here and there. The government started the process of developing a robust management and accounting system and made a number of changes. I recommend that members opposite read *Reform of the budget sector Victoria: elements of financial management* and look at the section on the integrated management cycle, which is about how we tie outputs and objectives in with the budget and performance measures and report in annual reports and through the budget documents. I recommend also that honourable members read the *Output costing guide Victoria* or *Output specification and performance measurement Victoria*. I recommend that honourable members read the transcripts and the most recent report of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, of which I am pleased to be the chair. Chapter 2 of the report is about demands that government address the issues of transparency and accounting.

The government has gone to a lot of trouble to develop a robust accounting system: why would it want to nobble the Auditor-General? It is a nonsense and always has been.

In any large environment — manufacturing or service; in any big field of endeavour involving amounts of $15 billion to $20 billion such as a government — some things will always be done well and others done not so well. The government wants to know what is wrong so it can fix it. That is why it wants to measure results. It brought in accrual accounting, with the support of the opposition I might add. The government wants a robust audit system that complements the systems of accounting and measurement it has brought in.

It is a nonsense for Mr Theophanous to spend three and a half hours of our time today listing a number of people who do not believe this is a robust system and not once referring to the bill or the act.

In the course of this debate over the past 12 months people have expressed concerns about a number of proposals. The first was the suggestion in the terms of reference that departments could appoint their own auditors. That issue was considered; it was rejected. You won't find that anywhere in the bill. Another one was that the Auditor-General would not control the tender process and that the tender panel would comprise people other than him. You won't find that in the bill. The only person who controls the tender process is the Auditor-General, and he has the capacity to bypass it if he so pleases. A further concern related to the government's ability to audit itself because we cannot have a gamekeeper–poacher scenario. In the establishment of the purchaser–provider split that provides the robust audit system that will improve the quality of audits in Victoria the government came up with the proposal that Audit Victoria cannot be given a direction. The bill says that on an audit matter Audit Victoria cannot be given a direction. It also says that in the case of a direction being given on a matter that is not associated with an audit — for example, a borrowing issue — any direction that the minister may give to Audit Victoria must be in writing, must be reported in the annual report and must be commented on. The issue about the government auditing itself has been specifically dealt with in this way, so that one can be crossed off the list.

Another matter of some concern and one that I picked up on was the comment by Mr Theophanous by way of interjection that performance audits would be abolished and replaced with performance reviews. No. If he compares the bill with the act he will see that, other than the changes necessary to cover the fact that we are going through a tender process to select the auditor, virtually all the provisions of the existing section 16, which deals with performance audits of authorities, stay the same. There is no performance review; they are still performance audits, so that is another one of the scares that has disappeared.

I dealt with the issue Mr Nardella raised of the Auditor-General getting no staff, therefore making his independence illusory and ineffective. The government wanted a robust system and it will get it because the Public Service Commissioner will work with the Auditor-General to decide the appropriate staffing levels needed to do the job.

If people want to take another view of this they should read the second-reading speech, which provides explicitly that the required staff will be made available to the Auditor-General so he can do the job that we want him to do.

Hon. Jean McLean — That you want him to do!

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — Yes, a robust audit system, because the proof of the pudding will be that next year and the following years audit reports will be coming in here in the same way as they come in now; some will be approving and some critical, but they will come in signed by the Auditor-General, having been through the tender process, having had the work done and the Auditor-General having used his own resources do whatever he wishes to do with them. The second-reading speech and the bill provide specifically that he may do what he wants to do in order to finalise and report.

I turn to section 15 of the principal act. Not long ago a scare campaign was being run saying that the ministerial portfolios report we saw this year would be the last one we would get. I do not know where that idea came from. It is difficult to find mention of it in the Maddock review; I went looking for it. Evidently there is a spot back in the appendices somewhere which, with some stretch of the imagination, could be interpreted as meaning that section 15 of the principal act relating to ministerial portfolios may be abolished, but this was nowhere to be found in the recommendations of the Maddock review. The bill and the act are quite specific on that point.

Section 15 of the Audit Act deals with reports by the Auditor-General. Subsection (1) provides that:

> The Auditor-General may make a report on any audit undertaken by the Auditor-General, or person authorised by the Auditor-General, under this or any other Act.

For both a financial audit or a performance audit, the Auditor-General alone reports to Parliament. In addition, under section 15 the Auditor-General can use his own resources to prepare a report to Parliament. The great strength of the system is that if the Auditor-General wants to report on an issue he can do so. I shall read to the house a letter I wrote to the Auditor-General on 31 October when the debate was at its height. It states:

Dear Ches,

I thought I might like to explain how the new system will work in practice.

While audits will be done under contract to you, you have absolute authority to report to Parliament and the act makes no specification on what such a report should contain.

As your section 15 powers are retained in the act, you can report on any matter arising from a financial audit at any time. How a matter 'arises', and how you deal with it, is entirely up to you. Of course, you have complete discretion in how you report a performance audit as well.

The next thing is that you are funded by the Parliament, not the Executive. If you decide to report to Parliament you will use your own resource — not those of a contracted firm or person — to do so.

Given your section 11 powers to get information, under oath if necessary, I don't see what the problem is — you can report, you are resourced, you can go anywhere and get anything.

I would have thought that, coupled with the other powers in the act and the bill, this is absolute independence and a completely robust system.

In essence, you purchase whatever audit services you want and what you do with the result is wholly up to you.

I met with the Auditor-General's staff and discussed these issues. Some of the points arising from that discussion were incorporated in the bill before the house. The point I wish to make is that while both financial and performance audits are done under contract and the Auditor-General then has the ability to report on them to Parliament, the existing section 15 power remains. The Auditor-General will be able to use that power as he sees fit to do what he wants to do.

That is a quick snapshot of how the bill works. I shall make a couple of points about the misinformation that has been going around and I shall also deal with some of the specific issues Mr Theophanous raised, particularly in relation to me in Sydney. Let me put a couple of points on the record. The Leader of the Opposition said on 2 December that in future organisations will be able to appoint their own auditors and pay them handsomely to produce the results they want. There are two interpretations of that. One is that he was deliberately telling a mistruth and the other is that he does not know what he is talking about. I will leave it up to the house to decide.

I shall refer to what the Treasurer said. Much has been made of the independence of the Auditor-General and whether he can get things done. In a number of forums, the Treasurer has raised questions that need to be asked in relation to independence and who controls the audit process. The Treasurer asked the following questions. Is the person making the decisions guaranteed of independence from the political process? Is that person responsible to Parliament? Does that person have responsibility and authority to give directions on the conduct of audits and is he or she free from direction by anybody else? I add to that: does that person have sole responsibility and authority to give direction? The Treasurer also asked the following. Does that person have line authority over the audit process distinct from the executive government? Of course, that person does. Does that person have budgetary control? Is that person accountable to the Parliament or executive government? Does that person have power to determine the audit program in conjunction with the parliamentary committee that oversights the program? Does that person conduct the tender process himself or herself? Will that person engage the auditors who physically carry out the work of performing the audit? Does that person have the power to supervise the work? Will that person sign the audit certificate? Does that person have power to depart from the contestable process that the legislation contemplates as the norm?

The answer to all those questions is that the Auditor-General does. I would add one more to that list. The only person who can report to Parliament on any audit is the Auditor-General. He has absolute control over that process.

I shall touch on a couple of specific issues raised by Mr Theophanous. In particular he asked whether an auditor who got it wrong could be sued. Of course, the answer is yes. Mr Theophanous maintains the auditor cannot be sued, but there is nothing in the act to provide that the authorised person who has won the tender has immunity for any mistakes made. If that person makes a mistake, he or she is responsible. If an authorised person, who provides a report concerning a financial audit, is negligent, fails to comply with the terms and conditions, fails to comply with the auditing standards, or fails to comply with performance standards, he or she can

be sued for damages that flow as a result of the audit report.

The only person who reports to Parliament and signs the audit is the Auditor-General. However, the people who do the work must be responsible for the work they do for him. If the Auditor-General signs a report he obviously has obligations of his own to ensure that the work that has been done is in accordance with the act and the auditing standards, which need to be proven. However, there is nothing in the act and nothing in the way the system will work that prevents auditors from being held totally responsible for the work they do. Mr Theophanous went into great detail about what happened in Sydney at the ACPAC conference earlier this year.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Where you couldn't get a seconder.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — Mr Nardella helps me by his interjection.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — You couldn't get a seconder. The seconder withdrew.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — Mr Nardella was not there.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — No, I wasn't, but my leader was.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — Mr Nardella has in front of him no transcript of what happened. That is disappointing because I would not want to be unkind. We went to Sydney to discuss minimum requirements for auditors-general. I have absolutely no problem with the resolutions passed. I have never had any problem with that. I have always believed in and have never wavered from the notion of having an independent Auditor-General doing what he or she wants to do.

I do not believe that is in any way in conflict with a contestable model. I went to Sydney with some of my colleagues to represent Victoria at joint meetings of public accounts committees in Australia. We were prepared to support what we all believed to be an important motion on the independence of auditors-general. A number of debates took place about particular clauses. It is ironic that Mr Theophanous should only quote bits of what happened. He will remember that in Sydney we changed the provision about the auditor-general being an officer of the Parliament. We said he or she should be responsible to the Chief Minister, the Prime Minister or Premier of the state.

There was debate about various aspects of 'independence' and what they mean. As Mr Theophanous knows, I was comfortable in supporting the motion that referred to 'operational independence' and in his absence I detailed what it means.

The first draft of the minimum requirements for the independence of the Auditor-General states at 1.4:

> The Auditor-General should be responsible administratively to the Parliament.

That is what we do here. The version we finished up with after discussion states:

> The Auditor-General should be responsible administratively to the Prime Minister, Premier, or Chief Minister.

We had a discussion about 'operational independence'. Don't you remember?

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Yes, but tell us about the other piece.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — I am happy to. Mr Theophanous tried to paint a picture of my getting caught out. My colleagues know me better than that. I had actually done some work on what we were going to do and I went there with a motion in my pocket.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You didn't do too well!

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — I had already talked to the other states about what was going on.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Is that why you got rolled?

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — We will get to that. The later version of the minimum requirements of the Auditor-General further states:

> The Auditor-General should have the sole power to carry out, or designate an auditor to carry out, the external audit on all agencies which are owned, controlled or substantially responsible to government.

That is what we have in Victoria, and there is not a problem about that at all. I will now read into *Hansard* what I said in Sydney:

> On the substantive issues contained in this motion, as members have seen by the way we have voted today, we have no problems.

That is, we have no problems with the independence of the Auditor-General. I went on:

> However, there is another problem, which is that a totally independent and separate review is being undertaken of Victoria's audit legislation as it relates to competition policy.

We decided to move our own amendment, as was described by Mr Theophanous. The commonwealth government agreed to second it. After some discussion about whether it was appropriate, the chairman stated:

> If the seconding of the motion is withdrawn and it is not otherwise seconded, its present status, which is an amendment to the substantial report, will lapse. I will then entertain another motion.

My seconder, Mr Somlyay, representing the commonwealth, said:

> I would be happy to withdraw it provided I have the assurance of the council a motion to that effect will be accepted.

Mr Somlyay withdrew on the proviso that he had the assurance of the council that a motion would be accepted. We withdrew the amendment and went through the business of passing the original motion. Then I moved my new motion with Mr Somlyay seconding it. We then got into points of order and the like.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Why didn't he second your motion dissenting from the ruling of the Chair?

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — There was a queue of people to second my dissent motion.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — So many that you lost!

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — Let's get to the bit about losing. In Sydney eight people had a vote. We withdrew the amendment on the basis that we could entertain a new motion. The chairman then ruled the motion out of order. We thought it was a bit rich in the circumstances and I did not think I had much choice but to dispute his ruling. I did not want to do it, but I moved that the debate proceed. The chairman said:

> I have just ruled that it will not proceed. If you want to debate that issue you would need to move dissent from the chairman's ruling.

This was a new experience for me. I always do what the chairman says, but I was not going to put up with that. I said:

> This is a sad day.

Then I moved dissent. As Mr Theophanous pointed out, the representative of the Northern Territory was quick to her feet to second the motion. Everybody had anticipated we would get to debate the motion before we were gazumped by the chairman from New South Wales.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Which party was he from?

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — The National Party. He put the question and said:

> On the show of hands I declare the motion for dissent from the ruling of the chairman in respect of the closure of this debate lost. This session is now concluded.

The transcript of the meeting was made available to me and I was invited to make corrections to it. I identified for correction that the ayes were Victoria, Northern Territory, Queensland and the commonwealth, and that the noes were New South Wales, the representative of which was the chairman; the ACT, the representative of which was an opposition person; Tasmania, the representative of which was an Independent; and South Australia. The vote was four all, so the motion was lost on the casting vote of the chairman.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You lost the motion and you're complaining!

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — I stand here happily today — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — What happened to the other conservative states?

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — The representative from South Australia chose to vote the way he

wanted to vote. I was happy to go to Sydney and argue for the independence of the Auditor-General — I will go anywhere and vote for the independence of the Auditor-General — but I make the point that what happened in Sydney was a hijack and was very disappointing.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The one Labor state, which had a National Party chairperson, hijacked all the other states.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — No — you did, Mr Theophanous. I conclude my contribution by touching on another statement Mr Theophanous made in his contribution. He described the Auditor-General as a monstrous rubber stamp.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That's not true! I said that is what you will make him or what he will become under the proposal — and it is what he said about himself.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — Although there are occasions when I disagree with Mr Baragwanath, often I agree with him. I always support his ability to audit what he wants to audit and report to Parliament what he wants to report, and to describe him as a monstrous rubber stamp is an absolute outrage.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, I do not mind Mr Forwood putting his point of view, but deliberately misleading the house about what other members have said is inappropriate and not in accordance with the forms of this house. I did not describe the Auditor-General in the terms he used. I said that if the proposed legislation is passed the Auditor-General will become a rubber stamp, which is completely different from what Mr Forwood said. I ask you to suggest to Mr Forwood that he should stop deliberately misquoting members of the opposition.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. G. B. Ashman) — Order! There is no point of order. This is a wide-ranging debate and there is adequate opportunity for people to rebut arguments put during the debate.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — The process requires that all reports coming to Parliament through the audit process go through the Auditor-General so he can satisfy himself as to their scope and whether they are in accord with CPA guidelines. He will have the staff to do so. In no sense will he be a rubber stamp. The motion dealing with the Auditor-General that was carried at the Liberal Party conference in Shepparton states:

> That, in the interest of Victorian taxpayers, the Victorian state government, when making any future alterations to the Audit Act 1994 to protect the authority and powers of the state Auditor-General, will ensure that his office has the exclusive authority to contract out, have control of and be responsible for the payment of all audits of Victorian state government departments, instrumentalities and authorities conducted by private auditing firms.

The bill meets those criteria, and I commend it to the house.

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — It is not without a measure of sadness that I speak on the legislative changes proposed by the government to undermine the position of the Auditor-General. This bill would have to be the most radical, contentious and unnecessary piece of legislation to be introduced into the chamber. I do not know how many government members in this place can reconcile their support for the legislation. Regardless of their complexion, all governments hate the Auditor-General!

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Wrong!

Hon. M. M. GOULD — That is in relation to the Auditor-General bringing out reports to show where governments have mismanaged the state's finances. It is not much different from football players not liking umpires! During the past year, there have been a number of press reports regarding the Auditor-General and ordinary Victorians have been involved in the debate. They are greatly concerned about the role of the Auditor-General being diminished as a result of the legislation and the opinions of a number of commentators who have spoken out.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Talk about the bill!

Hon. M. M. GOULD — I will get to that, Mr Forwood! The first Australian Auditor-General was appointed in 1828, but it was not until the 1950s that there was a change in the representation in this house. It could be said that the position of the Auditor-General is as old as democracy in this state. On this day the government continues to attack democracy by attacking one of the state's key institutions. It will come as no surprise to honourable members that every member of the

opposition in this chamber will speak in opposition to the bill for a couple of reasons. We want to publicly display our support for the Auditor-General and we want to hear government members respond during the debate.

The bill demonstrates how far the Kennett government is prepared to go in order to silence one of its most effective and persistent critics. The most disturbing aspect of the bill is that it threatens to destroy the Auditor-General's ability to carry out his or her fundamental goal within our system of parliamentary democracy.

The Auditor-General is an integral part of the parliamentary regulatory and accountability framework. He or she is charged with the responsibility of independently auditing the government's activities on behalf of Parliament and the public. Significantly, the Auditor-General's Office is the principal source of independent information for both Parliament and Victorian taxpayers on the performance and operation of the government. The mission statement on the aims of the Auditor-General's Office is:

> ... to strive for excellence in the provision of independent audit services in order to enhance accountability to the Parliament and efficient and effective use of public resources in Victoria.

It is no wonder that the government wants to reduce the ability of the Auditor-General to carry out his or her functions. The government has consistently sought to silence its critics, especially in areas where its performance may be shown to be lacking. There is no better way to silence critics than to reduce the Auditor-General's access to information upon which criticism could be based. The bill achieves that disturbing result by removing the Auditor-General's operational independence and discretion.

The political climate surrounding the bill demonstrates yet again that the government is willing to adopt the steamroller approach to its reform. The bill arose in the wake of the much criticised review of the Audit Act 1994. The review was commissioned by the government in order to consider the applicability of the national competition policy on the Auditor-General's Office. What could be more inappropriate than setting up a special review team targeting the Auditor-General and restricting the way his office functions? That the review should have occurred at all shows a failure on the part of the government to understand the role of the Auditor-General. It was a level of ignorance that surprised many, including the Auditor-General. He wrote to all members of Parliament, and that letter was reproduced in his annual report:

> I am astonished to see that the role of the Auditor-General is regarded as a government activity and, therefore, subject to this review. In fact, my role and that of my office is clearly separate from government.

The recommendations of the review team were strongly criticised because, had they been implemented, they would have stripped back the Auditor-General's power to merely deciding areas of audit and countersigning reports due to go to Parliament. The review team recommended that the Auditor-General should lose the power to directly conduct audits and that private accounting firms and Audit Victoria compete to carry out that work. It recommended that a three-member tender panel be assigned to that work.

The bill has adopted many aspects of the review team's recommendations. The most disturbing of those aspects is that the Auditor-General's operational discretion and independence be substantially reduced.

Not surprisingly, the process of change used by the government has involved limited consultation. Following the Premier's lead, members of the government have shown their usual pig-headed attitude towards any issue, and the views of the public and others who have supported the independence of the Auditor-General's Office have been blatantly disregarded. For example, opposition to the government's reform has been voiced by a number of organisations, including the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants; the Australasian Council of Auditors-General; New Zealand's Auditor-General, Mr McDonald; the Victorian Bar Council; and the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties. Moreover, the government has continued to ignore the views of the Victorian Auditor-General. For example, in May this year the Auditor-General commented on the review of the Audit Act by stressing that no change to the legislation was necessary. He said:

> I firmly believe that contestability principles can be responsibly and simply applied within the current legislative framework and in a manner which is acceptable to the Parliament.

On 20 November the Auditor-General expressed his bitter disappointment over the approach taken by

the Premier. Through a spokesperson from the Auditor-General's Office, the Auditor-General pointed to the Premier's failure to honour his undertaking that there would be subsequent discussion between them once the Auditor-General's comments on the bill were received. Not surprisingly, all of the substantial changes recommended by the Auditor-General were disregarded. Only 5 very minor suggestions of the 18 changes were incorporated in the bill.

Disturbingly, the bill is based on a flawed understanding of the role of the Auditor-General. As stressed by the Auditor-General himself, the bill is based on the false premise that 'the Auditor-General is the principal purchaser of audit services'.

On 17 November, in a letter to all members of Parliament, the Auditor-General stated in part that:

> Such a premise undermines the primacy of the Parliament in that it is the only purchaser of external audit services in the public sector and the Auditor-General, as Parliament's exclusive external auditor, is the only provider of such services to the Parliament and ultimately the community.

Surely, the government should listen to the views of the Auditor-General. Not only is he extremely knowledgeable about this area, but also he is the person who must ultimately work under the proposed changes. The government has tried to diffuse criticism away from itself over the bill. It has done so by attacking the performance of the Auditor-General's Office. A statement was released on behalf of the Auditor-General in defence of his office. It said that he was:

> ... quite disturbed that the Premier has questioned the performance of the office and therefore linked, at this late stage, the Audit Act review under the national competition policy to the performance of the office. It was understood from past announcements that the review would not be based on performance but solely related to the legislation.

This attack is without substance; it shows the level to which the government is prepared to sink in order to trample upon those who are willing to stand up to it in order to defend the Auditor-General and the public interest. The problem for the government is that the attack highlights its real motives in introducing the bill. The bill is not about implementing national competition policy, as the government would have us believe. It is a full-on attack of the audit office under a neutral banner. The Auditor-General's ongoing commitment to defending his office from this shameful attack is worthy of praise and gratitude. In the wake of the government's approach one is left to marvel at its arrogance and the persistence of its attack on the Auditor-General.

On 30 October the Auditor-General summarised the failure of the government to listen by saying:

> The overall direction of the changes appears to me to be totally at odds with the views expressed on this issue by virtually all sections of the Victorian community, for almost a year now, in support of the Auditor-General and the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

Sadly, should the bill go ahead, it will be the public and the democratic system that will suffer the consequences of the government's refusal to listen, not only to the Auditor-General but to the community at large. There is no doubt the bill will seriously impair the independence of the Auditor-General; it will remove the Auditor-General's ability to directly conduct audits. According to the Auditor-General, operational discretion is of absolute importance to the independence of his office. He rightly asserted that:

> ... operational discretion is an integral part of, and cannot be separated from, an Auditor-General's independence'.

He has drawn that fact to the government's attention again and again, only to be ignored. His position was supported by the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants. At page xi of the Auditor-General's *Report on Ministerial Portfolios* in May of this year these bodies are cited as supporting that view by maintaining that:

> ... fundamental to the independence of the auditor is freedom to plan and conduct the audit, report findings and express an opinion free from external influence.

The reaction of the Auditor-General to the changes contained in the bill has been damning. He has slammed the bill as removing his power to directly carry out audits in the public interest. In a media statement issued on 30 October this year he expressed shock and disbelief at the approach taken. On the nature of his position under the bill he wrote:

> Under the bill, the Auditor-General will be stripped of the power to directly carry out audits which will leave the Auditor-General without an ongoing audit

> investigatory arm to serve without fear or favour the interests of the Parliament and the community. Simply put, the community's independent audit and reporting voice will be replaced by a contract administrator.

The bill will ensure that the Auditor-General lacks a direct audit role. As of 1 July 1998, the power to conduct financial and performance audits will be assigned solely to contractors. In the case of audits of financial statements relating to departments or public bodies, the contractor — termed 'authorised person' in the bill — will make a report to the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General must in turn provide a report on the contractor's audit to the department or public body, its responsible minister and the minister administering the section of the act.

For performance audits the contractor will make a report to the Auditor-General who then reports on the performance audit to each house of Parliament within seven sitting days after making the report. Mr Theophanous has raised the opposition's concern about those provisions in the bill.

For both types of audits limitations are placed on the Auditor-General's powers. Firstly, the bill narrows the Auditor-General's powers to that of merely being able to require that the contractor do follow-up work; by doing so the Auditor-General lacks the capacity to conduct an audit in his or her own right. Before making a report on an audit done by a contractor, the bill allows the Auditor-General to require only that the contractor provide a further report. Secondly, the bill restricts the purpose for which information may be obtained by the Auditor-General to that of obtaining information for the purpose of carrying out his or her limited functions and powers under the act — as they will be reduced by this bill.

The Auditor-General has only a limited capacity to add anything to his or her report on a contractor's performance audit under the proposed legislation. The Auditor-General's report cannot include a matter that varies the report of the contractor unless a copy of the Auditor-General's report is first given to the relevant department or public body and its comments are then included in that report.

The effectiveness of the Auditor-General's annual report on ministerial portfolios will be severely weakened as a result by the bill's amendments. Although section 15 of the Audit Act allows the Auditor-General to present such a report, its nature will change greatly. Removing the Auditor-General's power to directly conduct financial audits will leave the Auditor-General without operational discretion. This lack of independence will in turn be reflected in the thoroughness of the evaluation of the ministerial portfolios and the nature of the key findings that can be made. That will be the case because issues identified during the financial audits will be included later in the report on ministerial portfolios. The bill fails to recognise the importance of preserving the quality and nature of those reports. That mistake has been made by the review team and, sadly, it has been repeated by those drafting the bill. Responding to the mistake in the review team's discussion paper, the Auditor-General said:

> The paper fails to identify that financial audits carried out by my office extend beyond the forming of audit opinions on financial statements of individual agencies and the whole of government to the examination of a wide range of issues emanating from these audits from a public interest perspective. The results of this examination form the basis of detailed reporting to the Parliament in my annual reports on the government's financial position and performance and on operations in individual ministerial portfolios.

Consequently, the bill significantly reduces the effectiveness of this mechanism whereby government operations are held accountable to Parliament and the community.

In addition, the Auditor-General will lose most of his staff. It is not enough to say that the Auditor-General and the Auditor-General's Office will be fully resourced for their responsibilities, as claimed in the minister's second-reading speech. That statement is misleading. Yes, the office will be staffed, but by a fraction of its number. Moreover, it will be staffed to the extent necessary to enable it to carry out its severely restricted tasks. In effect, the Auditor-General's Office has lost the power to directly carry out its core function and, for this reason, will no longer require the bulk of its staff. The situation met with extremely strong criticism from the Auditor-General. In a media statement of 30 October he said:

> I am unaware of any other organisation which is precluded from using its in-house skilled resources in carrying out its core activity and is forced, as a result, to totally rely on parties outside the organisation to meet its corporate objectives. In effect, what the government will achieve will be a world first, unfortunately — an Auditor-General's office without auditors.

If the bill proceeds, Victoria will stand in a unique position compared with other jurisdictions. Firstly, it will have an Audit Act which provides the Auditor-General with no operational discretion, with the result being devastating for his or her independence. Secondly, it will have an Auditor-General's office without auditors.

Accordingly, the chief executive officer of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants expressed his opposition to the planned privatisation of Audit Victoria. In an article in the *Age* of 20 November this year he warned that:

> If Audit Victoria is separated from the Auditor-General, it will mean far less accountability ... on financial management in this state.

Members of the society are concerned about the bill and they have expressed their concerns loudly and often. No Auditor-General under such a system could guarantee that audit services would be carried out with a sufficient degree of structural independence so as to enhance accountability to Parliament and the efficient and effective use of public resources. Victoria will have a watchdog without teeth. The nature of Audit Victoria is such that people will wonder why it was ever created.

The staff of Audit Victoria will be separated from the Auditor-General and Audit Victoria will not be answerable to the Auditor-General for its overall performance and direction. Instead staff will be answerable to a board of directors appointed by the government. That is contrary to the position advocated by the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia as stated in their plan, which is contained in an open letter dated August 1997.

The existence of Audit Victoria seems to accomplish little more than facilitating the removal of the Auditor-General's staff by providing them with a place to go — they have gone from the Auditor-General's Office to Audit Victoria. Perhaps the government thought the attack on the Auditor-General was a bit too obvious and softened it by creating Audit Victoria so no staff would have to be sacked or removed.

The establishment of Audit Victoria is far from appropriate. It will result in a weakening of the knowledge base that is found in the current office. The result was foreseen by the Auditor-General when in a letter to members of Parliament dated 17 November he warned that:

> This action will disintegrate the existing experience and knowledge capital of my office which is now a distinctive community asset and has a high standing worldwide in public sector auditing.

Under the bill the Auditor-General will have to apply a competitive process to the appointment of contractors, whether Audit Victoria or one of the large accountancy firms. The commercial basis governing the function of Audit Victoria and the private accountancy firms will mean they are unable to equal the service that has been provided by the Auditor-General's office.

The Auditor-General wrote to all members of Parliament on 17 November and raised concerns about Audit Victoria. The letter states:

> Audit Victoria will ultimately be involved in a range of functions on a commercial basis and therefore will not be able to perform the dedicated external audit role of protecting the public interest, which is the hallmark of successive Auditors-General in Victoria.

There is a potential for a conflict of interest for firms which are interested in securing government consultancies and which choose to carry out performance audits: their interest in consultancies may cause them to be reluctant to criticise the government in their audit reports.

Under the bill if the tendering process is not adhered to by the Auditor-General the reasons for failing to do so must be included in the annual report to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. The Auditor-General's discretion will be severely restricted by that requirement. As a result of the need to justify his or her decisions to a committee, that discretion will be exercised rarely, if at all — and only in exceptional circumstances.

In another place on 20 November, the Treasurer, Mr Stockdale, claimed that one of the provisions protecting the Auditor-General's independence means that he or she would not be unequivocally bound to take part in the competitive tendering process. However, given the limited discretion that will be available, the Auditor-General might as well be unequivocally bound.

The government has tried to deceive the public into believing that the Auditor-General will be more independent than he is now. I find it difficult to

accept that the government believes the public will fall for the sort of rhetoric it has been churning out. The changes will ensure that the Auditor-General's independence is severely weakened. That is apparent in the Auditor-General's description of the effects of the bill. In his letter of 17 November to members of Parliament he warned that:

> Under professional ethics, it is fundamental to audit independence that an auditor have the freedom to actually conduct audits.

In any other climate that would go without saying. However, in Victoria it needs to be said — but it is being ignored by the government. Clearly, the Auditor-General will not have that basic freedom.

In the face of the changes that have been described, it is clear that the mechanisms the government is relying on to suggest that the Auditor-General's independence will be enhanced are simply symbolic. They are mere trappings without power, form without substance. Without operational discretion the Auditor-General can have no independence. It therefore means nothing to say that the Auditor-General will be an independent officer of the Parliament. The mere symbolic nature of the statement is acknowledged in the bill. It excludes the usual implications that would otherwise arise from the change. To remove any doubt, proposed section 4A(3) states:

> There are no implied functions, powers, rights, immunities or obligations arising from the Auditor-General being an independent officer of the Parliament.

Proposed section 4A(5) states:

> There are no implied powers of the Parliament arising from the Auditor-General being an independent officer of the Parliament.

On the issue of funding, the transfer to Parliament of budgetary responsibility for the Auditor-General is also just symbolic. At page (xiii) of his latest report on ministerial portfolios the Auditor-General states:

> The important issue is not the source of funding, but that the staff are answerable solely to the Auditor-General who is independent of the government.

Because of the bill the Auditor-General, the Parliament and the public will miss out. The government has shown an unrelenting disregard for the mechanisms of accountability in our democratic system. It has consistently silenced its critics and sabotaged bodies that once enjoyed a high degree of independence. The reform package that has been dealt out to the Victorian community began with the removal of the former Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, Moira Rayner. Later the former Director of Public Prosecutions came up against the Premier, and as a result the DPP's structural independence was weakened to an unprecedented degree.

The Auditor-General has called on Parliament and the public to protect an institution that for so long has protected them. There are numerous examples of reports that have protected the interests of Parliament and the community. Recent examples include the report on child protection and the reports on Intergraph, which highlighted the huge mismanagement of taxpayers' funds in the tendering process. They also include the reports on the Community Support Fund, which highlighted massive mismanagement and showed that the money was generally not being used for the purposes for which the fund was established. Without the Auditor-General reporting on those matters to Parliament — and, in turn, to the community — Victorians would not be aware of what is happening in those areas. The question one therefore has to ask is: where will Victoria be once the bill is passed?

Once reports are tabled in Parliament the government criticises them and then steps on them. As I said, the Auditor-General criticised the government for failing to demand up to $174 million more from Crown Casino for its 150 extra tables. He also criticised its administration of the Community Support Fund. He reported on the government's spending $130 million on marketing and promotion, some of which was used, in the Auditor-General's words, totally inappropriately for party political advertising. Another report found that the Leeds Media contract was awarded after a flawed and inappropriate tender process.

The Auditor-General's report on the child protection system was a damning indictment of the government, which would not allow his report criticising the administration of the Children's Court even to be tabled in Parliament. The Auditor-General also produced reports criticising the government for its handling of school amalgamations. He criticised the government for failing to follow its own guidelines in allocating funds for capital works and for giving questionable

priority to a number of projects over more needy proposals.

One of his reports highlighted the fact that the Premier did a deal with Kerry Stokes over the sale of HRL that involved his being given an interest-free loan of $8.5 million, which taxpayers will never see again. The Auditor-General revealed that taxpayers had paid more than $97 million in private consultancy fees. Another of his reports analysed the costs associated with the grand prix. The Auditor-General raised these issues and brought them to the attention of Parliament — but the bill will ensure those sorts of reports will not be seen again.

The changes threaten the viability of an element of the institution on which our democratic system is based, something that all honourable members need to acknowledge. The bill removes the Auditor-General's operational discretion. For that reason it is consistent with the approach recommended by the review team. Such a direction is dangerous because it reduces government accountability. If confronted by an oppressive or corrupt government, a future Parliament will be relatively impotent and not privy to information that would enable it to call that government to account.

In May this year the Auditor-General posed three vital questions for members of Parliament to consider before giving their support to the legislative changes. They were: will the Auditor-General be able to continue to serve, without fear or favour, the interests of the Parliament and of the community with severely restricted discretion and without an ongoing audit investigatory arm; will the level and quality of information available to the Parliament from the Auditor-General on the activities of the government be enhanced or even maintained by the measures proposed; and why should the Parliament and the community wish to put at risk a highly effective audit model which has served Victoria well and embark down a path which strips the Auditor-General of direct audit responsibility and which would lessen accountability? Members of this place should consider those pertinent questions before voting on the bill. The answers to those questions posed in May would not have supported the measures proposed by the review team, just as they do not support them now.

The bill fails the public and Parliament and deserves condemnation from both sides of politics. It does not deserve support. It strips the Auditor-General and the community of their rights of receiving independent reports about government operations, the misspending of funds or inappropriate leasing of contracts. As a matter of honour all members should oppose this measure. This bill is too important to echo the party line. Members of Parliament should preserve democracy by protecting the role of the Auditor-General.

I have no doubt that coalition backbenchers who argue in support of the bill do so for no reason other than they are backbenchers who aspire to move to the front bench. Their ambition leads them to put their interests above the interests of their electorate. To those honourable members I say this: if parliamentarians do not stand up for the interests of the public and their electorates, who will? The only reason there is a by-election in Mitcham this week is because a former member of the government stood up to the Premier in opposing the bill. I reiterate the challenge made by the Auditor-General in May this year in his report on ministerial portfolios when he said:

> As this matter has significant ramifications for democracy in Victoria and for future generations, I consider that, in order to maintain the supremacy of the Parliament and to protect the overall public interest, individual members have an obligation to ensure politics do not intrude when deciding on any legislative changes.

There is no better time for members of the government backbench to represent their electorates rather than follow the party line. They must look after their constituents and the community by vigorously opposing this measure.

Hon. B. C. BOARDMAN (Chelsea) — I have no doubt that this debate has been hijacked by misinformation, misleading arguments, non-factual statements and, in some cases, blatant lies. Mr Theophanous criticised the government for nobbling the Auditor-General and said that if the Labor Party were in government it would maintain the status quo. At the last election the Labor Party released a document entitled *Victorian Labor — Financial Management Plan — Platform for a Brumby Labor Government*, which details what a future Labor government would do to the Auditor-General. It states in part:

> ... the Auditor-General has the ultimate responsibility for the external audit of all public sector agencies over which the government has control, a financial interest, or to which it has financial exposure.

No doubt that is the case. That is currently the situation and will continue to be so under the provisions of the legislation. The document also states:

> ... legislation will not allow the minister the discretion to appoint an auditor to a public sector entity or to influence the type of audit undertaken.

I am not sure whether opposition members have read proposed section 4A(6), which states:

> ... the Auditor-General has complete discretion in the performance or exercise of his or her functions or powers and, in particular, is not subject to direction from anyone in relation to —
>
> (a) whether or not a particular audit is to be conducted;
>
> (b) the way in which a particular audit is to be conducted;
>
> (c) the priority to be given to any particular matter.

Those provisions confirm the independence of the Auditor-General. The Labor Party's financial management plan further states:

> ... the Auditor-General will become an officer of Parliament and given constitutional protection.

That is one of the key components of this bill, yet the opposition has the audacity to object to this measure. The opposition also says that it would create an environment where:

> ... triennial checks on the efficiency, economy and effectiveness of the offices of the Auditor-General will be conducted by leading external practitioners and/or by peer review.

The opposition is happy to use private sector resources to audit the Auditor-General's Office, but if the Auditor-General avails himself of those facilities there is a philosophical objection! The Labor Party document says a future Labor government would establish a continuing audit of implementation — in other words, another bureaucracy — to ensure that the Auditor-General is at the forefront of accountability. It would mean the Auditor-General would be subject to consistent checks and directions from government. If a future Labor government wants to put Victoria at the forefront of public sector management and accountability it should realise that the role of government leading up to the new millennium will be vastly different from what it has been in the past.

Government policy can easily be construed as being politically or ideologically based, but I submit that there is a new reality that enters any policy implementation — globalisation and the relationship of economic policy to contestability principles.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Who wrote this?

Hon. B. C. BOARDMAN — Mr Nardella, I will provide you with a copy of my speech that includes definitions of some of the words and phrases I am using, just so you can understand it! New directions in public sector management and accounting methods must ensure that public sector auditors can meet the challenges. Ensuring contestability principles in audit provision creates an environment where service delivery and quality is paramount. It is essential that the changes in public sector management and in accountability principles are such that audit provisions are adequately and appropriately amended to meet those challenges.

Mr John Taylor, the then commonwealth Auditor-General, referred to the value of using private firms. The *Business Review Weekly* of 3 August 1990 records him as saying:

> ... using outside firms is no cheaper, but they offer experience that the audit office cannot match and it exposes his staff to the private firms' audit techniques.

Mr Taylor was thus defining the value of using outside companies. He further states:

> ... staff attrition ... is as bad as ever at 20 per cent.

He had no hope of competing with the private firms because as soon as any of his officers showed any promise, he or she would be approached by private firms. His office could not perform to its maximum because of antiquated practices old staff were implementing.

In the *Business Review Weekly* of 9 February 1990 the Victorian Auditor-General said he was experiencing the same problem with staff attrition and the competitive nature and remuneration packages of some of the larger firms. He gave the example of two of his senior audit directors who had received 45 per cent salary increases when they joined private sector firms. He says he has nothing against them but jokes:

> I might join them myself.

He realised he could not keep up with the times and work in an environment that was subject to outside

firms creating a better service delivery and, therefore, offering an environment where auditors were in a better position to negotiate contracts if they delivered the goods. He is admitting that his office was understaffed and underresourced through the competitive nature of the environment in which they were placed.

The opposition has always queried the value of privatisation and the use of private firms in public sector auditing. That is a valid concern because there is always the possibility of an element of corruption within firms, which has been demonstrated in other states during the 1980s. I refer the house to the Australian Accounting Research Foundation guidelines for the conduct of audits:

> ... the auditor has a legal and professional duty to exercise reasonable skill and care with respect to the planning and conduct of the audit so as to have a reasonable expectation of detecting material misstatements arising as a result of irregularities.

Because of what happened in the 1980s the commonwealth government implemented changes to the Corporations Law in 1992 to give statutory provisions and regulations to those auditors who were not meeting their obligations. Subsections 332(9) and (10) of the federal Corporations Act outline the procedures if an auditor encounters any question of illegality or fraud. The act details the actions to be taken by auditors in that situation and to whom they should report. Auditors can report to various organisations, whether it be the Australian Securities Commission, the Australian Taxation Office, the Victorian or commonwealth police, or any officer who has statutory power to investigate such alleged illegality. Not only do auditors have a responsibility and duty as outlined by their own professional guidelines but they face obligations imposed by Corporations Law.

Furthermore, the Australian Securities Commission acts as a regulatory watchdog. Section 1308(2) of the Corporations Act provides penalties and sanctions if auditors are thus found to be operating illegally. The penalties are a $10 000 fine or up to two years gaol. That may not sound much for a large corporation to pay but the Australian Securities Commission can also enter the name of a firm into its black book. Any private sector firm entered into the black book would have its national and international reputation damaged to such an extent that the company would no longer receive any work and, thus, would be unable to operate in the future.

The standards set by the profession, the regulatory guidelines contained in statutes and the threat of a black-book listing for private sector firms not meeting their objectives mean that worthwhile deterrents and standards are set to ensure private sector firms meet their auditing obligations. That is no different from what happens now in the public sector.

The proposed legislation establishes Audit Victoria and will lead to a more competitive framework so that the competition for auditing work by other public sector auditing firms will increase. There is no doubt that the standards will improve. The argument about corruption, lack of privacy or collusion cannot be substantiated when such deterrents clearly exist.

It is also hypocritical for the opposition to accuse the government of nobbling the Auditor-General or of trying to lessen his powers. Although I was not a member of Parliament in 1989, I remember the episode involving the then Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Dr Coghill, who requested advance copies of reports so he might vet them before they were tabled in Parliament. He wanted to read the reports to ensure they were not damaging to the former Labor government. He also challenged the powers of the Auditor-General to carry out performance audits, arguing that his powers were strictly limited to financial audits only. He intended to scrutinise the Auditor-General's budget to ensure he was prevented from carrying out performance audits.

Yet, today the opposition has the audacity to accuse the government of nobbling the Auditor-General's powers. It has been well documented in various forums that the then Speaker, during the Labor Party's time in office, blatantly interfered with the Auditor-General's processes and gave clear government directions on what his powers were to be. That situation is best summarised in the 4 May 1989 editorial of the *Herald*:

> The government maintains Dr Coghill acted entirely properly. In the driest technical sense this is true. But it overlooks the alarming political implications of a Speaker from the same party intervening in a way which could so easily be construed as shielding the government's actions from public gaze.

As an aside, the report that Dr Coghill tried to vet before its tabling involved the Auditor-General casting doubt on the state's workers compensation scheme — that is, Workcare. It is ironic that this

week the house is debating two pieces of legislation dealing with the Auditor-General and Workcover, issues with which the Labor government interfered in those days.

In his report on the Treasurer's 1989 budget statement the Auditor-General said that in compiling his report he was denied access to the then State Taxation Office and the Stamp Duties Office. He was denied access to vital records and, thus, was unable to fully assess his predictions because of the hindrance from government departments.

At the time the Auditor-General stated that his access to state government departments had never previously been questioned. That fact was best summed up by the Treasurer, then in opposition, who referred to the fact that the government had refused to allow the Auditor-General to investigate vital departmental books and records, raising the spectre of the Auditor-General being hamstrung by the government. One can only shake one's head at the opposition's accusing this government of trying to nobble the Auditor-General. In fact the government is increasing his powers and would never go to the extent of directly interfering with the process which, as I have so clearly demonstrated, occurred numerous times in the past.

The then Premier, Mr Cain, was accused at the time of running a campaign for the Auditor-General to toe the government line. He was not happy with the information the Auditor-General was producing. He actually challenged the powers the Auditor-General had, stating the reports were confidential. What did he want — to stop access to any reports at all?

Leon Gettler, state political editor of the *Sun*, as it then was, said in an article on 16 September 1989:

> True, Mr Baragwanath's office is not exempted under the secrecy provisions of the legislation covering those offices.
>
> But it was never off limits.

Mr Gettler made the point that one of the fundamental matters to come out of the Fitzgerald report into criminal corruption in the state of Queensland was the inability of the Auditor-General of that state to access public financial records. I do not want to draw a comparison between the previous Labor government in Victoria and the issues addressed by the Fitzgerald inquiry in Queensland, but when there are such striking similarities all sorts of questions and issues are bound to be raised.

What is even more alarming is that the Leader of the Opposition in this house, Mr Theo Theophanous, was chairman of the joint-party Economic and Budget Review Committee in 1989 when the Auditor-General released a response in relation to government debt. That report was criticised by the then Treasurer, Tom Roper, as being out by $8 billion. Mr Baragwanath predicted the state debt would reach $32 billion. We now know that was correct, but the previous Labor government would never acknowledge that.

The committee chairman, Mr Theophanous, wanted to appoint an independent auditor to audit the Auditor-General's office. The government of the day was not happy with the facts the Auditor-General was presenting in his report, so it thought it would jump on the bandwagon and appoint an independent auditor to audit the Auditor-General's office to make sure that the message the government wanted to be perceived as correct would be conveyed.

Mr Theophanous said that the act at that time made it quite clear that the committee should give direction to the independent auditor, again involving the government in audit provisions. He said his personal opinion was that a question mark hung over both the style and the context of the latest report and that it was at least arguable that the Auditor-General had overstepped the mark by commenting on government policies.

Mr Theophanous did not like the Auditor-General commenting on government policy, identifying economic mishaps and mismanagement of public funds, so much so that he wanted to appoint his own person so a story could be put out that was both misleading and factually incorrect. He said at the time:

> That information is purely designed to capture the emotive aspect of the impact of debt.

He was playing it down once again. He continued:

> The state has more than $80 million in assets, and that represents 2.5 times the $7430 debt for every Victorian. Under that calculation, we are all better off by $10 000.

Obviously Mr Theophanous did not care that the state was $32 billion in debt; according to him, if the state debt was calculated in relation to state assets

we were all better off by $10 000, so why would the government worry about it?

I shall conclude on this point: auditors, whether in the public or the private sector, must have certain qualifications and meet certain criteria. They have to have proper economic, accounting or other appropriate tertiary qualifications. They need to be members of the CPA or the institute, and they need to be selected by their firms as being capable of carrying out that job. People who criticise this process — the establishment of Audit Victoria and the Auditor-General's becoming an officer of the Parliament — are in fact criticising the Auditor-General's Office as it stands at present, because in future the same people with the same qualifications and experience will still carry out public sector audits.

When there is an environment of contestability where private companies are able to offer larger remuneration packages and better working conditions and provide an advantage over public sector management and wage negotiation principles, certainly one would assume the service delivered by the private sector would be equally good. I have outlined the penalties, sanctions and regulations applicable to the private sector and I do not think any private sector agency in Victoria would risk its reputation by doing anything other than what was ethical.

Hon. JEAN McLEAN (Melbourne West) — The Auditor-General was often a thorn in the side of the Labor government, as Mrs Hogg and Mr Pullen can attest. Scrutiny is not what governments want, but it is what oppositions want. It is what Mrs Varty spelt out so eloquently when she was in opposition.

Hon. Rosemary Varty — Tell me what I said, Jean.

Hon. JEAN McLEAN — No, you can tell us when you make your speech. Scrutiny is also what our electors want. Members of the public decide for whom they will vote in an election from the information supplied by the political parties — the promises of good economic management, better schools and services, more jobs and so on. Having made their decision they have little knowledge or control over what happens after that or of how their money is spent. They have to hope their elected representatives know what they are doing and what is being done in their name.

As honourable members know, it is difficult for a government backbencher, let alone an opposition member, to find out what is being done in any given government department. Without information about the government's activities or the research staff to scrutinise it there is no accountability. The only time we learn in detail what is going on is through the Auditor-General's reports.

The Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants is concerned about the independence of the Auditor-General. Mr Norman Geschke, the former Ombudsman, has expressed his dismay at this bill. Every newspaper in the state, indeed the country, has expressed grave fears about the future accountability of this government if this bill is passed. The Victorian Bar Council has actively criticised the proposed legislation, as have the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties and the Australasian Council of Auditors-General, which comprises every Auditor-General in the country. The New Zealand Auditor-General, on whom we were told this bill was modelled, is opposed to it. He said he would not work under the proposed Victorian system. He said the benchmark is that you cannot split up your audit office. I have not heard a single group or person of integrity support the proposed legislation.

Surely it is fundamental to the public interest that we have a system of checks and balances to ensure our system of government is working efficiently and effectively. It might be an uncomfortable truth, but when there is insufficient or no information forthcoming it is possible, indeed probable, that manipulation and corruption will exist.

Many Liberal members are uncomfortable with the bill. One even resigned over it. Roger Pescott showed that he had courage, dignity and integrity. Liberal Party members intend to pursue their determination to overturn this outrageous bill at their council meeting in April. It seems obvious that our Premier does not like criticism or scrutiny. He made it clear to his party members that he would ignore any special decisions of the state council. Given that his government has absolute control over both houses of Parliament, it is easy for him to stifle effective criticism from the opposition.

The Premier also wants to silence the churches, the judiciary and any other source of criticism. The former Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Bernard Bongiorno, and the former Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, Moira Rayner, were given short shrift. Now the Auditor-General is being nobbled to stop Parliament and the public finding out what is really going on.

In his present auditing role the Auditor-General gives Parliament the assurance that the instruments of government are accountable for their performance. In giving the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee his forward program for the 1997-98 financial year and beyond, he said he would be looking at performance audits; the management of the gaming industry; the Schools of the Future program; public transport reform programs; child care and kindergartens; case-mix funding in public hospitals; outsourcing in the public sector; the privatisation of a project yet to be picked; municipalities across the board, including their management of compulsory competitive tendering; higher education amalgamations; intellectual disability services; and a follow-up of the drinking water audit.

In his speech Mr Forwood promised Parliament that every one of the audits mentioned in the program would be carried out. They are all of vital interest to Parliament and the public. One would have thought the government would be happy to prove how effective its reforms have been, both performance-wise and financially. Instead, it has decided to set up a system that will revert back to financial auditing, not value-for-money or performance auditing.

In 1990 the Cain government gave the Auditor-General the very powers this government is now removing from him. The Labor government was not scared of performance audits, but this government is obviously scared of scrutiny. In his second letter to members of Parliament, dated 17 November, the Auditor-General said:

> My overriding concern with the proposed amendments is that the Auditor-General does not have the power to directly conduct audits in his or her own right, which leaves the Auditor-General without an ongoing audit capability to serve the interests of the Parliament and the community.

He also said:

> I know of no other external audit situation, in either the public or private sectors, where the auditor is faced with such serious operational restrictions.

The Premier obviously does not want the Auditor-General to have an ongoing audit capability to serve the interests of Parliament. The Premier is as good as telling Parliament and the public to rack off!

Mr Kennett insists that big events are the way to go. We were told to applaud our major events chief, Ron Walker, for prising the grand prix away from Adelaide. We were also told that the loss of parkland was a small price to pay for a car race that would put Victoria on the map and that the injection of profits into the local — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. B. W. Bishop) — Order! There is a lot of audible conversation in the chamber, which is making it difficult for Hansard to hear. If members wish to converse, I ask them to keep their voices down.

An honourable member interjected.

Hon. JEAN McLEAN — We were told the injection of profits into the local economy was more important than the damage that was done to residents' houses. The fact that the grand prix cost taxpayers $8.4 million came out only because the Auditor-General had the independence to report the facts to Parliament — and that is the point, Mr Boardman. Then there was another coup. The staging of the motorcycle grand prix at Cowes, which we were told would also help build national pride and bolster our coffers, cost taxpayers a cool $3.2 million.

The government should have come clean about the fact that those car and motorbike races would cost taxpayers $12 million to $15 million-odd and let them decide whether to go ahead. If it were not for the Auditor-General, the government would have got away with telling taxpayers that its mate, Ron Walker, had made them a fortune.

The Auditor-General also reported on the Metropolitan Ambulance Service, which involved Intergraph, and on the extra 150 tables for Crown Casino, as a result of which taxpayers were short-changed $174 million. I have quite a few conservative friends, all of whom cheered when Jeff Kennett was elected. They believed in his slogan — 'Victoria on the move' — because they believed his programs would prove beneficial to the state. Their attitude has changed.

They are worried about the casino culture, disastrous city planning, the architecture of the museum, with its ugly blades obscuring the Exhibition Building dome, and other stuff-ups. But they would still have made excuses and voted Liberal again — until the introduction of the

Auditor-General's bill. Now even they feel the Premier has gone too far.

They wanted strong leadership, but they also wanted a democracy. Whether they are right or wrong, their perception is of a gigantic covering up of financial mismanagement that will not deliver a fair or just society. My conservative friends might vote Liberal, but they still want a society that is fair and just.

The government's use of national competition policy and the Hilmer report as a smokescreen to hide the real reasons for changes to the Auditor-General's role does not wash. In a recent letter, the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants said:

> We do not accept competition policy is sufficient justification for the establishment of Audit Victoria or for having it responsible to the Treasurer rather than the Auditor-General.

An article on page 4 of today's *Age* says:

> Rank-and-file Liberals angry at the state government's changes to the Auditor-General's office have decided not to call a special state council and will instead use the party's next regular meeting to oppose the changes.

According to the article, they decided to do so because Mr Kennett told them he would not take any notice of a special state council. Those members of the Liberal Party oppose the legislation and want to overturn it in April. The opposition opposes the bill. I believe honourable members opposite should follow the example set by their membership and do the same.

Hon. S. de C. WILDING (Chelsea) — I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words on the bill. I want to remove a lot of the emotion and speculation from the debate by dealing purely and simply with the facts. Many people need a concise version of what is happening, and I intend to give it to them, without any technical detail or historical background.

I will explain my reasons for supporting the bill as simply as possible so that anyone listening to or reading my contribution will not have their minds cluttered by unnecessary, emotive issues.

In point form, the Auditor-General will continue to be independent of the political process. Independence will be enhanced by this bill. The best auditing expertise will be available through competition and all audits will be conducted under contract to the Auditor-General.

The Auditor-General will have full control of the selection, appointment, payment and dismissal of auditors and he will also have complete discretion in exercising functions and power. The Auditor-General will not be subject to direction from anyone in relation to these powers and functions. The financial and performance audits and the Auditor-General's annual report on ministerial portfolios will continue. These will not be abolished.

To enhance the independence of the office the Auditor-General will be an independent officer of the Parliament and not of the Premier's department, and he will retain all powers to directly investigate and report to Parliament on any matters arising from any audit.

From July 1998 the Auditor-General will use a public tender process to select and appoint auditors. If he choses to bypass the tender process he or she may do so and will report to the Parliament on the reasons for so doing. The Auditor-General will be free to select auditors from the private sector or to use Audit Victoria, which is the new public sector accounting organisation, to be established as part of the reforms. The Auditor-General will consult in the appointment of Audit Victoria's board and staff.

The government will not direct Audit Victoria in any audit matters. The Auditor-General will have a fully resourced office of professional staff who will assist him or her to monitor and check the work of appointed auditors, determine all priorities and set the scope of all audits. The Auditor-General alone will sign the audit opinion only when it has been completed satisfactorily to his or her requirements and will be the only person to report to Parliament.

The Auditor-General is empowered to conduct any investigation he or she feels is necessary to report on audits to Parliament. This will again ensure the independence of the Auditor-General. The quality of public sector audits will be improved through the process, and the independent effectiveness and accountability of public sector audits are also ensured.

Certain clauses in the bill, such as clause 7, which inserts proposed sections 4A and 4B, specifically protect the independence of the Auditor-General. Proposed section 4A states:

> (1) The Auditor-General is an independent officer of the Parliament.

Pure and simple! So the bill ensures the independence of the Auditor-General. The bill follows the report of an independent panel appointed to review the Audit Act in line with government commitments under national competition policy. The government has consulted widely to develop a reform model that preserves the Auditor-General's independence with a competitive framework for audits.

I believe the bill will ensure the independent status of the Auditor-General and provide Victoria with an effective and accountable auditing system. I commend the bill to the house.

Hon. B. T. PULLEN (Melbourne) — I oppose this legislation. Despite the answers given by some members of the government in defending it, it does violence to the independence of the Auditor-General and considerably weakens the ability of any government or Parliament to receive fearless and accurate advice on government performance and, in particular, for advice that to be available to Victorians through the reports presented to Parliament.

It is a credit to the people of Victoria that they are so perceptive that they understand this, despite the complications of the legislation, the process of review and the technical smokescreen that can be put up. The people of Victoria who have opposed the move have a strong sense that it is in their interests to do so.

Some honourable members were present the other night when the spill-over from the protest meeting held in the Melbourne town hall that was addressed by Mr Norman Geschke — a fine public servant respected as a very independent Ombudsman, as Mrs Hogg said. The spill-over occurred when people came to Parliament House to attend the debate on the Audit (Amendment) Bill in the lower house and some of them could not get into the chamber and were milling round in Queen's Hall or the foyer. It looked to me as if they were people from the Hawthorn side of the Yarra rather than the Richmond side. In fact they could easily have been confused with a group of Liberal Party members brought along by one of the members opposite as guests for a tour of Parliament House.

Clearly this issue has crossed party lines in terms of people's previous voting histories and intentions. The way they have reacted to it has happened spontaneously. If members of the government take comfort in the idea that this has somehow been organised or manufactured by the Labor Party, they are absolutely wrong, because if they take the trouble to talk to the many people involved they will find that the Labor Party represents just one group among many who are concerned about this issue. In my opinion the Labor Party has not been a major player in the efforts that have been made. People from churches, community organisations — a wide range of people spread geographically all over Melbourne — have been touched by and concerned about this issue. They have a very real perception that this is a crucial time in Victoria's history.

Victoria has had a very liberal democratic history. For whatever reason, whether it is because of the influx and mingling of people in the period of the gold rush or the fact that it has been the most industrialised state in Australia and people suffered great hardship during the Depression or a combination of other reasons, there has been a sense of Victoria being a progressive and liberal state, not in the party Liberal term but in the wider liberal term where people are not bound to do things simply out of their own selfish interests. Of course economic issues are often dominant and when times are difficult they become more dominant, but Victorians have always recognised the importance of the community, of caring and providing for people who have not always been as successful as others, and that has been a feature of successive governments.

I believe that liberal tradition was inherited by the Labor government and John Cain when we came to office. It was inherited not as something new but as something inherently worth while, a tradition of government that included an honest, professional public service where advice was given, where people — whatever their political voting position — could give neutral, accurate and proper advice to incoming ministers and could perform as a professional back-up group for those running a government. In many other areas institutions that had been supported by the previous Liberal governments endured and continued to be supported by the Cain government.

In his earnestness for some of these things I believe John Cain significantly enhanced and improved those areas. In particular he has to be regarded as having been foremost in setting standards for the proper conduct of public life. He set hard standards for people in our government to follow because he applied them rigorously and at a personal level and insisted that all others do the same. Sometimes he was ridiculed because he carried the standards to

what others thought were extremes in ways such as always reminding members of Parliament, whether they were ministers or not, that they were still ordinary Victorians and must sit in the back of planes when they travelled. We always travelled that way. As a minister I travelled at the back of the plane and not in the first-class section because John always felt in his idiosyncratic way that he was an ordinary Victorian who had been endowed with the responsibilities of office and that that was part of responsible government. He took these things seriously.

An Honourable Member — Obviously Paul Keating does not believe the same thing!

Hon. B. T. PULLEN — I am talking about John Cain. Your interjections show that you are not following this serious debate. At present we are witnessing a serious change, and this bill is only part of it. It is a change to a centralised form of government. Many ministers and members of the government would not like to admit that fact. However, Premier Kennett has produced a very different kind of government from any we have seen in the past. Some of the steps taken have passed unnoticed, some have been objected to and some have been translated into legislation.

The public service is not now the neutral public service it used to be. Senior public servants are now on contracts and are bound to the government in a much more political way. Their futures and their bonuses depend on performance. If they stand up and say, 'I do not believe this is the correct way to go ahead' their career development is doomed. They know that.

Furthermore, public servants are progressively being gagged by the government of the day. Despite the fact that it is a healthy part of democracy some dislike public servants saying they do not like what their masters are doing. Despite what honourable members opposite might think, the Labor government endured and suffered criticism but never stamped it out. In my former housing portfolio some groups that received funding objected to the things the Labor government was doing. However, their funding was not withheld because in democracies criticism is healthy. This government is systematically stamping out any spark of that. Through the invoking by the Premier of an ancient rule public servants are now prohibited from speaking out even on subjects outside those in which they are involved. Public servants are getting the message that they are no longer citizens with rights and principles who can stand up and say what they think. They know the bread they put into the mouths of their families depends on their subscribing to the rule of Kennett.

In that sense the role of ministers is more limited. This government has some talented and able ministers. All governments have a number of people who perform well. One example is the Minister for Finance, who is defending this legislation. He had not seen the bill before it was introduced and was not intimately involved in it, but he knows the game is set. He is unable to control anything because the control is centralised.

Senior public servants are drawn much more closely into the web controlled by the Premier. Ministers who do not have the confidence or the ear of the Premier perform their functions within that tight net. They perform within a philosophy that is very different from the one that pertained in the past. It is a philosophy of competition. It is a philosophy of dog eat dog, a philosophy where self-interest is paramount, and it pervades this government. The competition policy provides a convenient excuse to take another step to reduce critical voices. I admit it came from thoughts supported by people in my party. However, the way this government used that policy to achieve an end is extremely cynical.

Several people have mentioned the changes we have seen. I do not want to bore people by going through a chronology of events. I refer to the removal of the DPP, the equal opportunity commissioner and other things that remain in the consciousness of people such as the removal of the elected membership of community health centres and community service organisations having clauses put in their funding contracts to prevent them commenting on public policy.

All those pressures prevent democracy working in this state. This focusing, but perhaps not final, step goes to the heart of the Auditor-General's ability to comment on and criticise the economic performance of the government, its departments and instrumentalities. That is what this debate is about. Although we know we cannot influence the result, at least we can say Jeff Kennett does not pretend this house means anything. The sittings of the other house have ended, so even if this house found an enormous flaw in the legislation it could do nothing about it. The bill would have to be held over until the next sittings. Therefore, it is important to put on the record the importance of this change to Victoria.

Although the bill will be debated in the committee stage I will discuss its detail and the review that was used to bring it about. The review was surprisingly thin. When one reads it one finds that it does not contain cogent arguments as to why the new system will be better. One does not find any detailed arguments that justify the restrictions on efficiency and effectiveness being placed on the operation of the person who occupies the post of Auditor-General.

The review suggested three options. One was to stay as we are, the second was the model we are now looking at and the third was self-regulation, with departments appointing their own auditors. The third option was included as a straw man so that the middle option would look to be the most reasonable. The idea that departments choose their own auditors defies belief in terms of any proper check on the system. It is clear that the notion of information in relation to, say, auditing and accountancy not being like any other commodity has been totally misunderstood. It is not a question of competing suppliers of iron ore or grain crops. Auditing and accounting procedures are specialised. To think that one gets a better job by having firms compete for a particular job is to misunderstand the nature of how auditing works.

I have had direct experience of such competition in engineering, architecture and other areas. If one has consultants competing for work the amount of effort each firm has to put into getting past the first barrier adds enormous overheads, including the cost of presenting material, which is sometimes equivalent to a significant percentage of the total job cost. In proving that they are equal to the task some firms' preparatory efforts are often of the order of $10 000. Because all firms have to do that to compete, such amounts are inevitably built into their overheads and prices increase. It is built into the cost of all the bids. After the first flush of competition, costs often rise uniformly across the whole area.

Sitting suspended 6.02 p.m. until 8.02 p.m.

Hon. B. T. PULLEN — Before the suspension of the sitting for dinner I indicated that I would look at some of the detail of the proposed legislation, relate it to the review that has taken place and try to explain why it was not a particularly good review, why its conclusions did not follow from the work and why the bill does not meet the needs it is supposed to meet.

I reiterate that in an area that deals with accountancy expertise some of the usual benefits and applications that people think of when talking about competition do not apply. The structures in accountancy and the way the discipline works are profoundly different from other areas. Firstly, we are talking about a white-collar-employee area in which the salaries are high — in some cases obscenely so — and different firms have vastly different levels of bargaining power — a lot of amalgamations are being undertaken in the industry and not all firms will be able to take up the challenge equally in a competitive situation.

There is also considerable evidence of benefits in relation to quality auditing from the Auditor-General being involved in sustained work in departments, particularly on performance audits. The Auditor-General's office produces reports that add value to the understanding of where effectiveness might be improved and efficiencies gained. For instance, when one aspect of a department is looked at in producing a report, information is often picked up about areas that may not have been the focus of the particular inquiry, and that information may lead the Auditor-General's Office to recognise that other areas need to be followed up.

In addition, a sense of history and ongoing involvement give the Auditor-General's staff an understanding of how organisations work. It is not easy to replicate that when the lowest tenderer or most price competitive firm is brought in. The latter process does not necessarily build up an understanding of the broader picture.

When speaking about her experience as a minister Mrs Hogg said that at times she received from the Auditor-General reports that were critical of some parts of her administration. I have had the same experience. Although at the time I found the reports annoying and disruptive of what I wanted to do, on reflection I always found that they assisted me. Once I got over the bad press or having to handle the crisis that sometimes resulted when part of an administration was put under scrutiny, the report guided me in looking at areas of administration to which I might not otherwise have had my attention directed.

I did not always agree that the Auditor-General's examination was totally fair and balanced, but there was always an element of pointing up something that had not been clear. I found that the second time around the relationship between the auditor and the

departmental officers improved the understanding of both of the job to be done.

For example, I recall that a financial audit into cool burning to reduce the risk of wildfires simply looked at whether the funds were being expended appropriately and that there was no misappropriation of funds, whereas a performance audit considered whether the objectives to burn a certain area of forest in the right places had been achieved within the time in which the department had said it would do the work — that is, the performance of the department was being measured against the objectives that it had set itself. Audit pointed out that in some areas the department was deficient in meeting its targets.

Apart from the vagaries of the weather, the achievement of the targets was complicated by the debates that were occurring in the department at the time as to whether it was ecologically appropriate to proceed in areas adjacent to national parks or forests. The debate that influenced the performance of the department went beyond a financial debate.

The performance audit was beneficial because it brought out into the open that the debate could not be conducted without its implication for the department's performance against its targets being made more explicit. It was a helpful discipline in the department's facing up to the contradictory objectives that might be involved in genuine forest and national park management to have the Auditor-General point that out.

A one-off approach at arm's length by Audit Victoria or a selection year by year of people contracted to do such work will not measure up to the effective performance audit scenario that exists with a sustained approach. I am not objecting to the use of private firms to augment the work of the Auditor-General's staff, and I concede that from his writings the Auditor-General has also never objected to that. The figures for 1995–96 show that of audit work worth about $17.7 million some $5.5 million, approximately 30 per cent, was actually let out to private firms.

The Auditor-General was able to choose the areas he considered appropriate to tender out because of people's expertise in particular areas. He was able to make appropriate management decisions to employ people logically. However, it is now proposed that he will be at arm's length and that he will have to either rely on the work done by Audit Victoria or by private firms in competition. He will have control of an exceptional kind only. He can vary the circumstances under the legislation only if he believes there is good reason. Because he must then report to Parliament to justify that reason, it will have to be a strong one. When the Auditor-General receives reports he will have the opportunity of commenting on them. However, under the legislation he has limited opportunity to vary the reports he receives before presenting them to Parliament. In no sense can he effectively undertake further in-depth investigations. He will be a prisoner of a process that has already been put in train.

Audit Victoria will not report to him because it will report to the responsible minister, either the Minister for Finance or the Treasurer. It has been put in a different area. It will be at arms-length and separate from the operation of the Auditor-General. That is not the current situation. In that sense we must take heed of what the Auditor-General has said. He has continued to oppose the changes because of the impact they will have on his ability to do his job. In the latest letter the Auditor-General wrote to all members of Parliament he made that abundantly clear. On one hand government members have said they have been pleased with his work, particularly when he criticised the former Labor government, but on the other hand they are unhappy when he investigates the current administration. On one hand they say the audit office has been excellent — the review indicated that the audit office was performing well — but on the other hand when the Auditor-General criticises the changes to the legislation he somehow loses credibility. His views have not been picked up by the government and it is prepared to dismiss his advice. No satisfactory answer has been given to the fact that he is apparently credible for the work he has always done and in the view of his peers, but not credible when he wrote:

> The government's action to strip the Auditor-General of the powers to directly conduct audits will mean that current audit operational staff will be transferred to a government body (Audit Victoria) with staff answerable to a board ultimately appointed by the government. This action will disintegrate the existing experience and knowledge capital of my office which is now a distinctive community asset and has a high standing world wide in public sector auditing. Audit Victoria will ultimately be involved in a range of functions on a commercial basis and therefore will not be able to perform the dedicated external audit role of protecting the public interest, which has been the hallmark of successive Auditors-General in Victoria ...

> The changes proposed to the audit legislation represent a fundamental misunderstanding of the purchaser/provider relationship which exists between a parliament and an Auditor-General and appear to be based on a misconception that I undertake external audit services for the executive government rather than for the Parliament.

The Auditor-General says that because the government has cast him in the role of a service purchaser it therefore considers it appropriate to provide a competitive area for him to obtain services that are distanced from him. The Auditor-General says in reply that Parliament is the purchaser of services on behalf of Victorians and he is the provider. He can only provide if he is given the ability and the right to do so.

Mr Hartigan shakes his head, but that is the view of the person doing the job. An ideological view has been put which has not been argued clearly in any of the papers of the review committee I have examined. It is based on the belief that competition will provide virtues without explaining in any detail how those virtues will appear in dollar or quality terms. Its argument rests on the fact that there is a head of agreement to impose competitive practices everywhere and therefore it is appropriate for Victoria to be the first cab off the rank — the experimental cab — to test that theory without realising or being prepared to face up to the importance of the Auditor-General's activities to Victoria.

My thesis is as follows. The reason for this bill is that it suits the Premier's centralisation of government activities. It is convenient for him to pick up the rhetoric and theory that permeates Australia. It was certainly so when the Hilmer competition report was published. The Premier is applying that rhetoric to suit his own needs and to continue centralisation. Because they are so wedded to the ideological view that competition will solve everything and that somehow the bill will build a better foundation some government members are falling into line. Other government members accept it because they are unable to move far from the net the Premier has put over them. That happens regardless of whether they are ministers or members, even though they might have some questions about whether it is the appropriate way to go.

There is a range of opinion in the community about how the changes will affect Victoria which I believe is intuitively correct. The more informed opinion is questioning it. Under normal circumstances, the government would have paused. However, it cannot do so because of the Premier's need to increase his centralised control. Thus the bill will be seen as a turning point in both the government's credibility and the over-application of these types of theories. That happened with Thatcher. Victoria is now out of step. It is obvious to many that the world does not operate on competition alone.

The notion that nature is red in tooth and claw and that that is the appropriate way to behave is a crude theoretical extrapolation to impose on the lives of Victorians. Even in nature many successful plants and animals cooperate in a symbiotic relationship with the environment rather than existing purely by competing. Somehow the debate has been captured and reduced to this neo-classical economic view that is held with such force by the Kennett government. Although this bill is only an example, I believe it is the turning point. I am proud to say that at least the opposition, along with the community, is prepared to argue against the government's taking this fatal step.

In one way this legislation has been a gift because it makes clear that the Labor Party as the next government will restore the role of the Auditor-General. It gives the Labor Party a simple and understandable campaign objective. The more we see the excesses and problems arising out of the government's administration and economic activities, the more they will be sheeted home to the changes and the reduction in the effectiveness of the operation of the Office of the Auditor-General, which so many people see as important to good governance in this state.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN (Geelong) — I have listened with varying degrees of interest and enthusiasm to the contributions made by opposition members, but I would rather reflect upon the elements that make for good financial administration by governments.

The first important element of government is the desire to run its business transparently and efficiently. The government must have the capacity to administer its business soundly and efficiently. It must have an administration with the structure, capability and management systems to implement government decisions. The government must give the public a good understanding of its ideological objectives and the means by which it seeks to achieve those ideologies before it starts making statements about how it will operate.

For example, the government may tell the people it hopes will re-elect it that it plans to keep the level of government debt at a fixed proportion of gross state product or gross domestic product, so its citizens have some idea of the extent to which the government and the private sector are intending to interface. It may point out that it plans to run a balanced budget year by year or over a reasonably short period which reflects the time it is in government. It may discuss the need for an approach so that its revenue covers its expenditure, including depreciation and interest costs. It may say these are objectives. It may mention the extent to which it wishes to transfer income from one group in the community to another.

Indeed, with the $20 billion the government will spend that is effectively what it is doing. I am surprised it has escaped Mr Pullen's attention — to use his words — that tooth and claw rule the economy and that the $20 billion transfer the government is responsible for is to moderate the force of a completely unfettered and free market so we have as a raison d'être the role of providing a civilised society. If a government does that it has a responsibility to inform its constituents, the taxpayers, that it proposes to spend their money wisely. I mean wisely not in the sense of my making a pejorative statement about what ideological or philosophical approach should be adopted by government, but in the sense that the government will be a good steward of the resources placed at its disposal.

Hon. Pat Power — Says who?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I am speaking, Mr Power; you will have the chance to express your philosophy. A government must plan to spend money wisely and be accountable to voters. If you wish to make transfer payments to one group to ameliorate their condition you must make those payments transparent; you must not hide them in a distorted cross-subsidy that not only fails to make available to the public the cost but distorts the allocation of resources to the extent that you cannot run the business properly.

I was reminded of a similar situation last week when Mr Nardella spoke on the Water Acts (Further Amendment) Bill. He was horrified at the prospect of the government running the water authorities in Melbourne so that price bore some relationship to cost. He said the government was acting purely because it wished to privatise. I should have thought the reason was to inject sense into how people make judgments about the amount of water they use and so the government could assess how much money to invest in the system. To suggest that as a government policy objective you should run a business incompetently so nobody understands what is happening makes nonsense of the desire for an efficient governmental system.

Mr Nardella had some fanciful ideas when he talked about these things. He said the only reason to reduce debt on water authorities and make them more profitable was so that they would be more attractive to private buyers. I have not the faintest idea why he thinks the level of debt has anything to do with it. I thought the reason for doing those things was to lower costs. Apparently I was mistaken.

I am trying to make the point that a government that wishes to be responsible in the stewardship of the taxpayers' resources is a government that is capable of understanding what that means. It worries me that a shadow minister can so lamentably fail to understand the basics of accounting practice. This is a question of arithmetic not ideology. The complete ignorance of and failure to recognise how important it is that governments set the tone, the policies and processes by which government is kept honest is of serious concern when talking about the Auditor-General.

Mr Pullen talked about former Premier John Cain. I did not know John Cain but I would say that it is penny wise and pound foolish to be concerned about saving the pennies while dropping $10 billion or $12 billion on the ground through mismanagement. It is all very well to have personal ethics — I have no criticism of them — but it would have been be nice if at the same time Mr Cain had paid attention to the big dollars that were lost.

To argue that the role of Auditor-General is in some competitive way to defend the state against the incompetence, excesses and dishonesty of government is to fail to recognise the role of government and to place on the Auditor-General a responsibility which is not and should never be his. It is the responsibility of governments to set up systems and processes that will enable the state to be run properly and responsibly.

Let me go further. It is not sufficient that the government wishes to do that or that ministers and the government have the capacity to do it. There must be in place in the government — the departments and enterprises that constitute the government's activities — administrative,

management and financial systems that will enable it to identify what is happening and build in disciplines that will ensure that the sorts of errors that concern us all are not allowed to occur continually and are picked up and corrected as quickly as possible. The government is working hard in that respect.

The opposition apparently supports the introduction of accrual accounting. Accrual accounting does a couple of things. It enables departments to understand the full costs of their operations — not only the direct labour costs. That is important for reasons I will come to later, but it is also important in relation to running accounting and financial management systems. For example, those systems require each department to set itself objectives, whether they be financial, operational or the sort referred to by Mr Pullen, and those objectives become part of the budget process. Departments, ministers and the government as a whole establish resource allocations against those objectives.

Previously I referred to the issues of making sure in the provision of any services that costs and prices follow fairly closely and that any obligations — the so-called consumer service obligations — are met by direct budgetary transfers rather than by cross-subsidies. One of the reasons for allocating resources that way is to have a consistent policy across all areas of expenditure that will at least provide an understanding of where the public will get the best value out of government administration and enable prioritisation to take place. A good government will worry about the electorate as a whole, not about particular vested interests. It will not run its business to protect one group to the disadvantage of others. It will run its business to allocate the resources in the fairest way possible.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — When are you going to start doing that?

Hon. Pat Power — Is that why all the poker machines are in the northern and western suburbs?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Opposition members appear happy to get into a discussion on the issue. I will get to that in due course, but having said that the government of the day has a responsibility for setting up the right systems it is unfair to then argue that it is the role of the Auditor-General to protect the people of the state against the excesses of government — it never can.

Hon. Pat Power — Report on.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — The argument being presented by the opposition is that the Auditor-General reports on the excesses of government and therefore controls it. It is not the responsibility of the Auditor-General to do that. The responsibility of the Auditor-General, and of any auditor conducting a financial audit, is to ensure that the processes which have been agreed and which control and regulate the financial and administrative aspects of government are properly observed.

It is the responsibility of governments to make sure that the data the Auditor-General uses reflects accurately what is happening in departments and enables him to understand things such as cash flows and whether decisions were properly made. It is hard to understand how under the previous financial accounting system the Auditor-General could make a useful assessment of performance when we did not allocate any of the fixed costs. With whom was he comparing the performance of department X? It beats the hell out of me. I don't know.

On my recent CPA trip I visited a number of auditors in a number of places around the world, all of whom admitted that performance reviews were late and generally the results came out some time after the incident they were reviewing had happened and most of the people involved had disappeared. They said that a political argument often arose about who did what with whom and when.

The more important issue in respect of performance reviews is to make sure the operating entities have systems available that will ensure that failures in performance will be picked up early, not two years after the event. It is even more important to have in place systems that will enable the Auditor-General to go quickly through the financial and administration areas of an organisation and identify any defects. There is no virtue in arguing that the Auditor-General is responsible for the failures of the government.

I kept hearing opposition members talk about how the former Labor government was embarrassed by the Auditor-General. To be perfectly frank, it was not embarrassed by the Auditor-General but by its own failure. It had nothing to do with the Auditor-General. I have no concern about the Auditor-General's activities in the past five years in so far as some of the reports have caused people embarrassment. I do not mind the Premier or a minister being embarrassed if the worst we have to

worry about out of an expenditure of $20 billion a year is somebody saying a process that should have been in place was not in place.

If I were in the Auditor-General's position I would see it as my duty to embarrass them and the public servants involved, but I would also want to put in place administrative and accounting systems that protected and gave public servants an opportunity to understand what was happening so they would not be embarrassed. We have been well served by a public service that is fundamentally honest and does not have its hand in the till. However, that service has been badly served by bad accounting and management practices. It has been even more badly served by inept, administratively incompetent and administratively corrupt governments. That was the problem Victoria had in the Labor years. It had nothing to do with the Auditor-General and the business of, 'Gee, we didn't like the Auditor-General when he criticised us'. The problem was not the Auditor-General but the government of the day.

I did not mind opposition members comparing the Auditor-General's comments about the current government with what he found in respect of the former Labor government and what the opposition of the day, which is now the government, found subsequently. I have no difficulty at all with that. It must be obvious to the opposition that the Auditor-General is only one element of an honest, efficient and open government — and not the most important element. The most important element is the government itself.

The current government has put in place systems that allocate resources transparently. It has put in place systems that enable the public servants who do the day-to-day running of administration to identify early on whether they have a problem. Honourable members who are interested in these things will realise that Victoria now has a budget which states that based on experience a certain level of income and expenditure is expected month by month.

Those systems will enable the government to understand what is happening with the cash flow so that the Treasury can balance its investments in a way that is consistent with the least risk and highest return. It will enable deficiencies in the system to be picked up quickly — that is, if a particular account in a budget is not operating effectively it will immediately be identifiable on a month-by-month basis. It will not be necessary to wait for a year after the Auditor-General has done his survey and made a report — generally six to nine months after the year has closed — to find out there is a mistake. Those are the sorts of systems good governments put in place, and they make the Auditor-General's job that much easier.

Let us turn to the Auditor-General himself. I received the same letter Mr Pullen received, and I replied to it courteously manner, as honourable members might expect. Not unnaturally the Auditor-General is afraid of change. We all resist change to some extent. The government has put in place a system of administration and financial management and information that will, firstly, make any auditor's job a great deal easier, and secondly, will enable the Auditor-General to actively examine the situation with a great deal more detail than he has available to him today.

I hope the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — I noted in its recent report it is starting to display some passing interest in this — will start to get itself interested in the progress of the budget by departments during the year. The important issue is not to have to wait until after the event because things then become political footballs. It does not save the state anything to find out after the event that it has lost a couple of million dollars. Savings are made through finding out about situations before they becomes so dangerous that nothing can be done about them.

As we move down the road of tax reform I hope we will see the accrual accounting system become the standard private and public accounting practice. In some respects accrual accounting is necessary in the private sector because of the taxation requirements. It is necessary to be able to identify costs and revenue to achieve a taxable profit. However, the private sector and the accounting profession have so developed the system that much more important than the system is the information that flows from it and enables organisations to run their businesses more efficiently and with less risk.

Quite clearly as we go down that road there will not be any great mystery in the way management information and financial data in government departments will vary from data that would be recognisable in the private sector. We still have a little way to go, but it is progressively moving that way. Many agencies of governments — TAFEs, hospitals and local governments — are already well advanced along the path of adopting that sort of system. There is still a little way to go but the end is close at hand.

I assure honourable members on both sides of the house that it will be a great boon to an honest government if these systems are pursued and governments are keen to make sure they have the right management and financial information systems in place. It will not be a great help to people who want to hide what they are doing. It will not be a great boon to people who do not want to manage their businesses in the way they should be managed because that will be revealed early in the piece and will demand a great deal of corrective action.

Mr Pullen talked about his concern for centralisation. He contrasted it with nothing that I could understand, other than anarchy. It is true that the coalition government works as an entity, and despite what people might think of the Premier I personally do not have any difficulty debating these issues with him and I do not know why anybody else should.

Hon. Pat Power — But you do not put on the public record what you say to him or you would get into big trouble.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I remind Mr Power of some of the things I had to say when I debated the workers compensation bill. Mr Power would be surprised at what I am prepared to put on the public record — which is more than I can say of some members of the opposition. When Mr Theophanous was two years out of government he was prepared to go back and criticise what Labor did in government. It would have been much more impressive and would have saved a lot of money if he had done it while he was in government.

Mr Power should not speak nonsense about how virtuous Labor is. Victoria would have saved a lot of money if Labor members had the guts to put up their hands because what happened under Labor was a disgrace for the Westminster system of government in a First World country — an unparalleled disaster. If greater evidence is needed of the secondary importance of the Auditor-General's role — —

Hon. Pat Power — Do you think it is disgraceful that people in the Geelong Hospital are going to a hotel?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — People at the Geelong Hospital will have a four-star — —

Hon. Pat Power — Do you think that's disgraceful?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I know all about it, Mr Power, and if you wish to debate it I will be happy to do so. It ill behoves the opposition to denigrate the medical staff at the Geelong Hospital for no other reason than selfish political point scoring. There will be absolutely no risk to the people there. It is one of the best hospitals in the state, and it is run to the highest standards. If opposition members are suggesting the Geelong Hospital does not have the best interests of its patients at heart, they are hypocrites — as usual. For them, that is standard practice.

We all remember the 10 years of malpractice, the 10 years of incompetence, the 10 years of dishonesty and the 10 years of great expense. Opposition members talk about the importance of the Auditor-General, but when they were in government they ignored him. I have heard ministers say the Auditor-General used to criticise the Labor government. If he criticised you for 10 years, why didn't you do something about it?

Hon. D. A. Nardella — We did.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — But you got worse. Mr Theophanous said, 'We knew we were in trouble with Workcover, so what could we do? We couldn't do anything. The unions rolled us so we did nothing'.

Hon. Pat Power — Not true.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — That is what he said. Are you telling me he did not say that?

Hon. Pat Power — No, I am saying that what he said is not true.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — You tell him that. All I can do is rely on the written record. The former Premier, Ms Kirner, had two big problems with Workcare: first, costs were out of control; and second, charges were too high. What did she do? She just reduced premiums by 10 per cent. No-one can tell me that is honest government, because it is not. All the Auditor-General said was, 'I guess it's government policy. If you want to be dishonest, what can I say about it? All I can ask is what happened'.

When the Labor government was in financial trouble, one former Labor minister, Mr White, responded by telling the SEC he wanted an extra dividend. When the SEC said it was not making any money, he said, 'You are not listening. I have the

authority to demand a dividend. Give me $60 million'. The SEC said it did not have $60 million and he told the commission to borrow it instead, which it did. The Auditor-General said that was not a good thing to do, but Mr White did not worry about that. He simply said, 'Stiff'. That happened time after time — the Auditor-General reported, and the Labor Party ignored him. I am getting sick and tired of beating the Labor Party, but if members opposite want a debate about the importance of the Auditor-General, I will tell them about the importance of good government. Before 1992 Victoria did not have good government, which throws into relief the fact that an Auditor-General cannot be the protector of good financial administration if the state has a bad government. I turn to the legislation.

Hon. D. A. Nardella interjected.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Mr Nardella got up the other night and gave us his views on the water authorities bill. His said we should avoid the good administration of our water authorities to ensure they were not privatised. He said he would rather our water authorities were badly administered so they did not make a profit and did not look attractive to buyers. He would rather they ran at a loss! Have you ever heard a more perverse theory of management than that?

Hon. D. A. Nardella interjected.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I suspect the real issue is not what we do about the Auditor-General but what the Labor Party would do if it got back into government. It seems as though it will do the same things it did when it was last in government: pervert good administration, look after its mates, overman the public service and push debts on to future generations. The cost of the services it will provide to win a few measly votes will be left to future taxpayers to pick up.

There can be no argument that that is what the former Labor government did. It was considered the worst Westminster-style government ever in the First World. Someone said it was worse than the British! The house may recall my view that the only government worse than Labor was the administration of George III, which lost the United States! It was an unmitigated disaster.

For Mr Nardella to talk the nonsense he on anything involving simple arithmetic casts doubt on whether the Labor Party has learnt any lessons at all. It is about time someone who believes it is the level of debt that an entity can attract that has a bearing on its value in the marketplace got some commonsense. Assets have value, not debt. Someone should teach Mr Nardella the simple facts of life so he does not make such a fool of himself. I cannot believe the Labor Party subscribes to what he says. At least half of them must not. Surely at least two or three don't! Somebody on the Labor side should take the opportunity to try to dispel the common view that Labor has learned nothing from its 10 years in government and its 5 years in opposition and that it would again be a disaster if it were elected to office.

Hon. D. A. Nardella interjected.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — We picked up $30 billion worth of debt — $10 billion without any asset backing — and have turned the state around in five years. Is Mr Nardella really saying he would have the state return to the condition in which his government left it in 1992? If he says that, he is the only one. His government left a disaster of incompetence, maladministration and dishonesty that was unparalleled in the history of government in this country.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — That's rubbish!

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — What you did was utter rubbish. The federal Labor government said yours was the worst government it had ever seen, as did the Queensland and New South Wales governments. In fact, it was unanimous.

An Opposition Member — How is Little Johnny going?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Mr Howard is doing a good job.

Opposition members interjecting.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — That is a very good point; I am glad you raised it. I will tell you a few of the things the federal government has done. It has reduced its level of borrowing in line with the action taken by Victoria. It has provided good, sensible government, reducing the demand on the money supply and cutting interest rates. The actions of the Howard government have enabled us to protect ourselves from the desperate effects of the problems experienced by our neighbours to the near north. Among other things, the Howard government will be remembered for protecting Australia against

the sorts of activities that Labor seems to think constitute good government.

The Auditor-General should not be held responsible for good government. He is there to perform an audit role, which is in two parts: firstly, to examine the financial management of government entities from year to year; and secondly, to review as he sees fit the performance of those entities. We have put accounting and management information systems in place to make sure that is the reality and to make it possible for him to do an even better job.

In addition we have constructed legislation under which the Auditor-General will report to Parliament. He will also have the sole right to select those who will carry out audits, for which there will be competition. Mr Pullen talked about engineers and architects and wondered whether or not competition was good — and I have not worked out which side he came down on. The curious thing is that the Auditor-General thinks competition is pretty good, but Mr Pullen apparently has a different view on the necessity of competitive tendering.

The legislation says that if for one reason or another the Auditor-General does not think competitive tendering will work, he has the option of avoiding it. Just as the Auditor-General would demand that a government department have a good reason for not going through the tendering process, so the Auditor-General will, when asked, have to advise why he chose not to go to tender. I should have thought that was perfectly reasonable and something the Auditor-General would not argue about.

Mr Pullen said it was likely that outside auditing firms would have more highly qualified and better paid staff than Audit Victoria, but then he got confused in arguing about the results of competitive pricing. He was not sure whether the price would be higher or lower, or whether the quality would be higher or lower. There is a recognition that if you want more qualified financial and performance auditing, you may need to pay more for it. I do not have difficulty with that and nor should anybody else. The Auditor-General will determine what element relates to the quality and what element is uncompetitive. Someone always has to make that judgment.

The Auditor-General will have access to the best qualified people who will carry out financial and performance audits at his discretion. In the past the Auditor-General has carried out performance audits. Members opposite have said that outside auditors who have reviewed the Auditor-General's Office have said that the Auditor-General has done a good job. I would be interested to know how his performance audits would compare with private auditors if they were contestable.

I am not bagging individual auditors. Government departments have been audited from time immemorial. Many disagree with the audit findings and are entitled to do so. I notice that the New South Wales Premier is getting stuck into the Auditor-General in his state for supposedly being highly political. I do not care to make similar comments about our Auditor-General, because that would be unfortunate. The Auditor-General will have the authority to pick the best people available to do the job. The notion that there is some mystery about government audits that would rule out private sector auditors from doing those jobs is nonsense. The experience of auditing in the private sector is infinitely more diverse, profound and detailed than in the government sector. I make the same point that was made earlier — that is, the Auditor-General who I so admire was incapable of discovering all the depredations of the former Labor government.

Interjections from gallery

The PRESIDENT — Order! We are happy to have members of the public in the gallery; however, we are not happy to have them participating in the debate. I will warn them only once.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Private enterprise is fully capable of carrying out public sector audits because it has better skills.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Just like Skase and Bond.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — The question to ask is not about Skase or Bond but about the former Labor government. Did the Auditor-General have the capacity to stop the depredation of the former Labor government? I have no doubt that he tried his best, but it committed so many errors and mistakes that the Auditor-General did not have sufficient resources or time to catch them all. We have been through them time and again. The Labor Party gets upset every time I raise those issues, but hundreds of millions of dollars was lost by the former Labor government through bad management. There is no argument about that. Many members of the opposition admit to it. That is the reason the Labor Party lost government. It does not matter how smart

or quick you are to cover up your sins, when you run out of money it is all revealed. That is what happened with the Labor government. It made promises it did not plan to keep, it made statements that were untrue and it took actions that in almost every other respect would have landed people in gaol. The point I make is not that the Labor government was dishonest, but that the Auditor-General could not do anything about it.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — It was never dishonest.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — The actions of the Labor Party in government amounted to administrative dishonesty. It knew what it was doing and did it on purpose. It knew that its decisions would cost the state billions of dollars. If that is not dishonesty, I do not know what is.

The Auditor-General is not the person who should be held responsible for the failure of government to properly run the business of government. The Auditor-General reports to Parliament and he will have access to the best auditors in the state. He will make the judgment about the quantum, the frequency and capacity of the staff to interpret audit reports. I have no doubt that in one or two years time he will be embarrassing ministers and the Premier and, frankly, that is a small price to pay. Good government values a competent, independent Auditor-General, and this government will continue to do that.

Although I attribute no political motives to the Auditor-General, regrettably he has been naive in his objections to this measure. I express no surprise that the Labor Party would align itself to the Auditor-General's view — it is in opposition and it is its job to oppose. I am surprised that the Auditor-General did not understand he would attract the Labor Party to his cause, as well as fellow travellers and people such as Mr Pescott, who used this matter as an opportunity to embarrass those who became his enemies.

Hon. Pat Power — People who have always been his enemies.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Mr Power, you should stick to your understanding of the factionalism and tribalism of the Labor Party. That is sufficient to keep anyone in a full-time occupation! It is a mystery to me and when it is sorted out you may care to tell me about it, because it changes as quickly as changes occur in the marketplace.

The Auditor-General committed himself to be politically involved as a consequence of his opposition. It raises questions that other people have raised regarding officers such as the former Director of Public Prosecutions and other so-called independent office holders. I believe John Cain and his government had no motivation other than avoiding the political ignominy that could arise with some of the issues. Governments have a responsibility to govern and handle issues, and I fear they will be measured on whether they handle themselves well. I do not resile from that. I worry a great deal about the continued pressure to place a great deal of responsibility for public administration on appointed, unelected representatives. I say that in the context that the Auditor-General does not fall into that category. We need an independent Auditor-General, but we need to define the level of his independence. We should not be dictated to. We are the democratically elected representatives of the people. Whether they like it or not, Mr Nardella is a democratically elected representative of the people, so we have to put up with it.

I have no doubt the legislation will be effective and will improve the quality of administration. I also have no doubt that future audit reports will irritate the Premier and ministers, and I can live with that.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I will make a brief contribution to this debate. Honourable members who have had the opportunity of listening to the contributions of Mr Pullen and Mr Hartigan would have enjoyed and appreciated their contributions. Mr Pullen made clear the range of reasons why the opposition sits so strongly with the broad community's concerns about the bill. Mr Hartigan, as he always does, leaves people in no doubt why he is such a passionate supporter for radical legislation such as this bill.

There is a strong relationship between the level of community ownership of government legislation and decision making and whether a government is exercising good governance. I have not the slightest doubt that in next Saturday's Mitcham by-election the community will deliver a clear message on behalf of all Victorians on whether it believes the Kennett government has been exercising good governance.

Not only will the Mitcham electorate consider that question but I am certain the two major pieces of legislation the house will debate this week — this and the Workcover bill — will be prominent in the

thinking of the Mitcham electors prior to their entering the booths to cast their votes next Saturday.

The audit and Workcover bills have been nothing but controversial. In their contributions Mr Pullen and Mr Hartigan set out two sides of the argument. Mr Hartigan said that once an elected government had achieved a mandate from the community, it had no ongoing obligation always to respond to the wishes and aspirations of the community.

Mr Pullen said that is certainly not the case and governments need to respond to the views, hopes, wishes and aspirations of their constituents. As Mr Pullen said, the government of the day is nothing more than a custodian of the state and its welfare on behalf of the people — in this case, the Victorian people. It is not a situation where the Kennett government has freehold title over Victoria and can therefore do whatever it sees fit about the structure, infrastructure, provision and management of government. As Mr Pullen said, it is necessary for the government of the day, having been granted a mandate by the people, to continually monitor its proposals, strategies and decisions so that at no time does it get out of step with the community in the way the Kennett government has.

That scenario is not limited to the Auditor-General. During question time the Minister for Health said the management of the Geelong Hospital is so constrained and politicised that it is now operating midwifery services out of the Ambassador Hotel in Geelong. That illustrates the stark contrast between the views of the government and those of the opposition on the ongoing obligation of an administration to practise good governance. I also remind the house that a report in today's newspaper says Victoria is the highest taxing state in the commonwealth.

Hon. Rosemary Varty — No, New South Wales is.

Hon. PAT POWER — Mrs Varty says that is not so. When she contributes to the debate perhaps she will tell the house the date on which Victoria ceased to be the highest taxing state. This has occurred at a time when the Kennett government has asked Victorians to live and work in a way that is markedly different from that demanded of its members. Since 1992 the government's taxes and charges have risen by more than 24 per cent while local government has suffered a 24.6 per cent decrease in revenue.

The government is not prepared to live in the way it demands of others. I can refer the house not only to the use of a Geelong hotel as a wing of a major provincial hospital but also to the number of teachers the Kennett government has hunted out the door in an attempt to make its books, in the eyes of those who are interested in international financial affairs, more desirable. I can refer to the Kennett government's decisions to reduce the number of country train lines and to the removal of uniform electricity tariffs which had existed for many years.

Hon. R. A. Best interjected.

Hon. PAT POWER — Mr Best should stop reflecting on the Chair.

Hon. Rosemary Varty — The Chair is not interested in the debate.

Hon. PAT POWER — It is not interested in the interjections, and I compliment the Chair on that. The contrast in the contributions of Mr Hartigan and Mr Pullen highlights why the community is so concerned about the actions of the Kennett government, and especially about the audit and Workcover bills.

I have not the slightest doubt that in the Mitcham by-election next Saturday the electors, on behalf of the broad Victorian populous, will express a clear opinion on whether it believes the Kennett government has gone too far in some of its radical decisions.

Hon. Rosemary Varty interjected.

Hon. PAT POWER — I agree with the interjection of Mrs Varty who says they do not understand. That comment is typical of the Kennett government's arrogance because when people do not agree they are accused of being ignorant.

Hon. Rosemary Varty — I didn't say that.

Hon. PAT POWER — When people will not kowtow to your every wish, you say they are ignorant and do not understand. That is the ethos now. People believe the government is arrogant and has gone too far. I do not have the slightest doubt that will be measured clearly in the Mitcham by-election on 13 December.

Hon. Rosemary Varty — So what?

Hon. PAT POWER — I again point out the government's incredible arrogance; Mrs Varty asks, 'So what?'. The Kennett coalition government cares nothing for what people feel about its performance and decision making.

I shall make some comments on the issue of audit. I am sure all members in this house have received correspondence from a whole range of individuals and organisations expressing various concerns about the bill. I take the opportunity tonight to predicate some of my comments on the basis of views that were put to me by the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service. Not long ago I reported to the house that an application from the Good Shepherd service to provide an additional 40 no-interest loans in country Victoria — a proposal that had the support of the Deputy Premier, Pat McNamara, and sought quite a small grant from the Community Support Fund — was refused. It was refused not because applications to the Community Support Fund go through any open and transparent process or because the Good Shepherd service or any other Victorian can see in black and white the reasons that an application is granted or refused, but because the person who makes decisions about the Community Support Fund is the Premier.

Those are the issues people feel strongly about. We need in this state a process where the Auditor-General of the day is able, fearlessly and with a strong degree of independence, to make his assessment publicly available to all Victorians. It is not about whether good governance has been achieved but about whether the funds under the guardianship of the state government of the day are being expended properly and in accordance with broad community wishes and aspirations.

It is quite clear to me and to the Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service that the Community Support Fund is not being expended fairly and equitably. Good Shepherd received a letter from the Premier saying that its application had failed because it did not meet the criteria. I am not suggesting for a moment that the Premier was being dishonest, but I point out that the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee reported that no criteria are used in assessing applications for grants from the Community Support Fund. In this case a successful application would have benefited provincial and regional Victoria. It enjoyed the support of the Deputy Premier, the Honourable Pat McNamara, but the Premier decided it was not appropriate.

Hon. Rosemary Varty — The Premier doesn't decide.

Hon. PAT POWER — The Premier decided it was inappropriate and in a misleading way advised the applicant that its application had failed on the basis of its not meeting the criteria, despite the fact that there are no criteria by which those sorts of applications are assessed. Therefore it is appropriate that I make some comments in this debate on the basis of attitudes expressed by an organisation like Good Shepherd, which I am sure every member of this house would agree has played an enormously successful and responsible role in providing no-interest loans to a whole range of Victorians who otherwise would not have access to credit.

The Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service has sent me a letter I think is very appropriate:

> An audit is the principal means by which stakeholders gain independent assurance about the stewardship or management of resources that they have entrusted to another party, when they are unable, for reasons of complexity or distance, to satisfy themselves.

That is what the role of the Auditor-General in this state ought to be about. The Auditor-General's role is not to measure whether the Kennett government is governing well. It is the responsibility and role of the Auditor-General to provide independent assessment to those who hold a stake in the Victorian community — that is, the taxpayers — about whether the funds in the guardianship of the state government of the day are being properly and sustainably managed. That is the point on which Mr Pullen and Mr Hartigan expressed very different views.

Mr Pullen said that the role of the Auditor-General is one of guardianship and advocacy for the community. Mr Hartigan simply said the Auditor-General's role is to provide ticks to the government of the day. It is evident that independent checking of fiscal assets and public accounts took place among the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans and Chinese. Therefore we are not in any sense talking about some new phenomena: the notions of audit, of independence in the audit and of that independence being practised fearlessly are centuries old.

The role and purpose of the Auditor-General are founded on fundamental constitutional principles. Government agencies are accountable to Parliament for their use of resources and the powers conferred

by Parliament. The Auditor-General's role is to provide assurance that government organisations are operating and accounting for their performance in accordance with Parliament's intentions. To be credible such assurance must be seen to be independent and competent.

I point out that the Auditor-General really is a person of the Parliament, not of the government of the day; he is not a person the Kennett coalition government can rejig, restructure, confine and constrain. If the Auditor-General is to be able to operate in the way that has traditionally been the case, he or she must be able to report to Parliament — not to the Premier or to the Treasurer — fearlessly and independently, representing the people of this state. An Auditor-General is the auditor of all public sector spending. He audits central government departments, local government, government trading enterprises and Crown entities.

The Auditor-General's Office has three main tasks: to provide reports and advice to Parliament on matters of significance arising from audits; to ensure that all funds released from government bank accounts are used for the purposes for which the appropriations have been made; and to audit the statements of public sector organisations. The Auditor-General assures Parliament — not the government — that the instruments of government are accountable for their performance through the reports that arise from his audits. The Auditor-General's reports to Parliament have raised serious concerns about child protection services, public education, the Community Support Fund and Intergraph. Independence is fundamental to the concept of auditing.

Hon. Rosemary Varty interjected.

Hon. PAT POWER — It means independence from the bodies that are subject to those audits and statutory protection against improper influence. Mrs Varty said, 'What is wrong with it?'.

Hon. Rosemary Varty — I didn't say that. I said that is what is in the bill.

Hon. PAT POWER — What is wrong with it, Mrs Varty, is that the Kennett coalition government is talking about a new structure for the Auditor-General that removes his capacity to report fearlessly and independently to Parliament.

Community reaction to the proposed changes has been marked. I think Mr Pullen said the view in the community is that the review of the Auditor-General's role has been conducted not by Parliament but by the Kennett coalition government. That is a reasonable observation to make.

There is certainly nothing in the report of the review panel to show that it took account of the principles that are broadly held by members of the community and therefore reflected in this Parliament. Rather, the review panel demonstrated beyond doubt that its report was commissioned by the Kennett coalition government. Removing the Auditor-General's direct responsibility for auditing threatens not only his operational independence but also our fundamental democratic principles. I do not believe that is an overstatement.

The Mitcham by-election will show that those kinds of concerns are now uppermost in people's hearts and minds. Mitcham is very much middle Melbourne, and I believe the people of Mitcham will prove that middle Melbourne believes that in passing this legislation and the Workcover legislation and in making a raft of other radical changes, the Kennett coalition government has gone too far.

Shifting responsibility for performance audits from the office of the Auditor-General to individual government departments undermines government accountability. Auditors-General across Australia and New Zealand, the two leading Victorian accountancy associations, the Law Institute of Victoria, Liberty Victoria, academics, concerned community and church leaders and thousands of private citizens have publicly stated their belief that the restructure is a fundamental assault on the operational independence of the Victorian Auditor-General.

Mr Pullen argued that this parliamentary session, with its major debates on the Auditor-General and Workcover, and the Mitcham by-election, which will be held on 13 December, represents a major turning point in Victorian politics. I am not suggesting for one moment that it means the beginning of the end of the Kennett coalition government; but I believe it represents the beginning of community empowerment.

Victorians who have been disempowered since 1992 are beginning to believe that it is possible to voice their concern and to find others in the community who share their belief that the government has gone

too far, is too arrogant, and has stepped well beyond the line that reasonable Victorians feel is the difference between good and bad governance.

The current proposal to restructure the Auditor-General's Office threatens a pillar of our democracy. To ensure his constitutional independence is upheld, the Auditor-General must be an officer of Parliament and must remain totally responsible for performing all the functions his or her role requires — and that includes policy making, planning, oversight and auditing services.

In the early 1990s the New Zealand government carried out a restructure that resulted in the formation of two business units in the Office of the Auditor-General — one called the Office of the Auditor-General, which is responsible for policy, planning, oversight and reporting, and the other called Audit New Zealand, which is involved in auditing services. This is the important point, on which I will conclude. Under the New Zealand reforms, the Auditor-General retains total responsibility for all the activities conducted in those units. I believe this is watershed legislation, for the reasons that I have outlined. I believe the opposition is acting in line with broad community concern in indicating its strong and total opposition to the bill.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. Jean McLean) — Order! I call Mrs Varty.

Interjections from gallery.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Do you want me to move for the expulsion of our guests from the gallery?

Hon. D. A. Nardella — She called Mrs Varty.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I will move — —

Hon. Pat Power — You do that, Roger.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — You do that, and we will have quorums all night!

Hon. Pat Power — You do it. Come on, get up; put your money where your mouth is. Come on, you do it: you kick them out!

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. Jean McLean) — Order! I call Mrs Varty.

Hon. Pat Power — Stupid!

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Stupid?

Hon. Pat Power — Well, do it!

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I don't have to put up with that!

Hon. Pat Power — Well do it; get up!

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY (Silvan) — We have had one lot of your bully boys today threatening — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. Pat Power — If he has not got the courage, Rosemary, you might have. You move for them to be expelled.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. Jean McLean) — Order!

Hon. Pat Power — That is silly, Rosemary, and it is not like you.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — I beg your pardon! I don't have to put up with that sort of rubbish from you or anybody else. Today we again heard misinformation on this bill put about by members of the opposition. I alluded to the voters in Mitcham not understanding.

Hon. Pat Power — You said they do not understand.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — That is exactly what I said. When I talk to them on a one-to-one basis it is clear that the misinformation the opposition has peddled to them has led to their lack of understanding of the issues involved.

Hon. Pat Power — Why aren't you out there campaigning?

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — We are. I'm here tonight. Why aren't you out there? All the people with whom we have talked understand what it is about when they get the facts. The opposition is not interested in the facts. It is not interested in one fact.

Since I came to this house in 1985 one of my major objectives has been to see the public sector accountable for the resources entrusted to it, because they are not my resources, they are the community's resources. To that end there has to be accountability at all levels provided in a timely fashion.

Mr Power talked about the things that arise from an audit. The truth is that happens after the fact. After the fact it is too late, and unless the mechanisms for accountability are in place it will never change. Accrual-based accounting has to be introduced across all state and local government departments and entities to give timely reports about what is happening with the state's resources and our stewardship of them, not some after-the-fact report, because by then it is too late.

It is also about the ability of the Auditor-General to undertake, to world-best practice standards, the sign-off of compliance auditing of all designated bodies in the public sector. It is about the ability of the Auditor-General to undertake special investigations and special reports.

The bill does not compromise those objectives. It gives a guarantee of independence from political interference or political process. The Auditor-General has never before had statutory protection of his independence of executive government. Never before has there been legislation to enshrine the principle we all support, which is the statutory independence of the Auditor-General. Clause 7 headed 'Independence of the Auditor-General' inserts new section 4A into the act and says:

> (1) The Auditor-General is an independent officer of the Parliament.

That is in the bill, Mr Power, and you choose to say that is what we should be doing when it is in fact what we are doing. Again you are peddling the rubbish that we are not doing that. It is in the bill. Is it that you cannot read? Is it that you choose to be blind?

Hon. Pat Power — You can't resist being arrogant; it just comes naturally.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — Following on from your comments, what do you expect? The absolute arrogance of you to suggest some of the things you said! In his speech Mr Theophanous alluded to and quoted from a speech I made some time in April or May 1990 when we were in opposition and were debating the Audit Act.

Hon. Pat Power — Where you supported the Auditor-General in his current form?

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — Yes. I am happy to quote what I said very proudly at that time and to reiterate that comment:

> The Auditor-General is one of the most important independent statutory officers in this state, and that independence must be protected at all costs.

That is exactly what we are doing. Why did Mr Theophanous pin his hopes upon that statement? I have been totally consistent ever since I came to this Parliament about the role of the Auditor-General, as have Mr Hallam and Mr Stockdale. We were the ones who worked on these issues and brought in the amendments to make that so, because the current opposition was then in government and was refusing the Auditor-General access to departmental information in a number of departments. Do you deny that?

Hon. Pat Power — I don't.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — You don't deny it? It is a fact.

Hon. Pat Power — I said I don't deny it.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — As I say, I have no problem reiterating that statement. I will briefly go through some of the points in the bill in relation to that responsibility to Parliament. Bear in mind that the Auditor-General has been shifted from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, which is part of the executive arm of government, into the Parliament, and the Auditor-General is required to report to the Parliament, not to the Department of Premier and Cabinet. He is an independent officer but a servant of the Parliament. He acts on behalf of us all as parliamentarians; he acts in the public interest, not on behalf of any government or any minister or any one person. He reports to the Parliament. He has the responsibility and the authority to give directions in relation to the conduct of audits. He already contracts out 75 per cent of the audits for which he is responsible. He sets the parameters and the guidelines for the audits and signs them off, so that is nothing new. That has been occurring for a considerable time.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Because he has poor control.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — Thank you, Mr Nardella. Control is not incompatible with contracting out because it is already occurring. Are you saying that currently he does not have control?

Hon. D. A. Nardella — No, I am not. I am saying this bill will remove that.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — Why would you say that, when you accept the current contracting out? Are you saying the current contracting out is lack of control?

Hon. D. T. Walpole — No, it is his decision. You are going to remove the opportunity for him to decide that.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — It will continue to be his decision to set the parameters and to sign off the audit. It is in the bill. You obviously have not read the bill. It does not undermine the integrity of the process or the interests of the Auditor-General.

Hon. D. T. Walpole — How do you audit without auditors?

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — The same way he does 75 per cent of the audit now: by contracting it out.

Hon. Pat Power — This is like the Bjelke-Petersen car that was going to run on water.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — I can imagine Mr Power driving the Bjelke-Petersen car on water; it would not get him very far. It makes the line of authority of the auditing process distinct from executive government, and that is the important thing to bear in mind all the way through. For the first time the Auditor-General will not be subject to the line authority within the executive government through the Department of Premier and Cabinet. For the first time his program will be subject to the accountability of Parliament. He will not be subject to the whim of the budgetary process of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

At the very end of my speech in 1990 I made an appeal, which I will read because it is relevant to what we are talking about now:

> My final comment is a plea to the government not to hamstring the Auditor-General, as is happening now through lack of resources, and to ensure that he is able to carry out the functions Parliament has given him in the past and will further extend through the bill.

We are again talking about ensuring that the Auditor-General is under parliamentary control as distinct from being under the control of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The Auditor-General will be able to determine the audit program. The Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, which is an all-party committee of this Parliament, will have input into that program but the Auditor-General will not take direction from that committee. Proposed section 4B, which is inserted by clause 7, provides:

> In performing or exercising his or her functions or powers, the Auditor-General must confer with, and have regard to any audit priorities determined by, the Parliamentary Committee.

The Auditor-General is also required to prepare a report for that committee. That is an important element in linking accountability through the Parliament and not through the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Auditor-General will be responsible for conducting the tendering process. He will have complete control over the process and the ability to bypass it if he so chooses. The requirement is that he report any bypassing of the process to Parliament, to which he is accountable. The Auditor-General will be able to engage auditors to carry out the work and will have power to supervise their work. He will also sign the audit certificate.

Clause 12 inserts a section that will make it clear that the Auditor-General is the person who has to sign off on audits. He will be the only person who will report on audits — and he will report to Parliament. The Auditor-General can depart from that contestable process, but where he takes that course of action he must report via the Parliament and make his reasons known. There is nothing in the bill that will preclude him from undertaking or getting someone else to undertake performance or special audits.

Mention was made of the ambulance service. It was not until the responsible minister asked the auditor to look at the ambulance service that various issues were brought to light as a result of the auditor's report. The Auditor-General has always been responsible for the ambulance service but did not pick up the problems that existed.

In closing I refer to part of what the Minister for Finance said in his second-reading speech. The speech states:

> The bill retains the essential features of the Audit Act, while strengthening the competitive framework within which audits in the public sector will be conducted. The appointment of the Auditor-General, conduct of financial and performance audits, reporting to Parliament and the powers of the Auditor-General to

> examine documents and persons remain in the act. Within this competitive framework, the Auditor-General will be entirely in control of the selection, appointment, payment of auditors and termination of audit services.

The following comment was made in a news release dated 20 November issued by the office of the Treasurer:

> In reality, this bill entrenches the independence of the Auditor-General and the public sector audit process with statutory guarantees that have never applied before.

I have much pleasure in supporting the bill.

Hon. D. T. WALPOLE (Melbourne) — The bill strikes at the very heart of democracy because it is designed to prevent public scrutiny of government actions. Government members often talk about the need for transparency in government, but that is all they do — talk about it. All their actions are designed to produce the exact opposite, and this bill continues the process. It is deliberately designed to obscure. It will not produce transparency. It will produce the reverse — opacity.

From the very moment the Premier announced he would review the office of the Auditor-General it was abundantly clear that what he was really about was silencing another critic of his government. That is the Premier's style, just as it is the style of government members to simply bow their heads and toe the line whenever he dictates a course of action. They will not question bad decisions and will not stand up for their principles — if they have any. The jellyback backbench simply falls into line. The Premier knows backbenchers will fall into line regardless of the issue with which they are confronted.

Government members in marginal seats are faced with a very hard decision in respect of this bill. They are caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand there is the need to take all action possible to obscure from public scrutiny the internal actions of this disgraceful government, and on the other hand there is the outrage and bitter opposition that this bill has engendered in all sections of the community, outside the government and among its cronies.

Government members in marginal seats are walking a tightrope, and it will take only one small shove from he who must be obeyed — Emperor Jeff — and down they will fall into the camp that advocates treating the public like mushrooms and not telling them anything if it can be avoided. Of course, most of them are very comfortable in that position. Their position is summed up well by a contributor to the 'Access Age' of Thursday, 18 November. The contribution states:

> I approve Mr Kennett's nomination for Mitcham, of Elle — his Great Dane — providing that she has been to obedience school like the rest of his coalition members.

This time government members have gone too far. I sincerely believe that in supporting this bill and the upcoming Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill they are sowing the seeds of their own destruction.

The honourable member for Frankston East in another place clearly recognised that fact and sought to take some sort of stand on the issue, but he was nobbled. Nevertheless, recognising that he was vulnerable at the next election he made a small but utterly ineffective protest. The former member for Mitcham took a much stronger position and has had scorn and vitriol poured on him from all sides of the coalition. That was to be expected from a government that will brook no criticism — stick your head up and criticise the actions of the government in any way and you must be prepared to pay the price, as have people such as Moira Rayner and Bernard Bongiorno.

Today we are considering a bill that attacks the absolute independence of the Auditor-General. The bill seeks to structure the Auditor-General's office so as to make it unique in Australia and contrary to what applies in all countries that operate under the Westminster system of government. Although there are countries with audit processes that are worse than what this bill seeks to impose, they are countries that suffer under dictatorships and have no need to carry on the pretence of having an independent watchdog.

The government faces the problem that Victoria is not some Third World dictatorship and the people of Victoria are not about to allow the government to ram through this Parliament a bill that is specifically designed to prevent them from knowing how their hard-earned taxes are being used.

What does the government fear that causes it to behave in this manner? Clearly it fears scrutiny, but the truth will out sooner or later, and when that happens nothing will save the government. The

reasons why the government is rushing to force the legislation through instead of waiting until after the Mitcham by-election, which would provide an opportunity to test this appalling bill when people go to the polls on Saturday next, are patently obvious.

Firstly, if the result of the by-election is as expected it will be seen, at least in part, as a referendum on the legislation. A rejection by the people of Mitcham would make the government's desired course much more difficult to follow. Secondly, it is desirable for the government to distance the legislation as far as possible from the next state election in the hope that the electors' memories will have dimmed by then and they will no longer maintain the anger they feel currently.

The government can rest assured that the opposition will keep the matter before the public. In particular it will go to the people with a platform that it will enshrine in the constitution a guarantee of the independence of the Auditor-General and other key public office holders. Amendments to the Constitution Act will guarantee the independence of key office holders and provide that their roles may be changed only following a referendum.

The amendments I have referred to will enshrine the independence of the Auditor-General in the constitution, guarantee he has the sole power to order and carry out audits ensure he is free from any direction on how to carry out audits, and give him the freedom to determine the audit program, the bodies to be audited and the priorities for audit. That will re-establish transparency in government following the dark ages that will follow should this disgraceful bill be passed.

In claiming that the legislation is required to comply with competition policy the government is seeking to obfuscate the real reason why it has been introduced — to prevent as much public scrutiny as possible. If the bill is passed more than 140 years of open government will be consigned to the rubbish bin of history. Shame on all government members!

The government's continuing claims that the bill will enhance the independence of the Auditor-General are nothing more than a smokescreen to camouflage what it is really about. Proposed section 4A(1), which is inserted by clause 7, states:

> The Auditor-General is an independent officer of Parliament.

No other provision of the bill supports that assertion in any way. It is simply a sop to satisfy the government's own constituency — coalition members with cold feet. Once the Auditor-General's prime auditing function is removed his role will in effect be reduced to that of a contract auditor. He will be responsible for things such as appointing authorised persons or firms to undertake financial audits of statutory authorities, appointing authorised persons or firms to conduct performance audits, preparing specifications for such audits, terminating the appointments of auditors who do not perform in accordance with the act, and making a report in relation to audits conducted by others. No longer will he be in a position to conduct financial or performance audits himself, as he most certainly would be if he were genuinely independent.

Of its very nature the role of the Auditor-General is wider than that of a private audit firm. He has a responsibility to ensure accountability in government and that the electorate is fully informed about the costs and ramifications of government actions. He is required to work in the public interest, and that is his overwhelming priority. Nothing in the bill will enhance that role. To the contrary, the bill will restrict and narrow the independence that is critical to ensuring that the Auditor-General is able to carry out his role to the ultimate benefit of the Victorian people.

Only this morning I heard the Treasurer on radio 3LO again claiming that the proposed changes will further enhance the independence of the Auditor-General. The Treasurer works on the premise that no matter how big a lie is, if you tell it blatantly and often enough sooner or later people will begin to believe it. This time it will not work. The people of Victoria are awake to this one.

At present the Auditor-General is able to carry out selected audits with his own staff. How can his independence be enhanced when he will have an office without auditors? That is hardly increased independence. The government claims that removing the requirement for the Auditor-General to be responsible to the Premier of the day and have his budget determined by the Department of Premier and Cabinet — which under this bill will be matters to be determined by Parliament — will further enhance the Auditor-General's independence.

That might be correct if there were any application of a genuine democratic process in the government party room or if any of the spineless jellyfish sitting opposite were prepared to stand up to the Premier.

That is not the case. For so long as the government continues to occupy the Treasury benches it will be purely an exercise in semantics. The Premier will still make the decisions and the jellyfish will still obey.

The planned privatisation of the newly created Audit Victoria will further hamper the ability of the Auditor-General to properly carry out his duties, which is another case of the government finding ways to further line the pockets of its mates and in the process open up the potential for a less than rigorous investigation of state government actions and possible corruption.

This is a bad bill that strikes at the heart of democracy. It was drawn up most improperly without any consultation with the Auditor-General. I conclude my remarks by reading a letter from Mr Phillip Kemp of Middle Park that was published in the *Age* of 6 November. Government members would do well to heed its contents. The letter states:

> Over the next few days each state government minister and backbencher, elected by the people for the people, will consider to whom he or she owes the greater loyalty — to the Westminster system of government by Parliament, and to the Victorian people who overwhelmingly support it, or to one man, Mr Kennett, who, almost alone, even in his own party, seems intent on destroying an integral part of the system.
>
> No government MP will escape the ignominy that will attach to a decision to accept Mr Kennett's Machiavellian proposal to strip the Auditor-General's office of its true independence. Government members should be under no illusion — it will be an infamous day in the Victorian Parliament if they turn their backs on such a fundamental principle of parliamentary democracy as the right of the people to know where and how their money has been spent.
>
> Government ministers and backbenchers know how well informed the community is on this issue and how strongly it supports the genuine independence of the Auditor-General. They know how strongly the state Liberal Party disapproves of Mr Kennett's proposal. They know the people are not fooled, and they know their first duty is to the people.
>
> If cowardice, opportunism or a false sense of loyalty win the day, history will record the names of those who put self-interest before the interests of those they were elected to serve.

Following the federal government's backdown on its nursing homes policy I saw the Premier on television defending the federal government's action and saying that it is appropriate to change your position when you get it wrong, or words to that effect. It is time the Premier heeded his own advice and admitted that at least on this occasion he got it wrong. I will not hold my breath.

This is the most appalling and anti-democratic legislation. It removes the checks and balances designed to protect the interests of the electorate. It provides fertile ground for the growth of government corruption. It does not deserve the support of this house and should be firmly rejected.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — I shall make a brief contribution to the debate on the bill. I will not go through the many and varied points made by previous speakers. Basically I want to convey some of the lines of argument and conversations I have had with constituents about the bill.

The public debate has been characterised by much emotion and little fact. Many Victorians still do not understand the content and proposals of the bill, and the effect it will have on auditing in this state. I have discussed those matters with constituents who have come to my office. The community's lack of understanding about the changes may well be the fault of the government. Perhaps it has not sold its message well enough; perhaps it has not adequately explained the amendments. The debate tonight provides honourable members with the opportunity of putting on the record some of the facts about the bill and of conveying some understanding of it.

When I have had the opportunity of sitting with some of my constituents and discussing the bill they have all made the effort to talk to me and have left my office feeling comfortable about the proposed changes. Indeed, I have sensed their degree of comfort.

Hon. D. T. Walpole interjected.

Hon. P. R. HALL — I will detail some of the arguments I have put to my constituents and the house will judge whether I have told them the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You have changed your tune since you were a member of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee.

Hon. P. R. HALL — No, I have not. Relatively few people have wanted to talk to me about the matter. However, the conversations go something like this: we commence by talking about the Auditor-General and discussing whether we believe he has been an effective watchdog of public expenditure. The people who have come to me have said, 'Yes, we believe he has been an effective watchdog on public expenditure'. I ask them if they understand how the Auditor-General works, particularly the fact that he already contracts out 75 per cent of the auditing work he undertakes. Some people are aware of that fact; others are not. It is a surprise to some to learn that the Auditor-General does not undertake all the audit work in this state and that he contracts out 75 per cent of it.

I next ask people if they know which of the reports presented to the Parliament and ultimately to the public of Victoria are performed in house by the Auditor-General and which have been contracted out to a private sector auditor. The answer is no. Of all the reports that come before this house members of Parliament do not know which have come from the Victorian Auditor-General's Office and which have been contracted out to the private sector. There is no mention in the Auditor-General's reports of who has undertaken the work or whether a financial or a performance audit that has been presented to Parliament. We simply know that every in-house or outsourced audit report tabled in Parliament is presented under the signature of the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General has had to satisfy himself that the quality and accuracy of the work is a fair and accurate representation of the facts. The Auditor-General puts his signature on an audit only when he is satisfied.

Then I explain the fundamental change in the bill, which is that now 100 per cent of the Auditor-General's work will be contracted out. Members of the opposition have recognised that change in their contributions. I then say to my constituents if you believe — and I share the view — that the Auditor-General has performed satisfactorily with 75 per cent of his work being contracted out, why would the contracting out of 100 per cent of his work not be just as satisfactory; why would it not be as accurate as the 75 per cent of the work now being put before Parliament? There is no reason to suggest the extra work to be contracted out will be less inferior than the work that is already contracted out. I have not heard one argument in the debate — and I have listened to hours of it today — to suggest a criticism of the work that is already outsourced or any suggestion the Victorian public will be disadvantaged if all of the Auditor-General's work is outsourced.

I then explain to my constituents some of the safeguards that have been built into the bill. The Auditor-General will continue to appoint the auditors for the audit work he wants undertaken in exactly the same way as he does now. He appoints those he wants to audit the 75 per cent of outsourced work and he will retain the power and ability to appoint the people to do all the work being outsourced. The Auditor-General will continue to set the scope of the audits to be undertaken; he will have total responsibility to define the aspects of the department or authority he wants audited. He will also supervise the audit tasks just as he does now with three-quarters of his audits. The Auditor-General will monitor how audits are going and will meet frequently with the auditors of the firms working for him to ensure he is satisfied with the quality of their work. He will retain sufficient staff to discharge his responsibilities — a clear commitment given by the minister in his second-reading speech.

Importantly, the Auditor-General alone will continue to report to Parliament just as he does now with every audit report presented to the house. For three-quarters of his work there will be absolutely no change. The only change is that an extra one-quarter of his work will be presented in the same way as three-quarters of it is now. If we have not complained about the work being outsourced now, how could we imagine things will change with the other one-quarter of the work being outsourced to the private sector?

Some components of the legislation are welcomed by all commentators, even those who have criticised aspects of the bill. The Auditor-General will be an independent officer of the Parliament — and I have not heard any commentary suggest that that is not appropriate. He will no longer be funded from and report through the Premier and the Premier's department; he will be funded directly from and will report directly to the Parliament. Such a measure will mean that honourable members will have the opportunity of debating the funding to be appropriated to the Auditor-General every year. As I said, commentators universally have accepted those measures as important and necessary.

The bill ensures the independence of the Auditor-General from the executive of the government of the day. No matter which side of the

house is in government, it is important that the Auditor-General will be answerable to the Parliament, not to the executive government. The changes are welcomed. I shall not repeat the remarks that have been canvassed during the debate, but I can honestly say that the constituents who have made the effort to sit in my office and speak with me about the bill have left feeling comfortable about the changes. I, too, feel comfortable about the changes, which is why I support the bill.

Hon. T. E. EREN (Doutta Galla) — Unlike Mr Hall, I do not feel comfortable about the proposed legislation. The bill is nothing more than another attempt to silence the voice of anyone with the courage to criticise the government and point out its many faults. We have seen it all before. Moira Rayner, the Equal Opportunity Commissioner, who dared to criticise the effective leadership of this state, had to go. The Director of Public Prosecutions, Bernard Bongiorno, had to go. He not only pointed out the wrongdoings of the government but, as was his duty, recommended contempt proceedings several years ago.

It has reached the point where people who perform the duties they are hired to perform honestly are not only dismissed but their positions are made unworkable. The government is so sensitive to criticism that if honest, hard-working servants of the state do the right thing by the community the government will get rid of them and make it impossible for those who follow in their positions to uncover the malpractices the government is trying to hide from the Victorian people. Sadly the Auditor-General is the next on the list.

What is the Auditor-General's crime? Why is he being punished? He has done his job too well. Ches Baragwanath now has to pay the price for the sin of doing what the constitution says that the Auditor-General should do. This unjustifiable attack on democracy is contemptible in its own right. However, the situation is even worse because the background of excuses given for introducing the bill is based on lies.

We have been told the matter was out of the government's hands, that it had no choice. We have been told that Victoria has to comply with new national guidelines on competition policy and that the heartless measures outlined in the bill are part of that compliance. Any hollow ring of credibility for that assertion falls flat on its face when the situation in the rest of the country is examined. Currently this type of measure does not exist in any other state, and no other state is introducing such measures or anything remotely close to them.

Premiers of other states have joined the many community groups and organisations around this state in their vocal criticism of the proposals. The Liberal Premiers of South Australia and Western Australia, Mr Olsen and Mr Court, and the National Party Premier of Queensland, Mr Borbidge, have said that under no circumstances will they follow Victoria's proposals. The bill is too outrageous for even ultra-conservative Liberal Party and National Party Premiers from other states to consider.

If the effective destruction of the office of the Auditor-General were essential to fit into national guidelines on competition then surely something similar would be happening on the federal scene. That is not the case. The federal Liberal government is making changes to the operation of the Auditor-General to fit the competition guidelines. However, the difference is that the federal changes are fair, reasonable and workable — they do not punish the Auditor-General for performing his job. If anything, the direct opposite is the case.

The federal government has legislated to make sure that the federal Auditor-General is totally independent and to increase his authority. They are basically measures to tidy up and offer protection, not punishment. They are not designed to make the Auditor-General redundant. They are not perfect, but on the whole they are fair and workable. Following some minor suggested improvements the federal Labor Party will support the federal proposals. Even the federal Auditor-General is supporting the general thrust of the changes.

If the Victorian Liberals want to gain any credibility they should drop the bill immediately, take time to properly evaluate the situation and eventually resubmit legislation based on the framework devised by their federal colleagues. History has shown that that is unlikely. The government does not have a track record of listening to or addressing the genuine concerns of Victorians. It is too preoccupied with pursuing its own agendas and looking after its mates.

I hope that some unusual commonsense will prevail, and that the government will at least listen to the concerns of its own party members. It should be recognised that politicians are supposed to represent the general community as well as their support bases. Like the Labor Party, the Liberal Party is made up of members of the community who have

an interest in making Victoria a better place for us all. In most cases that is done on a volunteer basis and reflects those people's commitment to improving society.

Although my views about what that better society should be like might differ from those of coalition members, I respect and admire the rank and file members of the Liberal Party for the time they give up and the efforts they put in to help improve the state. I was not surprised to hear that rank and file members of the Liberal Party were so disgusted by the legislation that they took the unusual and brave step of condemning it at their state council.

Rank and file Liberal Party members recognise that the independence and effectiveness of the office of the Auditor-General is essential for the proper and democratic running of the state. They share the opposition's concerns that the legislation is about a political payback for someone who had the guts to expose and criticise wrongdoing.

I will read part of the motion that was put to the Liberal state council so that decent, community-minded Liberal Party members could show their parliamentarians that they did not support the government's moves. The rank and file of the Liberal Party stressed to their representatives that:

> This state council unambiguously and completely supports the current role of the Auditor-General —

a very valid assertion and the whole point of our argument —

> and that the changes recommended under the guise —

and 'guise' was their very accurate description, not mine —

> of 'guidelines for review of legislative restrictions on competition' ... are not supported.

The motion continues:

> The state Auditor-General has consistently shown himself to be a friend of the Victorian people. The Auditor-General has conducted his role in a fearless and independent manner as Victorians would expect.

Victorians certainly do expect that, and I hope the government will allow him to continue to do that. The motion further states:

> He [the Auditor-General] is an integral part of the democratic process.

It is now a matter of history that the motion attracted overwhelming support at the Liberal's state council and was passed resoundingly. It now remains to be seen whether the government will listen to its own support base. The fact that the bill is still before us in its original vindictive format indicates that it will not. The government is still trying to bring about a situation that will be unique in this country, and I suspect in the world, of a duly appointed Auditor-General not being permitted to audit. If this were not so serious it would be laughable.

That leads to the question of why the Liberals so desperately want to persecute the Auditor-General. That answer is too simple. As I have already said, the Auditor-General did his job too well for their liking. He has alerted the Victorian people to the maladministration of the government. How has he embarrassed the government? The reasons for the government's continuing embarrassment are all on the public record in great detail, so I will simply list some of the major ones.

Firstly, he exposed the total mess in the ambulance service — the bungled process with the tendering and running of the Intergraph system. Secondly, 150 extra gaming tables were granted to Crown Casino with the government forgoing $175 million in tax. Thirdly, as if all that were not enough, the Auditor-General uncovered that the government was using taxpayers' money to pay for advertising that should have been paid for by the Liberal Party. However, it was not just an isolated incident.

The Auditor-General examined 17 advertising campaigns and discovered that more than half of the advertisements were Liberal Party advertisements. Such an abuse of power and virtual theft of public money should not be tolerated, yet for uncovering those secrets the Liberals were trying to hide from the Victorian people the Auditor-General is to be punished. He is also be punished quickly before he uncovers anything else that discredits the government — and that is almost certain to happen.

The Auditor-General released a forward program showing the next lot of areas he planned to investigate and scrutinise. He had to be stopped before he uncovered more problems. His forward program included audits of Onelink, case-mix funding in public hospitals, intellectual disability services, compulsory competitive tendering, public

sector outsourcing, child care and kindergartens, and higher education amalgamations. That is a huge workload, but Mr Baragwanath has demonstrated a capacity for hard work. The possibility of his discovering what had gone on in these areas obviously scared the government. Who knows what he would have uncovered? I say 'Who knows?' because Victorians will not find out now.

The bill will lead to the ridiculous situation of audits being tendered out to private companies. A government tender will be worth big money to a private company, which will want to keep the job. After taking note of the government's deplorable history of executing those who have dared to criticise it, no private company will want to join the list of victims. Private companies will therefore produce audits that are as favourable to the government as they can be. There will be no exposures and no critical evaluations.

For all the good private companies will do, the government might as well write the audits itself. In some cases private companies will not produce audits with the same integrity as Mr Baragwanath because they will be too scared of losing their contracts, not to mention Liberal Party retribution.

Regardless of which party is in power, Victorian taxpayers need and deserve a watchdog who will protect their interests without fear or favour. This matter is beyond party politics. Thousands of Victorians have attended public rallies across the state to try to preserve the crucial independence of the Auditor-General. Thousands more have signed petitions circulated by concerned groups and individuals from all walks of life and all political persuasions.

The former member for Mitcham in another place even resigned from Parliament in protest at the legislation. It was too much for his conscience to bear. In doing so he suggested that the by-election his resignation would cause should be used as a test of the public's acceptance of the bill. Not surprisingly, the government does not have the courage to allow that. Instead it is rushing the legislation through before the by-election so that it will not have to test its policies in the public arena. It will not make any difference. The public is sick and tired of the government.

In Tony Robinson the people of Mitcham have an excellent candidate who will represent their interests well. They will welcome his openness, his honesty and his ability. His victory will be a resounding defeat of the government's arrogance and deceit. I look forward to the contribution he will make. His talents will give the people of Mitcham an effective voice in Parliament.

The inequalities in the bill have done more than cost the government a vote in the Assembly. They will give the people of Mitcham the opportunity to let the government know they will no longer tolerate its continuing attacks on democracy. Tony Robinson will be a thorn in the government's side. It is a pity he is not here already. If he were he would condemn the bill, as I do.

Hon. R. A. BEST (North Western) — I will make a brief contribution to the debate. I do not intend to cover the ground covered by other speakers. As a member of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee I have had substantial dealings with the Auditor-General, including a telephone conversation with him today.

It is important to remember that 12 months ago the Premier announced the Audit Act would be reviewed. Between November last year and April this year, Mr Rodney Maddock undertook the review in line with the principles laid down in the national competition policy agreement. That report was presented earlier in the year. Although I cannot relate directly the conversations between the Auditor-General and the committee, it has been well reported that he substantially disagreed with findings of the Maddock review.

After taking note of Rodney Maddock's recommendations and the Auditor-General's comments, and after reading the second-reading speech and the contents of the bill, so far as I am concerned the Auditor-General has won the day. Of the eight points he expressed concern about, seven have been addressed. He remains an independent watchdog over the financial dealings of the state. His independence will be further enshrined by his being made an officer of the Parliament, independent of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

I have been disappointed by the continued willingness of members of the opposition to make claims that are factually inaccurate. They have misled the community and peddled a line of misinformation that will severely rebound on them. The Auditor-General will have sole control over the appointment of auditors and their payment, and he will sign off all audits. That is a far cry from the initial recommendations made by Rodney Maddock.

Honourable members know that 75 per cent of the auditor's current workload is tendered to external auditing firms. To test the other 25 per cent by way of competition is not unreasonable. Although there was some initial community concern about the independence of the Auditor-General's Office, there is now a wider understanding and a greater acceptance of the amount of work the Auditor-General currently tenders out, the services he currently buys and the potential his office has to operate efficiently.

The establishment of Audit Victoria gives what is now the Auditor-General's Office the opportunity to compete with major firms, and I do not think that is unhealthy. The whole-of-government approach, whether at the state or federal level, is based on competition, and it is important that that competition is transparent. The bill allows the Auditor-General to undertake the whole process, from establishing the terms of reference and tendering out the audit to signing it off only when he is happy with the way it has been conducted.

I have great confidence in and totally support the role of the Auditor-General. Unfortunately, as I have conveyed to him personally, I believe his reaction to several aspects of the legislation has been overly sensitive. It is not where you start, but where you finish that counts. Our starting point caused a lot of conjecture in the community, but the legislation means we have finished by enshrining the independence of the Auditor-General and preserving his ability to conduct audits.

I reiterate my support for and appreciation of the Auditor-General's role as an umpire in the parliamentary process. He enjoys a good relationship with the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. I have great pleasure in supporting the bill.

Hon. S. M. NGUYEN (Melbourne West) — Along with other members of the opposition, I oppose the Audit (Amendment) Bill. It is a sad day for Victoria that we are debating the most radical, extreme and unnecessary piece of legislation in the history of parliamentary democracy in this state. It will overturn 148 years of tradition in this Parliament. The office of Auditor-General has been part of public administration in Australia since 1828. The institution of Auditor-General is older than Australian democracy. If the bill is passed Victoria will have an Auditor-General who cannot do his job.

The government prides itself on being an innovator and a facilitator of change and as being seen to perform and to be accountable to the Victorian people. Although we strongly oppose many of the changes the government has made, members of the opposition have a responsibility to fulfil and an obligation to discharge. Quite simply, the legislation is bad policy. The people of Victoria strongly oppose the bill because they care about democracy.

The government has a massive majority in both houses of Parliament. Some government members swore until they were blue in the face that they would oppose the changes to the Audit Act, but they have done a backflip. Despite their better judgment and despite the fact that they will lose their seats as a result of voting for the legislation, those members have blindly followed their leader.

Liberal Party branches around Victoria are opposed to the measure. We know that the electorate secretary of the honourable member for Doncaster in another place is actively seeking signatories for a motion calling for a special meeting of the Liberal state council to try to overturn this bad legislation.

The opposition strongly opposes the changes not because of some personal affection for the current Auditor-General or for the sake of opposing them but because they are bad policy and will leave the door open to corruption. More importantly, the opposition says the changes have more to do with nobbling the Auditor-General than improving his efficiency. The measure has been introduced because the Auditor-General has been too efficient in undertaking his duties. He clearly demonstrates yet again that people cannot criticise the government and get away with it.

Along with other members of the opposition I will defend the Auditor-General and fight against the legislation until the very end. I remind members opposite that swinging voters will remember what I say today. They will show their anger and members opposite will lose their seats. Recently I attended a public meeting at the Melbourne town hall at which people indicated their opposition to the measure. They are the ones who will change the government because they expect governments to be accountable to the community.

Since 1828 Australia has had an independent financial auditor who has reported to Parliament, not the executive. The concept of an independent Auditor-General is older than this Parliament. Even the Maddock review committee conceded in its

discussion paper of February this year that an independent Auditor-General is an important feature of the Westminster system of government. All Westminster systems of government, including those in the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, the states and territories, and the commonwealth of Australia, have independent and impartial Auditors-General. There is no denying that these changes are an assault on the Westminster system.

In seeking to discover why the government is proposing the changes, one need go no further than the Auditor-General's uncanny ability to identify waste and mismanagement, which inevitably helps to ensure that the machinery of government runs more smoothly. Any independent investigation or analysis would show that the Auditor-General has proven his worth. In the five years that the Kennett government has been in office the Auditor-General has time and again identified areas of waste and mismanagement in government administration, showing where the government has failed and how it can perform better.

Since 1992 the Auditor-General has criticised the government's failure to demand up to $174 million more from Crown Casino for its extra 150 gaming tables. He has slammed the failed former Minister for Health over the Intergraph contract, saying the tender process was corrupt. He has criticised the government's administration of the Community Support Fund and reported on its $130 million expenditure on marketing and promotion. The Auditor-General found that some funds were used for totally inappropriate party-political advertising.

He also reported that the Leeds Media contract was awarded after a flawed and inappropriate tender process. He released a damning report of the government's administration of the child protection system.

The government would not allow the Auditor-General's critical report on the administration of the Children's Court to be tabled in Parliament. The Auditor-General also reported on state education; he was critical of the government's handling of school amalgamations. He also found that the government failed to follow its own guidelines in allocating funds for capital works and that it had given questionable priority to a number of projects over more needy proposals.

No honourable member would seriously doubt the Auditor-General's ability to do his job. The bill has been introduced because the Auditor-General dared to question the government and, in particular, the Premier. For those reasons the Auditor-General now joins a long list of publicly appointed officials who have openly disagreed with the Premier. Because they have disagreed with him they have found or will find themselves without jobs. They will either be hounded from office or will find they can no longer perform the duties associated with their positions.

The list of officials includes the former Equal Opportunity Commissioner, Moira Rayner; Justices Nicholson and Fogarty; the former Coroner, Hal Hallenstein; the former Children's Court senior magistrate, Greg Levine; the former Director of Public Prosecutions, Bernard Bongiorno; journalists at the then Australian Broadcasting Commission and the *Age*; church leaders; anti-gambling and other community groups; and, of course, the opposition.

No government member can deny the fact that the Premier announced his plans to limit the power of the Auditor-General the day after the Auditor-General released his important report into Intergraph. If ever there was a case for having a strong, independent Auditor-General, that report will prove it.

I turn to the privatisation of Audit Victoria. Even in the coalition party room that aspect of the legislation was neither raised nor discussed. The government has argued that such a scheme will be similar to that which operates in New Zealand. However, Audit New Zealand is still under the control of the New Zealand Auditor-General. In fact, when the Victorian changes were announced, the New Zealand Auditor-General, John MacDonald, said the Victorian model would be unacceptable to him. The *Sunday Age* of 12 October quotes him as saying:

> I would be uncomfortable, indeed I would not accept such a model being forced on me.

Why would that be the case? All the skills in the Auditor-General's Office will be lost to Audit Victoria, which will be sold off; the only buyers will be from the big six accounting firms.

But even before that happens, nothing in the bill suggests that a director of one of the big six firms will be barred from being on the board of Audit Victoria. The legislation does not address the prospect of a conflict of interest. There can be no doubt that the Auditor-General will not have the ability to properly perform his duties.

For those reasons, many people have sought to defend the Auditor-General. The editorial in the *Herald Sun* of 25 November 1996 states:

> Electors, whatever their political allegiance, should not tolerate any attempt from the ruling coalition to censure or subvert the Auditor-General's role.

The editorial in the *Sunday Age* of 24 November 1996 states:

> The faithful watchdog must remain free, unchained and unmuzzled to do his job. It is the government's arrogance on this issue that needs restraining.

On 2 December 1996 Frank Costigan, QC, said:

> In the circumstances it is clear that the attempt to base the review on the national competition policy is flawed beyond correction. It should be abandoned forthwith.

Even the conservative-dominated Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees is reported to have said on 11 February 1996:

> The Auditor-General should not be subject to any direction on how to carry out audits. The Auditor-General should be free to determine all aspects of the audit program.

The legislation should be totally and utterly rejected by all honourable members because it is bad policy. It has nothing to do with competition and everything to do with silencing the Auditor-General. I totally oppose the bill.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON (Koonung) — I shall not again cover the ground covered by other honourable members. I simply make several points about the proposed legislation. At the outset, I have no difficulty in supporting the bill because it takes Victoria forward and, contrary to the points made by the opposition about the future independence of the Auditor-General, it simply enhances his independence. The fact that the Auditor-General will become an officer of the Parliament will make him in theory and in practice far more independent than in the past.

It is interesting to note that the Labor Party took to the last state election that same policy — to make the Auditor-General an officer of the Parliament — so there is a recognition that the position achieves a level of independence.

There has been some discussion of the possibility that if the Auditor-General is an officer of the Parliament his budget or resources might well be constrained through that association with the Parliament rather than being in a minister's department — in this case, the Department of Premier and Cabinet. I should have thought that, as an officer of the Parliament, the budget and resources available to the Auditor-General to enable him to carry out his duties and responsibilities would be transparent under this bill; therefore I think it is a good thing.

The nub of the argument which has been presented to the house today and which has been the subject of much public discussion is the issue of the contracting out of the Auditor-General's audit work. Members of this house are aware that some 75 per cent or more of his work is already contracted out. That is not disputed by or a matter of concern to members generally. The concern is that perhaps he might not have the opportunity to conduct audits of his own volition in certain circumstances where he deems fit. The fact that he is able to accept or reject audits and require more work to be done and that he has the opportunity to sign off on the audits and set their parameters will preserve his position.

The more important point that occurs to me is that in many ways there is a greater independence for an auditor with an executive staff who does not constantly have to defend the reports and attitudes expressed by members of his own larger department in the conduct of audits simply because they are members of his department. I am talking about the issue of divided loyalties, where an Auditor-General is forced to defend reports prepared by his officers simply because they are his officers rather than because they are reports of quality that actually get to the nub of some issues.

The argument has been put to the house a number of times today that the contracting-out position will diminish the Auditor-General's ability to provide audits or to have independence as an Auditor-General. A strong counter-argument can be mounted.

I have absolutely no concerns that this bill is born out of any sense of vindictiveness or from a payback position. It was suggested a couple of times in the debate, particularly by Mr Theophanous in his contribution, that the Auditor-General had presented some reports that were uncomfortable for the government and that the government was therefore looking to nobble him as a payback for

those reports. The fact is that Auditor-General's reports will often come in with comments that do not suggest that everything the government is doing is rosy. When I say 'government' I am talking not about political government but administrative government.

This bill envisages that the Auditor-General is very much the ally of all members of Parliament on both sides of the house. There is no doubt that the Auditor-General and the department he heads — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Why don't you at least have the guts to put what you put to us privately?

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — I invite Mr Theophanous to suggest what I said privately and how it might contradict what I am saying now.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You said you have concerns about the legislation.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — I do not like to suggest you tell untruths, Mr Theophanous, but that is the most outrageous lie I have ever heard you deliver. I indicated to you I had some concerns about another piece of legislation. I have made absolutely no comment about this bill to you or any other member of this house, any member of the public, or anybody.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — What was the other piece of legislation?

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — You try to figure it out, and get it right. If you are going to suggest something by way of interjection, get your facts right and figure it out; it is not for me to help you.

I have no problems with this bill. It certainly is not born out of vindictiveness or a payback mentality. As I was saying before Mr Theophanous took his little meander, the Auditor-General is important to all members of Parliament on both sides of the house. It is imperative for us all to know how government administration functions. It is important for us all to make sure the sorts of services being delivered to Victorians are the services they require and that actually meet their needs, but also that they are being delivered effectively and efficiently. That is not simply the province of the opposition. It is important to all members of Parliament — and all members of the government have satisfied themselves of this — that the bill preserves the opportunity for the Auditor-General to report fearlessly on issues that are of concern to him and on matters of government administration where he believes there are shortcomings. All government members recognise 100 per cent that the bill enshrines that opportunity.

Much of the debate on this bill was ill informed in that it tackled issues and recommendations that were raised by a committee. Those recommendations were never government policy, and never at any time did the Premier or anybody else say, 'Yes, we are adopting those recommendations'. As opposition members who have been in government well know, areas of policy and legislation in particular are developed through an evolutionary process by a range of committees with input from departments or affected parties, public consultation and members of Parliament.

The proposed legislation does not reflect the recommendations of that committee, nor would government members have expected it to do so. The bill is certainly supported. As I said, it addresses many of the issues that people raised in the public debate over a number of months. Much of the discussion has been about trying to find ghosts and boxing with shadows, but the bill provides for the independence of the Auditor-General.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — Mr Theophanous questions the views of the people of Mitcham. I suggest that if the people of Mitcham really understood what was proposed in this bill rather than being given a jaundiced view by opposition members and other people they would support the bill entirely, and in most cases they already do.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — How would you know?

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — I dare say that I am in my electorate much more often than Mr Theophanous is in his.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — I'll bet you're not.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — I happen to be there every day.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Yes, doing your private work.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — Every day I am in my electorate doing my electorate work.

Mr Theophanous knows it, and he knows he had absolutely no support for the position he put.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Working for inside retailing.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — Actually, somebody else does inside retailing. The structure of — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — No wonder you don't support public accountability!

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — It is important for us to understand the way the structure of the departments — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — Will you stop rabbiting on, you idiot!

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You don't like it, do you? You don't like to be pulled up. You ought to stop what you're doing and become a full-time member and support your constituents.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — Mr Theophanous, there is absolutely no complaint from my electorate, as you would well know, about my performance in support of my constituents. We have listened to you speak at great length. One of the things that is often missing in this place is a focus on legislation and the issues as against the attacks on individuals you make in your rabbiting interjections. Let's get on with the facts.

The legislation establishes a structure that is capable of delivering the best results for government. There is no doubt that, given the work it is doing, the Auditor-General's department faces far more complex circumstances now than it has in the past. The range of skills and the resources it needs to do its work has changed. The legislation reflects that by providing opportunities to contract out those audits.

Much of the debate about the Auditor-General has been based on the perceived infallibility of a particular officer of the Crown. It is just not possible for a single person to achieve infallibility. In fact, the New Zealand equivalent of our Auditor-General was put in gaol for embezzlement.

Interjections from gallery.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. B. W. Bishop) — Order! The gallery will be cleared if people do not behave.

Person escorted from gallery.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — We need a structure which takes account of the requirement for proper government administration and which relies on the competence and honesty of particular individuals, the accountability mechanisms that are in place and resources and skills that are available.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — I cannot recall attacking anybody, Mr Theophanous.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You just attacked somebody when you carried on about the New Zealand Auditor-General.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. B. W. Bishop) — Order! Mr Theophanous has had his opportunity to speak.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — The facts stand as they are. The New Zealand Auditor-General went to gaol.

Hon. Jean McLean interjected.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — I point out that, just as one would have concerns about the competence and honesty of Auditors-General in some situations, not all the Auditor-General's reports have been accurate. The reports that have been made on the Children's Court, the Metropolitan Ambulance Service and, back in the days of previous governments, land transactions and so forth, which Auditors-General have signed and which Parliament has accepted and acted on in developing policy, have been wrong and have not fully informed either the Parliament or the people of Victoria. That demonstrates the need for the Auditor-General not only to be independent but also to have a wide range of skills. I believe the legislation will guarantee that and so ensure that we are all better served.

I conclude by quoting Steve Crabb, a former Labor minister, who I think was one of the more effective members of the Cain-Kirner governments. He communicated his views on the Auditor-General by way of an article in the *Herald Sun* — —

Hon. Jean McLean interjected.

Hon. B. N. ATKINSON — No, it has been faxed. Steve Crabb said:

> It's a major ministerial challenge to get a department to act in the interests of citizens rather than public servants, as anyone who has watched an episode of *Yes, Minister* knows.
>
> So we thought the auditors would be a great help in getting on top of our own Sir Humphreys.
>
> No way. The auditors are public servants too, some hoping to become Sir Humphreys themselves.
>
> And the Auditor-General's department, in my experience, was more concerned with supervising the performance of ministers than of the public service.
>
> A minister who bucked the public service was very likely to be the subject of a performance audit.
>
> They can pick whichever target they like, take as long as they want, spend as much as they want, because the target department has to pay for it.
>
> Then the report is presented under parliamentary privilege, sometimes having been leaked in advance to cause the maximum discomfort to the victim.
>
> Ministers can't complain. They are accountable to Parliament and the media on a daily basis. And to the voters every four years.
>
> But the auditors answer only to their public service peers. And that influence is made obvious by the matters they don't investigate rather than the ones they do.
>
> As long as auditors are accountable only to the public service, things won't change. The public service car policy was an example.

He also said:

> Every government department should be subject to stringent scrutiny and audit.
>
> But the Auditor-General's is a department, too. Costing upwards of $15 million in my day. About the same as Consumer Affairs.
>
> And, apart from the central commissars of Premier's, I can't think of one department more in need of a performance audit than the Auditor-General's.

In his article Mr Crabb pointed out that the Auditor-General had not identified significant cases of other public servants committing fraud or other crimes against the government and had missed a number of instances of significant waste and cost to taxpayers as a result of government inefficiencies.

Mr Crabb said he supported an overview of the Auditor-General's department. I believe the legislation would win his support because it tackles the very issues he raised. I have no problem supporting the legislation, and I urge the house to support it.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — The legislation is at the heart of the government's ongoing process of nobbling the Auditor-General. It is as clear as that, and all the rhetoric coming from honourable members on the other side cannot hide it. From the first day it came to office back in October 1992 the government has set out to silence its critics. It has cut funding for advocacy groups, silencing the voices of ordinary Victorians, and, much worse, the voices of the disadvantaged in our society. This legislation is also part of that process.

The government hates the Auditor-General. It hates independent processes and it hates the accountability the Auditor-General demands of ministers and the Premier. The government cannot handle criticism, and it cannot handle the exposure of the rorts and corruption in its departments.

Time and again hundreds of millions of dollars have gone into the pockets of the government's millionaire mates. Who has exposed them? The person who, without fear or favour, has exposed the corruption of the government is the Auditor-General. That is why he must be silenced!

That is why we have this government and the limp-wristed, jellybacked backbenchers who are supporting the bill because, mark my words, this bill means that the Auditor-General will find it hard to further expose the innate corruption of the government. For instance, the Auditor-General exposed the fact that $174 million was given to the government's millionaire mates, Uncle Lloyd and Uncle Ron, at Crown Casino. This backhander was given, at the expense of the Victorian community, to those two directors at Crown Casino, and their shareholdings have gone sky high because the patronage of the government and the Premier towards Crown Casino know no bounds.

What did the Auditor-General find in one of his reports just before the Maddock inquiry was put in place? He found that the $174 million that should have been charged to Crown Casino as licence fees for the increase in the number of tables from about 150 to 300 was not charged to Crown Casino because the government had to look after its mates, those two bastions of Melbourne society, Ron Walker and Lloyd Williams. Stuff the schools that need refurbishing; stuff the hospitals; don't worry about the ambulances that don't come on time; and stuff the people who have to wait on trolleys in hospitals because the government has ripped money out of the hospital and health systems hand over fist. Despite that it can easily find $174 million for its millionaire mates.

What happened then? Mr Atkinson would not refer to this in his address: the government set out to nobble the Auditor-General through the Maddock report. After the Auditor-General exposed the fact that $174 million had been given to the government's millionaire mates, the government appointed three people to the Maddock inquiry: they included Professor Maddock and one other telling appointment — a person with an absolute vested interest and conflict of interest, which this government does not seem to care about. That person was Mr Ken Spencer, a director of Crown Casino.

Remember, just weeks prior to that appointment the Auditor-General had exposed the gift to Crown Casino. The government then appointed to the Maddock committee Mr Ken Spencer, who had a conflict of interest on two points: one, that he was a director of Crown Casino and had a report tabled against him in the house with regard to the shonky dealings by the government; and two, his partnership in KPMG. That shows that the government has no probity whatsoever and how crooked it is. It appoints people who have vested interests and conflicts of interest to boards of inquiry that nobble the Auditor-General. The government went blatantly down that path with no concern for the independence of the Auditor-General — the bill demonstrates that — but with an absolute concern to institute a process that would get rid of the Auditor-General and his independence.

When the committee brought down its findings, what did Mr Forwood do? Initially he supported the Auditor-General, and the opposition saw that as a positive and responsible move from the chair of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. It is the position of support that people on our side of the house, if we were in government, would expect our chair to take. But what happened? Backflip Bill went jellyback because the Premier told him that he should not say anything and that he should back the Premier because if he wanted a career in Parliament and in the Liberal Party that was the only way to go forward — forward for Forwood — and that is exactly what he did. He kept his mouth shut and acquiesced to what the Premier said because it is the only way any government backbencher will get ahead. It is the only way the Premier knows how to operate. That is why Mr Forwood backflipped. For an extra $9000 a year he is doing a disservice to this Parliament, and it is an absolute disgrace.

Other aspects of the bill that are of great concern to the opposition include the fact that the Maddock inquiry was based on the theory of economic rationalism. It provided no evidence of the financial viability and benefits of contracting out auditing services, yet the government went down that path. Government members asked, 'If you are going to contract out 75 per cent, what is the problem with contracting out 100 per cent?'. I will tell them what the problem is: the Auditor-General loses control of the process. That is the fundamental problem that no member on the other side of the house dealt with in his or her contribution. Sure, Mr Forwood talked about new section 24 inserted by clause 22, which provides that the Auditor-General will talk to the Public Service Commissioner about his staffing, but what staffing? He gets a receptionist and a telephonist; he might get a stenographer but he does not get the resources and the staffing that he requires. He does not get the staff to enable him to supervise the contractors he employs from KPMG and the other Victorian accountancy firms that consistently donate heaps of money to the Liberal Party. He will not be able to ensure that there is a proper process through this legislation because he will not have the resources to do so.

Mr Forwood can talk about new section 24 until he goes blue in the face, but if the Auditor-General is not given the resources he cannot perform his duty according to the bill. The bill might sound terrific; it might read that the Auditor-General will be an officer of this Parliament; but if he has no resources and no ability to make sure the contractors are doing their jobs; if he has no ability to have his own people on the ground in the departments making sure the government is kept honest and accountable, he is not performing his job in the way required by Victorians and by Parliament.

That is the issue Mr Forwood did not cover in his address. It is a fundamental point he and other members of the government cannot answer and cannot deal with. What the government is attempting to do through the passage of the bill will have a marked effect on the government for the rest of this parliamentary term.

What is the background of the people in the government? Do they believe in an independent office? Do they believe there should be propriety within the government? Have they learnt from history? I say no. One need only look at the previous Liberal government that went through processes that resulted in corruption inquiries — the Gowans inquiry and others. The Premier of the time, Mr Hamer, instituted those inquiries because he was a person of principle, a person who wanted to maintain propriety in government.

Did the Liberals learn anything from that? They did not, because the current government had a Minister for Finance who, before he fell on his sword, said there was nothing wrong with the land deals and everything was hunky-dory, even though three ministers resigned and two people went to gaol. That is the attitude of honourable members on the other side of the house with regard to accountability and maintaining high standards. When a senior minister of the Crown under the previous Hamer Liberal government is prepared to take that attitude following criminal proceedings one can understand what the bill is about.

Honourable members on this side of the house have no doubt about where the legislation is leading Victoria. It means the government will be able to do whatever it wishes. It means that the accountability and probity put in place by the Cain government in 1983 will be swept away because this government is not about accountability. This government is not about ensuring that the absolute disaster that occurred with Intergraph will not occur again. In the Intergraph disaster people such as Grant Griffiths and his mates stole $30 million from the community. They stole from my constituents who require schools, hospitals and ambulances, yet they got off scot free. The Auditor-General — nobody else — exposed them to Parliament and the Victorian community because he had the power and the ability to investigate those dirty dealings, which ordinary citizens are not able to investigate because they do not have the power.

The Auditor-General has staff upon whom he can rely, unlike Mr Atkinson, who talked about how the Auditor-General is dividing loyalties. He said the Auditor-General has to report on reports by his officers. What a load of absolute rubbish. Those officers understand the departments they audit. They ferret out the information and ensure that departments are accountable. His officers ensure that the 75 per cent of audits undertaken by contract auditors are supervised. It is imperative that the Auditor-General has the ability to investigate the crooked dealings of the government on behalf of the community.

More information will come out. The Auditor-General's forward plan has the government scared. It is concerned about what the Auditor-General will expose. In 1996–97 the planned program related to the management of the gaming industry, Schools of the Future, the public transport reform program — what a disaster and waste of precious resources transport reform has been — municipalities, child care and kindergartens, case-mix funding in public schools, the police customer service strategy, outsourcing across the public sector and a privatisation project to be determined.

The Auditor-General has a forward plan for 1997–98 that will include the investigation of municipalities across the board and will cover any of the following: waste management strategies, domiciliary services, management of planning services and management of compulsory competitive tendering. That causes a shiver to run down the spines of all the jellybacks on the other side of the house because if compulsory competitive tendering were independently investigated it would demonstrate to the community how rotten the government has been.

The Auditor-General will investigate higher education amalgamations, intellectual disability services and the provision of school buses for students with special learning needs as well as conduct a follow-up of the audit on the quality of drinking water. The government is concerned about what the Auditor-General will expose next. The opposition and the community await those reports. Unless the Auditor-General is able to report without fear or favour, without being in a position where his resources are being taken away from him, the community will be worse off.

Our society and government are based on having a process that is accountable to Parliament. The people who are concerned about what the legislation will do are respected people of high calibre. They range from Liberty Victoria — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — The Archbishop of Canterbury.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — Mr Hartigan might think it is funny, but it is an extremely important matter. His contribution was one of the most woeful I have heard in an extremely long time. Not only is Liberty Victoria concerned but the rest of the Victorian community is concerned about the proposed legislation. Various groups have organised public meetings throughout the suburbs of Melbourne and in rural and provincial areas. At every one of those meetings people have expressed concern about what is happening to the Auditor-General.

The Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants came out against the changes, as did the *Age* newspaper. A former Kennett adviser and economist, Mr Saul Eslake, has said:

> It ought in my view be beyond argument that the final decision as to who conducts an audit must be taken by the Auditor-General.

The list is too long to go through. Of 51 submissions to the Maddock inquiry, only one was against the Auditor-General and the powers he has regarding maintaining accountability to this Parliament. The only other person who had any spine or principles and who was in a position to expose the government to the Victorian public is the former member for Mitcham in another place, Mr Roger Pescott. He was a man who got out on principle because he knew he could not find it within his party. He knew the obstacle of the Premier was insurmountable. He knew he would be nobbled throughout the process so he took the only principled step that he could take as a Liberal and resigned. He shines as a beacon against all the other spineless backbenchers on the issues of the Auditor-General and Workcover.

Roger Pescott was the only Liberal with principle! He was the only person in the Liberal and National parties who stood up to Jeff Kennett. He was the only one who was concerned enough to raise this issue in a serious way, but like all the other critics of the government he was put under the hammer. He was attacked by the Treasurer, Mr Stockdale, and he has gone through a bloodbath in his party. It is interesting to read his letter of resignation to Mr Speaker, which states:

> Principal among my reasons is the government's intention to alter the role and function of the Auditor-General. Having watched the government's position unfold, I have been uncomfortable from the beginning. I expected commonsense to prevail. It has not. In my considered view, the government's proposals compromise the system of checks and balances which are at the core of our system of government. To me, they run fundamentally counter to the public interest.

The Auditor-General is there for the public interest. Roger Pescott was the only man from the National or Liberal parties in government who took a principled position on the Auditor-General continuing to be able to report on matters of public interest. Mr Pescott's letter continues:

> While I regret the cost and inconvenience caused by a by-election, I see it as a further part of my protest in that it will be a plebiscite on the Auditor-General legislation.

It will be that because on Saturday we and the people of Mitcham will ensure that they send a message to the Kennett government that the changes to the legislation and to the workers compensation legislation are not acceptable to those constituents. They will not be acceptable to the people of Mitcham, and they will send that message loud and clear to the government, regardless of the $250 million spent on the freeway, the advertising by the Victorian Workcover Authority, the misinformation the Liberal Party has put out to the good constituents of Mitcham or the amount it has spent on the by-election.

One of the other things the government did not appreciate the Auditor-General exposing is the number of people involved in government advertising. Some 250 people were on the public payroll to ensure that the government was put in a good light. It is an absolute disgrace!

The government is placing its own welfare before the welfare of ordinary people. The Auditor-General also exposed the sell-off of HRL Ltd to one of the government's mates — it was given away for a song. Page 6 of the October 1997 report of the Auditor-General on the government's annual financial statement for 1996-97 states:

> A competitive process was not established for the disposal of the state's remaining interest in HRL Ltd as, according to SECV management, the disposal was complicated by the pre-emptive rights to the shares of the other shareholders, which made it difficult to sell the shares to parties other than the company or a buyer approved by other shareholders.

> An analysis of the sale of the state's remaining interest in HRL Ltd indicated that, while the sale proceeds were higher than its estimated share of the book value of the company's net assets, there was substantial uncertainty concerning the recovery of $8.5 million of interest-free loans provided by the SECV to the company, which are due for repayment in the years 2002 and 2003.

The government flogged off HRL, and the Auditor-General exposed the fact that the SECV will not be able to recover $8.5 million in interest-free loans. It was a dirty deal, and honourable members know who was involved in it. It was struck before the end of the financial year to give a tax break to the person involved. That demonstrates the importance of the Auditor-General being able to report without fear or favour. The opposition believes that will not continue.

Other findings were made by the Auditor-General in special report no. 50 for November 1997, which exposed the problems with Intergraph. Page 11 of the report states:

> For several months during 1997, Intergraph was in major default under its contract with the Metropolitan Ambulance Service for failing to answer at least 70 per cent of calls within 5 seconds.

Pages 11 and 12 highlight a number of other disparities in the system. Honourable members can read them for themselves. Special report no. 49 is more damning. It exposed some of the hideously corrupt practices the government and its agents have been involved in over a long period. I refer obviously to Intergraph and its contract with the government. On page 3 of the report the Auditor-General states:

> I have decided to present this report to the Parliament in advance of the more detailed report at the conclusion of the audit. This decision has been taken to inform the Parliament as early as possible of what I consider to be extremely serious matters identified during the course of the performance audit. These matters concern consultancy and outsourcing contracts entered into by the service between April 1993 and May 1995. During this period Mr J. Firman occupied the position of chief executive officer of the service and Mr J. Perrins was the government's appointed administrator.

What did the Auditor-General expose in the report? He exposed a number of serious deficiencies that do not concern Mr Hartigan — who is not in the chamber — because they occurred in the past. Mr Hartigan does not want an investigation of what occurred in the past; he made that clear by his contribution tonight. Investigations inform the Parliament of dealings that occurred and of how our money has been mismanaged in and by the government.

Page 4 of the report details the serious deficiencies in contract management. This free enterprise, economic rationalist government talks about contracting out and privatising everything that moves. It talks about the purchaser–provider split, about how efficient it is and how its economic management is so terrific, yet it has mismanaged a very important service — one that means life or death for many people in the community — just as it has mismanaged the state, its funds and taxpayers' money. The report states:

> Serious deficiencies in contract management between April 1993 and March 1995 were identified by audit in relation to the following major consultancy and outsourcing arrangements entered into by the service:
>
> engagement of Griffiths Consulting Pty Ltd to provide numerous consultancies encompassing the total management of several tender arrangements and of contracts subsequently entered into with appointed tenderers (actual cost: $1.5 million);
>
> management of tendering processes by Henderson Consultants for a new computerised ambulance dispatch system and for the subcontracting by the service of certain non-emergency services (actual cost: $216 000);
>
> the awarding of the contract relating to the outsourcing of a new computerised communications system in March 1994 to Intergraph Corporation Pty Ltd (initial cost: $7.5 million over four years);
>
> the outsourcing of the operation of new financial and management information systems and the service's subscription system under which a contract was ultimately awarded to Emergency Services Pty Ltd, a company established by the chartered accountant firm Arthur Andersen (current cost estimate of approximately $15 million over four years);
>
> the outsourcing of the management and maintenance of the service's ambulances and other vehicles leading to a contract let to JMJ Fleet Management Pty Ltd (estimated cost of approximately $2 million a year); and
>
> the subcontracting of particular non-emergency ambulance services to four separate companies (estimated cost of approximately $6 million a year).

The points I have highlighted are disgraceful examples of mismanagement by a government that prides itself on management. The report further states:

> Estimated savings of $20 million envisaged by the service to be achieved over a four-year period from the outsourcing arrangements have not eventuated and are unlikely to ever be achieved.

The most damning part of the report is on page 5, which shows where the government has gone down the path of corruption:

> While recognising the actions initiated by the minister, the absence of key documentation encountered during the audit is likely to be a significant impediment in the proposed police investigation. If at the conclusion of the police investigation such proves to be the case, I consider the matters raised in this report should be investigated in a forum where witnesses are required to give evidence under oath. Such a course of action could determine whether the various contractual arrangements at the service were carried out in a manner which, at best, involved serious mismanagement or, at worst, constituted corrupt activity.

That is what the Auditor-General is there for: to make sure people and departments are accountable to the Parliament. Here he exposes, at worst, corrupt activity:

> An inquiry of this nature may be necessary to identify and investigate all interrelationships between the various parties referred to in this report as well as to determine if any inappropriate financial benefits or other benefits in kind accrued to any party from such interrelationships.

That is one of the most damning reports handed down by the Auditor-General. Why wouldn't the government want to nobble the Auditor-General when he reports such matters to Parliament and to the Victorian community? That position is of major concern to the opposition.

Other Auditor-General's reports criticise the government's administration and use of the Community Support Fund. At one stage the fund was used to the tune of $1.5 million to support a boat that sank to the bottom of the harbour off the coast of America. What a disgraceful episode; what a shameful position. The person who exposed that maladministration was the Auditor-General. He reported the government's $30 million expenditure on marketing and promotion and the fact that the Leeds Media contract was awarded after a flawed and inappropriate tender process. I remind honourable members that Leeds Media is a mate of the government; it is part of a system whereby the government looks after its mates. This is not an open and fair process; it is tainted. The Auditor-General's Office reported on the government's administration of the child protection system and its $18 million subsidy to the Australian Grand Prix Corporation. At the time the government had taken away the right of people at Albert Park to sue the government or the grand prix authority for damage to their properties.

I will respond to some of the other issues raised by government members. There was support for the private auditors. Let me place on the record the situation relating to private auditors within Victoria and Australia. KPMG, where Mr Ken Spencer is a partner, were the auditors for Tricontinental and guess what other company? Pyramid! The government actually took KPMG to court for dereliction of duty. Finally, the government understood KPMG had done the wrong thing and the case was settled out of court. So much for the private auditors; so much for KPMG, which donates money to the Liberal Party. Over the past four years the government has paid KPMG more than $24 million for consultancies on its privatisation process.

Hon. K. M. Smith — By the Auditor-General.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — No, that is not correct. The Auditor-General has no pecuniary interest in what happens to his office. His only concern is to ensure that people like yourself, Mr Smith, other honourable members and the government are kept honest.

That is the important difference between the Auditor-General and KPMG, who were found out by their actions in auditing Tricontinental and Pyramid. As private auditors they failed the investors in Pyramid, the Victorian community and the government of the day by not exposing the outrageous and corrupt situation.

Following the transfer of 153 people who currently work for the Auditor-General to Audit Victoria, in the main, and out of his control a serious situation will arise — he will not be able to do his work. Government members do not want to discuss or debate a situation in which Audit Victoria will be sold off two years from now.

There are other issues concerning how the bill will further affect the good people of Victoria. For example, the points made by Mr Hartigan about the market system show that firms that criticise the government will not get further contracts.

The bill is pernicious. It is being put in place to nobble the Auditor-General, who has not been consulted because the Premier will not talk to him about the changes. The opposition and the wider community are concerned that the changes will mean that corruption will flourish in this state. We will end up with a situation similar to that which existed in Queensland, where corruption in the government was endemic for generations.

I promise that when Labor returns to power it will make the Auditor-General's position absolutely independent. The holder of the office will be given the appropriate resources and staffing to carry out the job without fear or favour and without reference to the millionaire mates of the current government — and Parliament will be informed at every opportunity.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 32

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hall, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Best, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Bishop, Mr (*Teller*)	Lucas, Mr
Boardman, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Brideson, Mr	Ross, Dr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Mr
Craige, Mr	Smith, Ms
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R. (*Teller*)	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Noes, 10

Eren, Mr (*Teller*)	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr (*Teller*)

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Committed.

Sitting suspended 12.01 a.m. (Wednesday) until 12.22 a.m.

Committee

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

1. Clause 2, page 2, line 2, omit "1998" and insert "2000".

I reiterate what I said during the second-reading debate, which is that the opposition intends to debate the amendments constructively. The extent to which we decide to divide on particular amendments or groups of amendments will depend in part on the government's response to the concerns we raise.

Amendment 1 would change the time at which a major part of the legislation comes into operation. It is to some extent linked to amendments 64 to 67, but there is a difference, so we will deal with them separately. Amendments 64 to 67 deal with a specific part of the bill, whereas amendment 1 deals with all clauses other than those referred to in clause 2(1). It states that clauses 9, 17, 21, 22, 24 and 26(2) will come into effect when the legislation receives royal assent, whereas the remainder will not come into effect until 1 July 1998.

The amendment would allow the creation of Audit Victoria on the day on which the bill receives royal assent, but the remaining parts of the bill which refer to authorised persons and put constraints on the capacity of the Auditor-General to report to Parliament would not come into effect in July 1998.

As I said, the provisions that would come into effect are those referred to in clause 2(1). They include clause 9, which inserts part 2A in the principal act and which establishes Audit Victoria; clause 17, which amends section 16; clause 21, which deals with freedom of information exemptions; and the other clauses, which deal with establishing Audit Victoria.

The remaining provisions would not come into operation until 1 July 2000. There are a number of reasons for that. One is that we believe it is not appropriate for the government to put in place those parts of the bill that diminish the power of the Auditor-General without going to the people.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — What did you say?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I said it is not appropriate without going to an election. The changes to the Auditor-General's Office were not part of the government's election platform. A commencement date of 1 July 2000 would meet the requirements of the National Competition Council. There is no great urgency about proclaiming the remaining provisions. The government itself has said it does not need to put the provisions into place until July 1998.

Pushing the date out by two years would enable us to see how Audit Victoria was functioning as a separate organisation, including whether it was achieving its objectives and how it was relating to the Auditor-General. It would allow for a significant transitional period. It would also enable the Auditor-General to complete any audits he may have already commenced. We know there are some that cannot be completed by 1 July 1998, and I am not sure what will happen to those. However, I will not labour the point because it will come up when I move amendments 64 to 67.

The opposition has moved the amendment principally because it thinks the remaining parts of the legislation ought to come into operation at a later date. It would not significantly affect the operational aspects of the legislation, because Audit Victoria would still be established. If the government agreed to accept the amendment, the opposition would probably be prepared to accept the legislation.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — That is an offer too good to refuse, Theo.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am not sure it will be taken up, Mr Nardella. The effect will be that the remaining parts of the legislation the opposition is seeking to amend will not come into force until after 2000.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — I will urge the government to seriously consider the amendment.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am sure you will, Mr Nardella, because if the government were to accept the amendment it would allow honourable members to go home early. It would create a cooling-off period and allow the government, in the lead-up to July 2000, to make the final decision.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I am sure Mr Theophanous will not be surprised to hear me say that the government is not persuaded of the merit of deferring the practical effects of the legislation. I raise two issues by way of clarification. Firstly, in respect of audits in process and the argument that 1 July 1998 will be an impractical date for the operation of the remaining provision, I refer Mr Theophanous to proposed section 26, which states:

> This act, as in force immediately before the commencement of section 10 of the Audit (Amendment) Act 1997, continues to apply to and in respect of an audit of the financial statements of an authority that is commenced before 1 July 1998.

The provision specifically accommodates that concern. The date 1 July 1998 was chosen deliberately as being the date upon which the most practical transmission can take place. And secondly, Mr Chairman, this is not a new position. It has been canvassed substantially in the community for more than 12 months. The government has made its intentions in terms of timing abundantly clear. The amendment would frustrate the implementation of this measure, and on that basis is not acceptable.

Committee divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 31

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr (*Teller*)
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr (*Teller*)
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Ross, Dr
Bowden, Mr	Smith, Mr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Ms
Cover, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Craige, Mr	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Varty, Mrs
Davis, Mr P. R.	Wells, Dr
de Fegely, Mr	Wilding, Mrs
Forwood, Mr	

Noes, 10

Eren, Mr (*Teller*)	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss (*Teller*)	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to; clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

2. Clause 4, line 9, after "Victoria" insert "as a body directly responsible to the Auditor-General".

The opposition is not opposed to the establishment of Audit Victoria as a body corporate or its incorporation. The opposition accepts that the purpose of the clause is to provide for the audit of public accounts and to establish Audit Victoria, but it wants to insert the words 'as a body directly responsible to the Auditor-General' to give the government the best of both worlds. The provision will establish the Auditor-General as a separate entity and allow Audit Victoria to have control and to report to the Auditor-General as opposed to reporting to the government.

This is an important principle because an obvious conflict of interest exists if Audit Victoria is reporting to the government while it is also auditing government departments. However, a conflict of interest would not exist if Audit Victoria reported to the Auditor-General.

The amendment is important not only from the point of view of the Auditor-General having operational control or being able to direct Audit Victoria to carry out particular audits but also, for example, being able to carry out risk assessments. I know from his appearances before the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee that the Minister for Finance is concerned about risk assessments; he believes the amount of risk should be minimised. The Auditor-General should be in the position to do that. He can achieve it through Audit Victoria if Audit Victoria is directly responsible to him.

The further important point government members have raised is to whom Audit Victoria is responsible. They have said the Auditor-General has raised the question with them. All honourable members will appreciate that this question goes to the Auditor-General's main problem. Honourable members on both sides of the chamber say they were surprised when the Auditor-General said he did not have a problem with the big six conducting audits as much as he does with Audit Victoria conducting audits.

There are significant problems in giving work to Audit Victoria because at the end of the day the Auditor-General's task is to ensure that any one of the big six companies chosen for a particular audit has no conflict of interest — that is, no government consultancy was in a position of conflict of interest and, therefore, an audit could be performed.

Audit Victoria will always be in a position of conflict of interest because it is proposed that it be directly responsible to the government. The board is appointed by the government and the government owns Audit Victoria for at least the next two years, according to the government.

Audit Victoria is in a position where the Auditor-General will find it difficult; and I am sure government members will say the Auditor-General has raised this problem with them. For example, if the Department of Premier and Cabinet appointed the board of Audit Victoria, how could Audit Victoria be appointed as the auditor of that department? It would be nonsense. It could not be done, as the Auditor-General has said.

If Audit Victoria were directly responsible to the Auditor-General, as my amendment proposes, such a problem would not arise. Not only would the problem of allowing the Auditor-General some control over the operations of Audit Victoria be solved the problem of a conflict of interest which the Auditor-General has identified in his appointing Audit Victoria for audits would also be solved.

The opposition strongly believes the amendment makes sense on both counts: it would go a long way towards satisfying the concerns of the opposition and it would allow the opposition, as was its case with the first amendment, to walk away and say, 'We have achieved something together tonight. We can at least recognise there is a relationship of responsibility between the Auditor-General and Audit Victoria, and the problem of conflict of interest has been removed'. Whatever else may be contained in the legislation, the amendment provides an operational capacity to restore the Auditor-General's responsibilities.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I acknowledge that this amendment centres upon the principles involved in the structure of Audit Victoria, but I do not accept the basis upon which Mr Theophanous brings it to the committee. He is implying that the only way we could overcome an inherent conflict of interest within Audit Victoria is for it to report directly to the Auditor-General. He is advocating we adopt the New Zealand model.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Which the Premier defended.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Okay. That is the basis on which the New Zealand model is constructed. I do not argue with the effect he spells out in his amendment, because that is exactly what it would do, but for almost precisely the same reasons that is why the amendment is not acceptable to the government.

The government takes the fundamental position that it is inappropriate to have the purchaser–provider blurred in the way Mr Theophanous is advocating. How can we possibly say that Audit Victoria is truly commercial if it is reporting to the Auditor-General and, therefore, in so far as it is competing with other players in the market, it is seen to have at least implicitly some sort of advantage in that context?

The government takes a very clear view that it is not in the best interests of public sector auditing for that inherent conflict to appear. Mr Theophanous is suggesting that a conflict of interest exists in one context, but his remedy would apply a conflict in another context. If honourable members are to get the best out of the audit process and harness it truly, which is what they are trying to achieve, the suggested compromise actually creates what could be regarded as an even greater problem.

I earnestly tell Mr Theophanous that we looked carefully at the New Zealand model; it was considered at great length during the course of the review, but on a matter of fundamental principle it was put to one side because we saw that model as not solving any problem but constituting a further one. Perhaps the opposition is seeing this in a restricted context, which it should not be. We do not want Audit Victoria restricted to work within the public sector. The expertise and experience in Audit Victoria, which was acknowledged by every member of the review committee, should be available to be used in a much broader context. On that basis, the opposition's compromise is inappropriate.

The government wants Audit Victoria to be truly commercial. That is what it has set out to achieve, and that would not be achieved if Audit Victoria were directly responsible to the Auditor-General. Mr Theophanous should note that if Audit Victoria is undertaking an audit it still reports directly to the Auditor-General, who brings the report to Parliament. So at least in that context it is responsible to the Auditor-General in a practical sense. It is against that background that the government is not persuaded to accept the amendment.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I thank the minister for that explanation. I understand the point he is making about establishing what he sees as a new conflict of interest, but he has not answered the central point I raised. Perhaps Mr Forwood might like to make a contribution if he thinks it can be answered. The minister has not answered the central question of how the problem of a conflict of interest can be overcome where the owner of a particular auditing firm is also the person being audited. For example, would anybody suggest that the parent company of Arthur Andersen, if such a parent company exists — I am not sure about its structure, but I am talking about the principle — could be independently audited by Arthur Andersen? It would be fairly difficult to persuade anybody to agree to that. The minister has not addressed that point. I do not know whether mechanisms will be put in place that will prevent that. Mr Forwood may have a better knowledge of that and may be able to give the committee a response.

I come to my second point regarding the creation of a new conflict of interest. The minister put in place a massive system of compulsory competitive tendering in local government, and in doing so he allowed competitive tendering with in-house bids and external bids. In that circumstance the government was able to put in place, to its satisfaction, a mechanism that would guarantee that the process of competition between the in-house bid and the external bid was not contaminated and that there was no conflict of interest. I should have thought it would not be beyond the government's capacity, having done that in local government, to be able to put in place a similar structure under this bill — although I do not think it is quite the same because Audit Victoria is at a significant arm's length from the Auditor-General anyway — to enable the Auditor-General to be a kind of in-house bidder, with appropriate mechanisms. It is not as though this sort of thing has not been done. I ask the minister to explain what the difference is.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — I shall deal with the first issue Mr Theophanous raised and the minister will deal with the second. In preparing the bill the government was conscious of the argument that it could not be seen to be auditing itself. It went to some lengths to think about a method to make sure this could not happen. The

method decided on is proposed section 7E inserted by clause 9, which states that the government — in effect, the minister — cannot give directions on any audit matter at all. Therefore, we strongly believe we have isolated any opportunity for any accusation to be made that parts of government are auditing themselves. We believe the wording of that provision is particularly clear:

> (1) The minister must not give directions to the board relating to the carrying out by Audit Victoria ...

We believe 'must not give' is very strong wording and makes it absolutely clear that there is no circumstance under which the sort of conflict Mr Theophanous raises can occur.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — Mr Theophanous likened what we are doing here to the process of compulsory competitive tendering in local government and referred to the claim the government has made that it has found a mechanism by which competition between in-house tenderers and those from outside is seen to be fair. I accept the thrust of what Mr Theophanous says and I believe we have established a mechanism by which we can be protected in that context, but it did not come easily. As Mr Theophanous would know, it is very complex.

If I had had the opportunity I would have preferred to have a clinical division between the two sections. I would prefer not to have the market complicated by in-house bids, if that were possible, because irrespective of how good the system is and how robust the audit process, in most cases when a tender is let unsuccessful tenderers are a bit inclined to look for an explanation for their lack of success. It is a very tough test to be able to persuade outside tenderers that the process has been fair when the successful tenderer is an in-house consortium, and all sorts of challenges come to the surface in respect of advantages and inside knowledge, inside running and those sorts of things. Even where the playing field is level, there is still at least the implication or inference of advantage. If I were king for a day and I had the chance, I would have a perfect-world circumstance where there was no complication of that kind. But that was not the case we had in local government. We had an executive service delivery profile from within councils, and that was not to be ignored. In many cases that had been developed at the expense of external contractors, so we knew there would have to be a transition over many years — and it would be foolhardy to pretend otherwise. It was that basis, rather than anything else, that determined the policy that we should provide for in-house bids.

I have said many times, and I am happy to repeat it here, that in that context I saw the best compromise of all as being the management buyout, which was likely to follow a successful in-house bid, because that removed any implication of an advantage in the marketplace. We were driven by the real world.

This case is quite different because we are starting out from a different circumstance and an audit process where the Auditor-General himself, even in the previous experience, was using private contractors extensively. For instance, in the same context that Mr Theophanous uses it, it is a matter of record that the Auditor-General became responsible for the audit of local government and used private contractors exclusively for that responsibility. In fact, that responsibility was given to him under my tenure as the local government minister, and quite deliberately so.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Which we supported.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Of course, and it was supported by all members of this place. But the point is that in that circumstance the Auditor-General uses private contractors exclusively, so we do not have that inherent complication to start with. We may have been able to find a mechanism that guaranteed everybody that there was equity in the tender process and, as Mr Forwood has outlined, we tried to achieve that at least in part by resolving that the government would be unable to give directions to Audit Victoria in respect of any audit.

That does not change the fact that if we had different circumstances we would prefer to have no complications of the kind the opposition is outlining — and that is the best way of overcoming it. It was on that basis, after careful consideration, that we resolved that Audit Victoria would not be directly responsible, in an operational sense, to the Auditor-General. We think that, on balance, that will be a far better outcome than pretending that the complications involved in dissecting in-house bids and outside tenderers are as easy to overcome as we would like. We know they are not, but we think the compromise we have struck is the best given the circumstances.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I point out to Mr Forwood that if proposed section 7E(1) were to say only that a minister must not give

directions to the board, there may be some grounds for accepting what he says. Unfortunately the rest of the proposed section gives the minister the power to give directions to the board on other matters.

Whatever Mr Forwood may say, my experience both as a minister and in the public service has been that a power of direction of any sort creates a power relationship. Even if the power of direction does not apply to the specific area of audits, it will still create an unhealthy power relationship. Rather than dealing with that now, I point out that we will be moving amendments to try to remove it. We will test the issue at the appropriate stage.

In his response to my example the minister basically said that it works in local government but that in an ideal world he would prefer not to have to do it. There are no ideal worlds, Minister, certainly not in the audit kingdom — or any other kingdom. Being king for a day does not help in these circumstances.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — It would have in local government.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It might have in local government.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — That was the example you gave me.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The point I make is that if the mechanism has more or less worked in local government, we do not see any reason why it could not work here. It certainly seems to work fairly well in New Zealand. I do not know whether the minister has found specific problems with the New Zealand model that cannot be overcome. As the minister knows, the New Zealand Auditor-General has been critical of the Victorian model, precisely because it does not provide the sort of capacity we are seeking in moving the amendment — that is, to be able to call an in-house bid a competitive bid.

I think that is unfortunate. We might have been much closer to agreement had something of that sort been incorporated in the legislation. Unfortunately it has not. The Auditor-General will be put in the position of having to decide whether to give an audit to Audit Victoria and take the risk that a conflict of interest will arise. He will probably do that based on a close scrutiny of the board, including an assessment of whether it is respected and independent. There are a lot of unknowns. We remain of the view that the simplest and quickest way to resolve the issue would be for the committee to accept amendment 2.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I also support amendment 2, because it goes to what I believe is the opposition's fundamental position — that is, that Audit Victoria should be the direct responsibility of the Auditor-General. You can talk about economic rationalist positions until the cows come home, and you can go on about purchaser-provider splits and being in kingdoms isolated from the real world, but the amendment provides an avenue through which the Auditor-General can have direct responsibility for Audit Victoria.

The minister has not talked about the fact that Audit Victoria will ultimately be privatised. In two years time it will probably be taken over by one of the six huge accountancy firms, all of which fork out lots of money to the Liberal Party. Audit Victoria should be the direct responsibility of the Auditor-General.

It is not a new concept: the Auditor-General currently has that responsibility. Neither the minister nor anybody else on that side has argued that the people who will be transferred to Audit Victoria are not working efficiently or effectively. The government is basing its argument that the Auditor-General cannot be trusted to look after Audit Victoria and should have no direct input into its auditing processes simply on ideology. In the final analysis the clause will allow the government and the responsible minister to sell off Audit Victoria. That is why the government will not accept the amendment moved by Mr Theophanous.

The amendment would give Audit Victoria and the Auditor-General real independence. Mr Forwood argued that, ultimately, the minister responsible for Audit Victoria will not be able to control what it does. He said it will still have to report to Parliament, and we certainly understand that — but we do not trust the government.

Just as it does when reports on other aspects of maladministration come out, the government shrugs it off. When the opposition raised the report by the Auditor-General on the amount the government spends on media and self-promotion, the government shrugged it off and said, 'It is our prerogative. It is an advantage of incumbency that we will not relinquish'. When the Auditor-General exposed the fact that credit cards had been freely

given to people, the responsible minister, the highest minister in the state, again shrugged it off. It is his prerogative to hand out credit cards to whomever he wishes.

The opposition does not believe the government will carry out this provision to the letter of the law. Even if it did, the Premier would report to Parliament and then tell the people of Victoria, 'I don't care because we have carried out our duty. I have given that direction to Audit Victoria because I am the responsible minister — so be it. That is what it allows me, as the minister, to do. Parliament has given me the authority to take that action and I will report it to Parliament, but that is as far as the accountability goes'.

This amendment is critical to the opposition. As with the previous amendment, it allows the Auditor-General to control Audit Victoria. It takes the position that operates in New Zealand, which New Zealanders have been able to live with. New Zealand, which has gone much further down the track of the economic rationalist model than we have and which will go even further down the track with Jenny Shipley, finds it acceptable; yet the amendment before the committee is not acceptable to either the minister or the government.

On a couple of occasions the minister has put to the committee that the government will seriously consider any amendments put before it. I place on record that the amendment Mr Theophanous puts to the committee, among other amendments, is critical. It will be a test of whether any of the opposition amendments, however argued, however reasonable, are to be adopted and seen to be adopted. The amendment is for consideration and the night is but young; certainly we will monitor the progress of these amendments because they deal with important matters. The opposition does not lightly place amendments before the committee, and it will certainly urge honourable members to support them.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — In a brief response to Mr Nardella, may I say that I did not for one moment suggest that the opposition brought these amendments to the committee lightly — quite the reverse. However, I reassure him that this is certainly not the first time the government has heard of this model. The New Zealand model is well known to us and was extensively canvassed at the time the government considered its response to the audit review committee.

The notion that somehow the government has come across this New Zealand model and is considering it for the first time tonight is unrealistic. It was extensively canvassed and carefully considered and, for reasons I have outlined which have been well known and highly publicised, it was resolved that it would be even more appropriate, notwithstanding the New Zealand experience, to make the functional audit arm, whatever it was called, totally commercial. On that basis there was seen to be an inherent inconsistency in having it on the one hand truly commercial and on the other hand directly responsible to the Auditor-General. This is not a new concept we have been considering; it has been carefully canvassed in the preparation of the bill.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I want to make a contribution at this point because Mr Theophanous and Mr Nardella are simply underlining the importance of the notion of the authority of the Auditor-General, not just to the opposition but to the great majority of people. I agree with the sentiment expressed by Mr Theophanous that by not being prepared to support this amendment the government is really indicating that the Auditor-General must not and cannot be independent.

As I said, the issues inherent in this committee discussion about whether the government wants to make Audit Victoria directly responsible to the Auditor-General reflect the reasons for the community's concern. I indicated earlier that I have not the slightest doubt that this will be clearly tested and demonstrated in Mitcham on 13 December. The government needs to understand that. I accept that the minister is not contesting that this is a legitimate amendment, but the government needs to acknowledge this as a core issue and the reason for the concern of an enormous number of reasonably minded Victorians, many of whom would in normal circumstances be strong supporters of the conservative parties and the coalition government. This makes people question whether the real motive for the legislation is to diminish the capacity of the Auditor-General to steer the ship.

Mr Theophanous's amendment provides an opportunity, as he indicated, for the government to say, 'Yes, we do support the Auditor-General. We believe Audit Victoria ought to be a body that is directly responsible to the Auditor-General'.

It is necessary for the government to understand that there is an enormous breadth of community concern that the authority, independence and capacity of the

Auditor-General will be undermined. That concern is shared not just by the Victorian opposition but by a whole range of people who have interest in good governance and matters to do with the Auditor-General. If the government is not prepared to accept this amendment, it will clearly indicate that in relation to the structures and the mechanism Audit Victoria will be a more influential body with more capacity than the Auditor-General.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — Again I do not challenge much of what the honourable member says, certainly in the context in which he puts it — that the amendment goes to the very nub of the difference between the parties. The difference can be refined to the question of whether in a practical sense the Auditor-General is able to undertake audits in his own right. I also understand that issue is seen as very important by many people in the community.

I make the point that I have been told by the audit profession that on this issue the bill is critically flawed to the extent that unless the Auditor-General has the right and resources to conduct audits that will somehow put at risk the issue of public interest. I challenge that claim, as I have done to the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants. I addressed that matter in a response to the society late last month. I wrote to the president of the society and said that, among other things, I challenged much of what it put out with respect to the bill and its conclusion that protection of the public interest somehow cannot be guaranteed unless the Auditor-General has a right to conduct audits.

Such a conclusion is illogical and ignores the fact that some 75 per cent of the work of the Auditor-General is already outsourced. I said that surely the president was not implying that outsourcing had of itself put the issue of public interest at risk, particularly when he would acknowledge that audits have been undertaken by fully professional members of the accounting profession. Surely we are not arguing that all the work that is being outsourced now is outside the public interest because of that fact alone. I do not think anyone is arguing that. The government is saying the principle should be extended one step further.

Although I do not dispute that that is the nub of the debate in the community — I acknowledge that — the debate is to some degree misdirected. When people come to understand that the bill effectively does nothing more than extend what already applies to much of the auditing undertaken by the Auditor-General a lot of the heat will go out of the debate.

Committee divided on amendment:

Ayes, 10

Eren, Mr	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs (*Teller*)	Pullen, Mr
McLean, Mrs (*Teller*)	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr

Noes, 31

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs (*Teller*)
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr (*Teller*)
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Craige, Mr	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Varty, Mrs
Davis, Mr P. R.	Wells, Dr
de Fegely, Mr	Wilding, Mrs
Forwood, Mr	

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 5

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

3. Clause 5, line 14, after "means" insert "the Auditor-General or".

We had a significant debate on amendments 1 and 2. We are moving down the order on accountability issues, but this amendment has a high priority for the opposition. Following the opposition's loss of amendment 2 Audit Victoria effectively remains a separate body that is not directly responsible to the Auditor-General — the opposition's arguments about the Auditor-General having control of Audit Victoria were lost following the division.

However, I am at a loss to understand why the government is not prepared to give the Auditor-General the power to conduct an audit using his limited resources of a very small office of

20 or 30 staff, or whatever it might be. This is important because there may be a particularly delicate issue or an issue the Auditor-General feels that only he can investigate. It may be that the Auditor-General finds it difficult to choose an agency that does not have a conflict of interest.

The fact that the Auditor-General cannot appoint someone from within his own office — effectively appointing himself — as an authorised person under the bill is totally inappropriate and is overkill in limiting his powers. The opposition cannot understand why the government has decided to go down that path.

I refer to the point made by the minister when he said that 75 per cent of audits are currently contracted out.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — All those in local government are.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is true, but more work is done in the 25 per cent that are not contracted out than in the 75 per cent that are. The 25 per cent figure includes the large central agencies such as the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Treasury and Finance, the Victorian Workcover Authority, the Public Transport Corporation and so forth — agencies that have always been audited by the Auditor-General. It is therefore not a valid argument to say that 75 per cent of the Auditor-General's work is contracted out. It is misleading to put it in those simplistic terms.

The minister is aware of the other aspect because I took the time to read from a number of special reports by the Auditor-General. The minister would be aware that all performance audits were conducted by the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General identified the problem of a conflict of interest in the marketplace in his submission to the Maddock committee. It states:

> As more services are outsourced to the private sector, the office is finding it increasingly difficult to identify private sector accounting firms to assist in financial audits who are not currently or have not recently provided services to the government or the agencies subject to audit.

The Auditor-General is finding it difficult to find private sector companies that do not have a conflict of interest. An analysis of the annual reports for 1995–96 and 1996–97 shows that Ernst and Young alone among the big six accounting firms would have been eligible to conduct financial audits of the Department of Treasury and Finance — the other five firms have all had consultancies with the department during those periods. Over the past four years the big six accounting firms have earned more than $22 million in consultancy fees from the government.

It is also important that the Auditor-General conduct audits so that he can keep his hand in, as it were. The 1995 performance audit of the Auditor-General's Office referred to a problem. The report states:

> Whereas it has been appropriate and successful for the office to contract out to agents audits such as hospitals and universities, in my view it will continue to be important for the Auditor-General's Office to audit at least the central agencies which are key to the management of public sector risk and where it is essential for the auditor to be totally independent of conflicts that might be seen to arise in the private sector. In my view it is also important for the office to retain some practical auditing experience and skill base in order to be able to effectively manage agents and to fulfil its mandate.

By eliminating the Auditor-General as an authorised person the bill does not allow even the much smaller office to conduct a single audit. Some government members have tried to claim that the Auditor-General could conduct an audit by virtue of his powers granted under the bill. If that is the case why not spell it out by agreeing to the amendment?

Why not make it clear that the Auditor-General, with his limited office and given that Audit Victoria is not responsible to him, is to be given the power to conduct an audit if he believes he cannot find somebody else do it to his satisfaction because of a conflict of interest or because the audit is of a particular nature? It is possible he might want to audit something like a corporate card system in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. That is something the Auditor-General should be able to do in his own right. He ought to have that last-resort power.

The amendment is crucial for the opposition because it would restore some semblance of independence for the Auditor-General. Even if it did not restore operational independence, it would restore his capacity to conduct an audit using the limited resources that will be at his disposal in this much smaller office.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — On my reckoning, amendment 3 is similar in effect to proposed amendments 28, 30, 32, 33 and 35. They all have the effect of achieving the same outcome as the previous amendment which the committee declined to support — namely, that the Auditor-General can be involved directly in the physical conduct of an audit. We are talking about a threshold issue. The impassioned argument Mr Theophanous brings to the committee does not change the fact that this is the same issue the government canvassed at the outset — namely, that the Auditor-General should be involved in the scoping, supervision and reporting of audits rather than in the conduct of those audits.

As to the question of whether the Auditor-General should be able to conduct an audit with the limited resources available to him under the proposed system, I am not persuaded by that argument at all on two counts. Firstly, the Auditor-General will have the power to investigate, and that is not removed. That concept is dramatically different from the concept of an audit. Secondly, let me paint a scenario: in a hypothetical circumstance the Auditor-General says he wants to undertake an audit which would require resources beyond those which had been previously granted him. We would immediately come into a conflict based upon the issue of resourcing. I, for one, do not want to be accused of nobbling the Auditor-General by denying him the resources he needs to undertake the role given to him by Parliament. I do not believe that is a suitable outcome, either.

I should prefer to say up front that we want our Auditor-General to be involved in all of the discussions and arrangements regarding the scope of the audit and how it is to be conducted; we want him involved in the selection of the auditor to undertake the work; we want him to supervise the contract that is let; and we then want him — and him alone — to accept the responsibility to report to Parliament. On that basis the government cannot accept the amendment proposed by Mr Theophanous because effectively it seeks the same outcome as the previous amendment but by a different avenue.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The explanation offered by the minister is unsatisfactory because there is a significant difference between this argument and the previous one.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — It has the same practical effect.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Except this amendment allows an audit of last resort. It allows the Auditor-General, as a last resort in circumstances where he is not satisfied that he can get somebody else to conduct an audit and using the limited resources that he has, to go out and conduct such an audit. The reason this is so crucial is that it would allow some capacity but it does not affect the competitive model, because on any reckoning with 20 or 30 staff the Auditor-General will not be able to conduct the vast bulk of these audits. He may be able to pick perhaps one out a year.

There are significant positive outcomes. Firstly, it allows him to keep his finger on the pulse. Even only one audit a year would allow him to retain some expertise in understanding how audits are being done.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — But you could not accept a restriction that it be only one audit.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — In effect it is a restriction. The fact that the Auditor-General has a staff of 20 means he will not be able to do many more; he will have a very limited capacity. Even if he wanted to maintain the same level of auditing he has at the moment one would have to accept that he will not be able to do that with a reduction in his staff to 20. The Auditor-General may be able to do some audits. If it is not one, it might be a handful — I do not know — but it will certainly not be anything like the level of auditing he currently does.

The amendment has important side effects which the government is ignoring. It would allow the Auditor-General to retain a certain level of expertise; it would allow him and his staff to understand how audits continue to be done by the private sector.

Hon. Rosemary Varty — If he is doing one audit a year it is a nonsense argument to suggest it gives him any experience.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is a lot more experience than doing none, Mrs Varty. I do not know whether it would be one or a handful.

Hon. Rosemary Varty — It shows how little you know about auditing.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Obviously, Mrs Varty, you have changed your tune since 1990. You ought to go back and read your speech from 1990 when you argued about increased, not decreased, resources for the Auditor-General. You

are one of the great hypocrites in this place. If I were you I would sit in silence in the corner and say nothing because you are not helping your own side.

Hon. Rosemary Varty — You are not helping yours either; you are just putting the case.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! This has been a long committee and it promises to be longer the way we are heading. I ask honourable members to have tolerance and patience because the Chair will not put up with constant interjections; they do not help anyone.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The argument the opposition is putting in this instance is that retaining some level of capacity and expertise, however small, within the audit office of the Auditor-General is a positive feature. That can occur by allowing the Auditor-General to conduct some audits in his own right, even if it is a limited number. The symbolism of the matter is important: we can say the Auditor-General is not an Auditor-General who cannot do audits, which is what this legislation provides for. At least we could say the Auditor-General can do audits but he is restricted in his operational capacity to do so. However, the principle — and it is an important principle — that an Auditor-General should have the right to conduct an audit is not abandoned if the opposition's amendment is accepted. At least we can say we have not abandoned the principle. The principle remains in the legislation.

If the amendment is not accepted, not only have we abandoned the operational independence of the Auditor-General by removing his capacity to use Audit Victoria for audits, but we have also abandoned the principle that Auditors-General should have a right — even if they do not have the full resources — to conduct an audit. This is an important question of principle. The opposition does not accept the argument of the government; it believes it is about time the government stopped using the 75 per cent of audits argument because the minister has accepted the vast bulk of public auditing is done by the Auditor-General. It is not helpful to seek to deceive the public by issuing publications that say 75 per cent of auditing work is already done by contracting out. What is the difference if the same applies to the remaining 25 per cent?

That is not the circumstance. It is a very different circumstance, and we should at least be honest in the way we present the facts on these matters.

The opposition will be pursuing this amendment because it provides the last bit of independence for the Auditor-General to enable him to conduct audits in this state.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I also support amendment 3. I pick up the words the Minister for Finance used when he said the Auditor-General will have power to investigate under section 15. He has nobody to investigate for him. What is the minister saying — that the Auditor-General will go out and audit the departments himself?

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — He is not allowed to do that, Mr Nardella.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — How will he have the power to investigate under section 15?

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — He can investigate, but he cannot audit.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — It is ridiculous. He has to have his own people, his own resources to be able to investigate and report back to the Parliament. It is just nonsense to say that there will be no conflict of interest with the private audit firms. I do not have the figures in front of me, and I hope an honourable member will be able to give them to me, but the situation is that every one of the big six accountancy firms that are available to do these audits has donated to the Liberal Party. Every one of them has a potential conflict of interest in the way they operate in our political system.

Hon. Pat Power — They are realists.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — They are realists, and that is the way the government operates, but the Auditor-General will not be able to investigate these areas unless he has his own resources. Because he will have to contract out to a firm that supports the Liberal Party — a firm that shares that philosophy, a firm that wants to continue to operate in Victoria under the patronage system the government is renowned for — the Auditor-General will not be able to report without fear or favour in the public interest.

Unless the Auditor-General is given resources by the Parliament he will not be able to investigate, even though he has what theoretically is the power to do so. That is an untenable situation for the Auditor-General and an even worse situation for the Parliament. It is unsuitable for us to have a minister

at the table of the committee who continues to say that the Auditor-General will have power to investigate when Parliament does not then provide the resources to allow the Auditor-General to do so. It is a ridiculous situation. That is why this amendment is critical.

What is the government scared of? If, as members of the government have all laboured in their contributions to explain, the Auditor-General will not be nobbled by the bill, why would they want to vote down an amendment that will ensure the Auditor-General is not nobbled? If the amendment is not agreed to the Auditor-General will not be able to conduct audits of all government departments despite the inevitable conflicts of interest that will arise. One could very well have a situation where the most powerful person in the state places him or herself in a position that means an Auditor-General cannot contract one of the big six firms to carry out an audit on his or her behalf because all of them have donated to the Liberal Party. That creates conflicts of interest and places the Auditor-General in an invidious position.

Worse still, Parliament places the Auditor-General in an invidious position, and it will rue the day that it does not allow the Auditor-General to undertake investigations into matters pertinent to his or her responsibilities under the bill. There is nothing more important than ensuring the Auditor-General is able to investigate all matters that are of concern to him or her. The clause does not allow that to happen, and it will mean that the Auditor-General is effectively nobbled.

That is not acceptable to the opposition and the opposition will vote against it. Members of the government have consistently said to the Parliament and to the Victorian community that the Auditor-General will be able to perform his duties, but this clause will not allow that to happen.

Committee divided on amendment:

Ayes, 10

Eren, Mr	Nguyen, Mr (*Teller*)
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr (*Teller*)	Walpole, Mr

Noes, 32

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr (*Teller*)
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr (*Teller*)
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 6

The CHAIRMAN — Order! I invite Mr Theophanous to move amendment 4, which will also test amendment 7.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

4. Clause 6, line 21, before "The" insert "(1)".

Amendment 4 is a simple technical amendment that will change the numbering. We are not concerned about dividing on the amendment — —

Hon. Pat Power — Theo, you are getting soft. We are watching you!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I make it clear that it may expedite the committee's deliberations if amendment 4 were considered as testing amendments 7, 8, 9 and 10. May I canvass those as well?

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Mr Theophanous may canvass them, but he cannot move them together because 8, 9 and 10 go to clause 7 and amendment 4 goes to clause 6.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, I understand that. I will canvass them together so that one division will test the committee's view on all of them. Although I would be happy to have two divisions, we would prefer just one.

Hon. M. A. Birrell — I would give you leave to do it all in one division!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am sure you would. Mr Chairman, in speaking to amendment 4, I will canvass amendments 7 to 12.

Amendment 4 would change the numbering, and amendment 7 would insert a new paragraph after paragraph (e). Proposed section 3A(1) would list the objectives. Amendments 4 and 7 would have the effect of showing that there was nothing in the objectives that limited the Auditor-General's authority or responsibility to provide for the auditing of public accounts in accordance with the act.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — What does that mean?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It would make it clear that the Auditor-General would have the authority to conduct audits under the act.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — That is another way of getting to the same issue.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It would have a similar effect, but is spelt out in clearer terms.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You acknowledge that it would have precisely the same effect.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, it would have a similar effect. If the amendments were accepted, proposed section 4A(6) would read:

> Subject to this Act and to other laws of the State, the Auditor-General has complete discretion to conduct audits in the performance or exercise of his or her functions or powers and, in particular, is not subject to direction from anyone in relation to —
>
> (a) whether or not, or by whom, a particular audit is to be conducted ...

Amendment 10 seeks to add a new power. Amendment 11 is a consequential amendment, and amendment 12 seeks to include the words 'and a report as to the authorities audited by the Auditor-General using his or her own resources'. That relates to the report the Auditor-General will send to parliamentary committees.

The amendments set out chapter and verse the way in which the Auditor-General could use his own resources to interpret the provisions that empower him to conduct his own audits if he so desired. In that sense the arguments have, to a large extent, been already canvassed. The government has made its intentions clear, but the amendments give members another opportunity to reflect on whether the Auditor-General ought not be given some power, limited though it may be, to conduct audits in his own right.

It would be done not by specifically providing the power but by indicating that nothing in the act prevented the Auditor-General from conducting an audit using his own resources. In other words, the proposed amendments would provide a negative power by not limiting the capacity of the Auditor-General.

This is a minimum position. Notwithstanding what is in the act, I ask the minister to say what his attitude would be if, during the conduct of an audit, the Auditor-General asked the government for a specific right under clause 15, which the minister says allows the Auditor-General to investigate authorities, to conduct an investigation that would take the form of an audit. Would the minister treat the request favourably or would he obstruct the Auditor-General through a literal reading of the act? Would he say to the Auditor-General, 'The investigation you have conducted looks like an audit'. Would the minister then penalise the Auditor-General in some way for having conducted an investigation and issued a report?

I am flagging the issue to get some indication of the extent to which the minister would adopt a literal interpretation of the provisions. Minister, you know that what you say in debate is considered by agencies in interpreting the limits or otherwise of their powers. I am sure the Auditor-General will consider what you say about how you would interpret and enforce those provisions.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — At the outset Mr Theophanous acknowledges that the effect of proposed amendments 4 and 7 through to 12 is for all intents and purposes consistent with an earlier amendment that sought to give the Auditor-General the precise power to undertake audits. To that degree the issues have been canvassed and tested.

I shall make a number of comments in response to this amendment. I should start with an apology. Earlier I said clause 15 was the provision under which the Auditor-General has investigative powers; in fact, clause 15 relates to the issue of reporting. Clause 11 is the provision which contains the investigative powers.

We are playing on semantics a little.
Mr Theophanous invites me to delineate between what constitutes an investigation and what constitutes an audit. I am not sure whether the boundaries are discrete.

Hon. Pat Power — Open slather.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Not at all. At least it is made clear and up-front that under this model the Auditor-General will not have the legislative authority to undertake audits. The government does not walk away from the fact that in many circumstances it may well be the Auditor-General's decision to use his direct resources as opposed to those available to him under contract to undertake an investigation. The last thing we would want to do is obstruct the function of the Auditor-General.

Inherent in the comments of many critics of the legislation is the suggestion that the government has some sort of vested interest in securing a weak audit system. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no protection in a weak audit system. The protection for the government is in a strong and robust audit process. I certainly would not visualise anything being done by government that would obstruct the Auditor-General in the conduct of his role.

If circumstances similar to those Mr Theophanous outlined to the committee emerge, the government would view any application from the Auditor-General on the merits of each case. But I commence from the premise that the government has taken a deliberate policy decision to draw a line of distinction between purchaser and provider in this context. That is the point from which we start; beyond that, we want the process to work. The government has a clear interest in making sure it does work. That is the basis on which we will approach the practical circumstances that arise in the future.

I repeat: we have no interest in securing a tame cat audit process; it is quite the reverse.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The minister has just said that the line is blurred between what might be a report under clause 11 — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I think it was 'not discrete'.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Okay, that the line between an audit and a report is not discrete. I would find it difficult to make a distinction particularly if a report went to a range of accounting issues. I would find it extremely difficult if we were talking performance audits because much of that information is presented in the form of dialogue.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Performance audits are specifically covered by clause 16.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — But performance audits are not allowed; the Auditor-General cannot conduct performance audits using his smaller resources. He cannot the performance audits but he can issue a report. That is how I understand it.

When one considers the Auditor-General's performance audits, it seems that often they are in the form of a dialogue, where he puts in a lot of opinions, where he reaches conclusions, and so on. One could just as easily say that somebody did a report as say somebody did a performance audit. I know and understand there is a technical difference but the problem is that the minister has not identified the extent to which he intends to enforce it and what mechanism he intends to use to enforce it.

If the Auditor-General issues a report, who will determine whether it looks too much like a performance audit or a financial audit? What would happen? Would the Auditor-General be precluded from tabling that report in Parliament? Is that the mechanism used? Who precisely would make the decision that a particular report prepared by the Auditor-General using clause 11 was an audit and therefore had to be disallowed?

Serious and dangerous precedents are established by this provision if we take notice of the minister referring to no discrete differences. Someone has to determine at some stage that the Auditor-General has crossed the boundary in a report. Who will determine it? How will it be enforced if the Auditor-General has crossed the boundary and conducted a report which looks too much like an audit? Will it be enforced or will some leeway be provided so that the Auditor-General is able to provide reports to Parliament using forms which might resemble an audit but are reports on particular agencies of government?

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — I do not know whether there is a particular response to the hypothetical situation put by Mr Theophanous. By way of clarification, section 15 of the act, which deals with reports by the Auditor-General, makes it clear that that section does not apply to section 16 which deals with performance audits. I suspect that

the question of what form the report would take is entirely in the hands of the Auditor-General.

I make the point that a section 15 reporting power relates only to financial audits, not to performance audits. When he conducts his reports, he is doing them on financial audits, as is the case with the current ministerial portfolios. This is the provision under which the ministerial portfolios — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Are you saying he cannot report at all on performance audits?

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — No, he does that under a different section and he will continue to do it under a different section. Section 15 reports by the Auditor-General specifically do not apply to performance audits. But ministerial portfolio reports, which are the section 15 reports, have a well-established format. They are not full-scope performance audits as one would find described in the CPA guidelines; they are reports on financial audits, and they will continue to be done the way they have been done in the past.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Who is going to enforce it in the event that he crosses the boundary?

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — I guess he will report the way he wishes to report. I do not see that enforcement is an issue that arises here. He has the ability to report to Parliament on financial audits, and he will report to Parliament on financial audits.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I listened carefully to Mr Forwood's remarks. It may well be that it is the responsibility of the Minister for Finance to do this, but it seemed to me that Mr Forwood was unable to give any assurances at all. In fact, he said things like, 'I guess' it would be done this way, or whatever. Mr Theophanous was seeking to draw out the ramifications or consequences of the minister's acknowledgment that the difference was discrete. In the context of the core issue being what capacity the Auditor-General has under this proposed legislation to be the driver without interference, I do not think it is sufficient for the opposition, on behalf of the community, to rest comfortably with Mr Forwood's response that he 'guesses' it would be done this way. Quite clearly the point Mr Theophanous was pursuing was when an audit is a report, when a report is an audit, and what capacity the Auditor-General has to establish the status of the work and determine where it will end up.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — Let me try to clarify the issue a bit. In my contribution to the second-reading debate this morning I read a letter that I had sent to the Auditor-General. Let me read just a couple of paragraphs from that and it may help clarify this issue. My letter to the Auditor-General dated 31 October states:

> While audits will be done under contract to you, you have absolute authority to report to Parliament and the act makes no specification on what such a report should contain.
>
> As your section 15 powers are retained in the act, you can report on any matter arising from a financial audit at any time. How a matter 'arises', and how you deal with it, is entirely up to you.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — It seems to me from Mr Forwood's remarks that there is considerable scope for the Auditor-General to make reports in any manner he or she sees fit. I think they are the words Mr Forwood used, or words to that effect. Is that correct?

Hon. Bill Forwood — Yes. Shall I read it to you again?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — In my letter to the Auditor-General I said:

> While audits will be done under contract to you, you have absolute authority to report to Parliament and the act makes no specification on what such a report should contain.
>
> As your section 15 powers are retained in the act, you can report on any matter arising from a financial audit at any time. How a matter 'arises', and how you deal with it, is entirely up to you.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The problem here is that I try to put myself into the shoes of the Auditor-General and ask exactly what this means. In other words, what are the boundaries? Are the boundaries based on there being some model of an audit that you cannot do, and that you can do everything else other than that model of an audit? This is the part that I am very unclear about. I assume from what Mr Forwood said that if the Auditor-General produces a report which looks like an audit, feels like an audit and smells like an audit but which the Auditor-General says is not an audit but a report, he is entitled under section 15 to make

that kind of report. I see the minister nodding his head. If that is the case, it would help the committee's deliberations if he would confirm that. I saw the minister nodding his head in agreement. Unfortunately, he was clearly directed by the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology not to confirm on the record that what he was indicating by nodding was in fact correct. There is no confirmation of the situation I have identified. The opposition wants to persist with this point because obviously if we cannot get that confirmation there will be an important restriction.

Section 15 of the Audit Act states:

> (1) The Auditor-General may make a report on any audit undertaken by the Auditor-General ...

I think that is amended later.

Hon. Bill Forwood — It continues to say 'or person authorised by the Auditor-General'.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, it says 'or person authorised by the Auditor-General'. I think that is amended. So the Auditor-General can make a report on any audit undertaken by an authorised person. Subsection (2) states:

> A report under sub-section (1) may include such information and such recommendations as the Auditor-General thinks fit for the more effective, efficient and economic operation of the authority to which the report relates.

Let us get this clear. I believe so long as an audit has been done by an authorised person this would allow the Auditor-General to produce a report.

Hon. Bill Forwood — A financial audit.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, it relates to financial audits. My reading of this provision is that the Auditor-General would be able to produce a report so long as a prior financial audit had been done by an authorised person, and that would include a capacity to produce something which resembled a financial audit of the same — —

Hon. Bill Forwood — It might look pretty much like a ministerial portfolios report.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It may. It seems that the limiting fact is the report on an audit. In other words, so long as an authorised person has done a report the Auditor-General can then go and do another report if he is not satisfied with the report produced by the authorised person. He can report on that, and in fact he can produce a report that is pretty much an audit of that organisation, but only if an authorised person has already made a report and done an audit.

If that is the situation, that confirmation would assist the committee in its deliberations.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I am happy to provide that confirmation and to make the point that there is virtually no restriction whatsoever on reporting by the Auditor-General. I make it clear that we are having this debate against the background of an amendment moved by the honourable member to entitle the Auditor-General to undertake an audit.

Let us clearly understand what we are talking about. I have no hesitation in confirming the proposition put to the committee by Mr Forwood about the right of the Auditor-General to report to Parliament. That is far short of your proposition, Mr Theophanous, that the Auditor-General should be able to conduct audits in some circumstances. That is the fundamental difference. I hope that is the basis on which we agree to differ.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — Yes and no. I think we agree that what I have proposed would provide the Auditor-General with an unequivocal power to audit. But the discussion on the issues so far has been about determining under what circumstances the Auditor-General's reports could resemble those of an audit.

It has been suggested that a significant direction could be given to the Auditor-General by simply saying that, so long as he is reporting on an audit undertaken by an authorised person, we would not care what form his report took — even if it were an audit of a particular organisation in its own right. At least he would know there would be no delimiting factor whatsoever on a report that had been prepared by an authorised person. At least we could then agree to differ on the other issue of whether he should have the capacity to do an audit of an agency in his own right.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The honourable member is once again resorting to semantics. He is again stretching the limit by suggesting that a report would be acceptable, even if it were in the form of an audit. That is clearly not countenanced in the legislation.

I am happy to again put on the record that Mr Forwood has captured the spirit of the reporting process. There will be no barrier to the role of the Auditor-General in that context.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Except that he had better not produce an audit.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — The legislation makes it clear that he is unable to conduct an audit in his own right. Let us not have any tricky terminology at the margins. Mr Theophanous wants me to agree that a report would be acceptable, even if it were in the form of an audit. I hope you know that I cannot accept it.

We are talking about a fundamental difference between what we acknowledge to be an audit and what we acknowledge to be the responsibility of the Auditor-General to report to the Parliament. But we are talking about a report on an audit undertaken by an authorised person, which is a fundamentally different concept.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — On that basis the opposition is not satisfied. It is sad that the government is not even prepared to concede that the Auditor-General could produce an unconstrained report on an audit. That would allow him to produce something, whether it resembled an audit or not. On that basis we will divide on the amendment, which tests all the other amendments I referred to earlier.

Committee divided on amendment:

Ayes, 10

Eren, Mr	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr (*Teller*)
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr (*Teller*)
McLean, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr

Noes, 32

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr (*Teller*)
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs (*Teller*)

Amendment negatived.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Amendment 5 also tests amendment 6, so Mr Theophanous may talk about those together.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

5. Clause 6, lines 22 to 26, omit paragraph (a) and insert —

"(a) in relation to financial audits of authorities, to determine whether the financial position and financial operations of authorities are presented fairly and in compliance with all relevant Acts and to examine issues as determined by the Auditor-General;".

Amendment 5 seeks to change the objectives from those set out in proposed new section 3A inserted by clause 6 of the bill, which reads:

(a) in relation to the audit of financial statements of authorities, to determine whether those statements present fairly the financial position and financial operations of the authorities.

The opposition sees this clause as a very important accountability clause because there is a significant difference between a financial audit, which is an accepted term, and an audit of financial statements. It is an accepted term in the accounting profession, and Mr Forwood should know that.

If agreed to in its present form, this objective will confine public sector auditing to a process of mere bookkeeping. If the proposed new section is read literally, it limits an audit to assessing financial statements rather than analysing and investigating the financial position of an agency. Mr Forwood should clearly understand this. Analysing the financial position of an agency is a very different process from simply assessing financial statements produced by the agency.

Hon. Pat Power — Like what happens in the local soccer club.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Absolutely, Mr Power. It goes right through all agencies of government. We do not believe this is the intention of the government, but a literal reading of it

certainly provides scope for it to be read in the way that I have proposed.

A financial statement is a simple reconciliation of accounts and provides little scope to further investigate anomalies and the financial operations and performance of an agency in financial terms. Even if one does not go to the extent of doing a performance audit, the financial performance of an agency is something that is normally looked at when financial audits are done. Indeed, the Auditor-General has in the past used financial audits to look behind the figures provided to him in the financial statements of authorities, as in the Auditor-General's report that Mr Forwood showed before. In a large number of cases he goes behind the figures and looks at where agencies have not fulfilled their obligations from a financial or reporting perspective. For example, the delays in implementing the automatic ticketing system involving the contract between the PTC and Onelink and, more recently, the blow-out in the grand prix construction costs and recurrent expenditures were revealed in the Auditor-General's financial audits. They were not revealed in performance audits conducted by the Auditor-General but in financial audits — very important financial accountability. However, if all the Auditor-General did was to assess the financial statements provided to him, these revelations would never have come to the fore.

To recognise the full ambit of a financial audit undertaken by the Auditor-General in the public sector, which includes ensuring that the financial statements of authorities comply with other relevant acts, it is necessary to change this objective. It is important that these audits also address any issues of probity and so on as identified by the Auditor-General for examination.

I think the government would probably like to be able to say that this is now provided under the act. However, if agreed to, this amendment will spell out that power. I cannot believe the government does not want financial audits of these authorities undertaken and that all it wants is a simple assessment of the financial statements produced by the authorities or the agencies. Indeed, without this definition of a financial audit issues could not be pursued for inclusion in the report to Parliament on ministerial portfolios. It would be difficult to do unless one took the broader view of what a financial audit is.

Again I do not believe that is the intention of the government, but perhaps I am being too kind, Mr Power. I am hoping the government will be able to clarify its position. It would certainly provide a great deal of comfort if the amendment were accepted. The opposition is even suggesting that if necessary the government would come back if it were found that full financial audits of authorities were not provided for as a result of the way in which the clause has been framed.

A second aspect relates to my amendment 6, which seeks to substitute for proposed section 3A(c) the following:

> (c) in relation to financial audits of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office, to determine whether the financial position and financial operations of the Office are presented fairly and in compliance with all relevant Acts and to examine issues as determined by the Parliamentary Committee.

Honourable members will note that the wording of the amendment is similar to the wording of the previous amendment. The previous amendment correctly refers to issues determined by the Auditor-General because it talks about financial audits conducted by the various authorised persons under the act. This amendment talks about the auditing of the Auditor-General's office itself, and in that case the issues would have to be determined by the parliamentary committee, which in this case is the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee.

There is another reason for including the provision, apart from giving the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee the power to direct that certain issues be looked at in relation to financial audits of the Auditor-General's office. Proposed paragraph (c) provides for a standard that does not apply to other agencies under the control of the government. Other agencies are not required in relation to audits of them to determine whether money appropriated by Parliament and payments made to those agencies are spent or applied for the purpose for which they were appropriated or paid. That test is not applied to the Department of Finance or any other government department, yet it is a test the government wants to apply to the Auditor-General.

The opposition says the words 'to determine whether the financial position and financial operations of the Office are presented fairly and in compliance with all the relevant Acts', which it has proposed, are exactly the same words as it has used in amendment 5 in relation to all other agencies.

Comparing proposed paragraph (a) with proposed paragraph (c), the government itself has said that

paragraph (a) provides for audits of financial statements, which I have already indicated is a lower test. Paragraph (a) talks of statements presenting fairly the financial operations of authorities but the same test is not applied to paragraph (c) in relation to the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General is the only government agency to which a different criterion is being applied. The opposition says there ought to be consistency of application.

For all those reasons, but principally because of the major issue I have identified of the difference between a financial statement and a financial audit, the opposition strongly urges the committee to support the amendments.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The government received early notice of proposed amendments 5 and 6 because they were suggested in the first place by the Auditor-General. I have in front of me a schedule of suggested amendments by the Auditor-General to the Audit (Amendment) Bill. With respect to amendment 5 the rationale outlined by the Auditor-General is:

> To recognise the full ambit of a financial audits undertaken by the Auditor-General within the public sector, which includes ensuring that financial statements of authorities comply with the government's financial management legislative framework. It is important that those audits also address any issues of probity, etc., as identified by the Auditor-General for examination.
>
> Without this expanded definition of a financial audit issues could not be pursued for inclusion in the report to Parliament on ministerial portfolios (under section 15).

He then suggests a rewording of proposed section 3A(a), which has been captured by proposed amendment 5 moved by Mr Theophanous. That is the genesis of the amendment.

The government looked at that proposed rewording very carefully and determined that it was not acceptable. The government took that decision some time ago. I am talking about a gestation period of several weeks, if not months. The government took that position because it believes that the response suggested by the Auditor-General is misconceived because proposed section 3A is not a definition section and does not operate to limit the scope of audits.

Indeed, the officers who were charged with the brief of responding to the Auditor-General were a bit intrigued by his commentary because with respect to the reference to relevant acts they were unable to locate any legislation that would actually fall within that definition. No legislation is identified as falling within the government's financial management legislative framework — there are no acts that could fall within the phrase used by the Auditor-General, namely, that the financial position and financial operation of authorities are in compliance with all the relevant acts.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Presented fairly.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I am happy to take the full text which I read into the record a moment ago. Further, it was resolved formally and after due consideration that there was no need for a reference to the phrase 'To examine issues as determined by the Auditor-General'. Ministerial portfolio reports will continue to be provided given that the Auditor-General is directly empowered to make these reports under section 15(2) of the Audit Act. I think the committee understands that that is not changed by the proposed legislation. The Auditor-General will certainly retain that reporting authority and his investigative powers under sections 11 and 12. That was reinforced in the second-reading speech.

Amendment 5 moved by Mr Theophanous was carefully considered in the early preparation stage of the bill and on the grounds I have outlined was determined to be inappropriate.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I listened carefully to what the minister said. It re-emphasised why there is concern in the community about the Audit (Amendment) Bill and the impact it will have on the role of the Auditor-General. From my experience in a whole range of organisations and community groups, every year there is an audit of the financial statements, usually conducted by a local professional who volunteers his or her services.

It is simply what we all understand the audit of financial statements to be — ascertaining whether all of the entries are appropriate and that the reconciliation for the end of the period is accurate. It is significant that the Kennett coalition government wants to limit the Auditor-General to that sort of arrangement under section 3A(a).

Given that these words are consistent with some concerns that the Auditor-General made known

himself, I believe the expression 'financial audits' is a clear expression of what ought to occur, what the community would prefer to occur and what the Auditor-General sees as being appropriate.

I support the leadership of Mr Theophanous when he indicated that we will call for a division on the amendment, because it is central to the debate. The community and the opposition do not support limiting the role of the Auditor-General regarding financial statements to one where he simply does a reconciliation and signs off the profit-and-loss statement as being an accurate record.

Under all Westminster governments the Auditor-General has the capacity and independence to conduct what honourable members will understand to be a financial audit of an authority. There is not a member in the chamber who does not understand the capacity and potential that flows from the words 'financial audit' and the constraint and restriction that is implicit in the reference to an audit of financial statements. One allows for the traditional responsibilities and obligations of the Auditor-General to be maintained and the other restricts the Auditor-General to being a bean counter who operates as a local accountant does when auditing a school council, a tennis club or a senior citizens club — that is, he signs off a reconciliation statement.

I repeat that each of the amendments we have seriously contested emphasises that the opposition supports the community's view that the operation of government ought to be properly exposed to financial audit. The intention of the Kennett coalition government is to restrict the capacity of the Auditor-General to indicating that the reconciled statements are indeed a true and accurate record.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I do not accept the minister's explanation that this is not part of the definition. I believe the words he used were that it 'did not have the same currency'. This is part of the objectives of the legislation. Obviously the objectives of the legislation — —

Hon. Pat Power — Are more important than the definition!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I would have thought so, but it is obvious if the objectives of the legislation do not allow for financial audits not only are they not objectives but also they act as a limiting factor. In that case to conduct a financial audit would be outside the objectives of the legislation. It is a significant limiting factor.

I do not know where the minister is getting advice, but it has no effect. It might be helpful if he indicated — I suppose we must carefully read what he said in the *Hansard* report — that the objectives do not have effect in relation to whether the Auditor-General does the financial audit.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — By way of explanation I shall take the committee to the terminology employed in sections 8 and 9 of the Audit Act 1994, which state:

> **8.** ***Audit of authorities***
>
> (1) The financial statements of each authority must from time to time ...

It is talking about an audit of the financial statements. Section 9 states:

> **9.** ***Report on audit***
>
> (1) A report on each audit of the financial statements of an authority ...

This terminology has been used until now and no-one has claimed that the dire consequences just outlined to the committee by members of the opposition have occurred. We are using the terminology that has already been in place. There is no trick or smokescreen or mirrors; we are simply using the accepted terminology.

Committee divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 32

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr
Ashman, Mr (*Teller*)	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr (*Teller*)	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Noes, 10

Eren, Mr (*Teller*)	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr (*Teller*)

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to; clauses 7 and 8 agreed to.

Clause 9

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

13. Clause 9, page 8, after line 4, insert —

"(5) The Parliamentary Committee must review the operations of Audit Victoria after 5 years to determine whether Audit Victoria has fulfilled its objectives and should continue to operate as a statutory authority or should become an organisational unit within the Victorian Auditor-General's Office".

Clause 9 is effectively a sunset clause. It gives a period of five years during which time Audit Victoria would remain in the structure established under the act, and at the end of that five years there would be a review by the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. I am not sure whether Mr Forwood will still be the chairman of that committee in five years time. He looks at me in amazement. I hope it is neither of us, Mr Forwood. If it is you in five years time you will have failed and if it is me I will have failed.

Clause 9 is important from the opposition's standpoint. It does two things. First, it gives a breathing space of five years by keeping Audit Victoria in the structure envisaged by the act. Second, it provides for a review after five years by the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee. This is an anti-privatisation provision. It provides an opportunity for honourable members to vote against the privatisation of Audit Victoria.

Given that these amendments were put to the coalition party room without reference to the fact that the privatisation of Audit Victoria would be on the agenda after two years, this is an opportunity for honourable members to express a view about that matter. The chairman of the parliamentary committee was not consulted on audit matters — —

Hon. Pat Power — He is treated with contempt.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He does not get consulted; he does not get listened to; and he does not get told. After this set of changes he may be consulted because if you can rely on a backflip you can also rely on saying yes right from the beginning.

The opposition says, 'Slow down, this is not the right environment to be thinking about the privatisation of Audit Victoria'. It is a resource which may be needed by Victorians after a period. It would be a tragedy if the government privatised Audit Victoria and an elected Labor government had to reconstruct it in the future to provide an independent auditing service for a future Parliament.

For that reason the opposition says this is a litmus test and urges honourable members to vote for its amendment. The opposition seeks from the government an indication whether its intention to privatise Audit Victoria in two years time is being pursued. Further to that, we would like an indication of whether that means the intention is to privatise Audit Victoria before the next election or after the next election.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The honourable member has the good grace to acknowledge that there is something of a tongue-in-cheek attitude about this, and he also acknowledges that this is the anti-privatisation amendment. That is exactly how I would describe it. He would not be surprised to learn that that is precisely the basis upon which we say on behalf of the government that the amendment is unacceptable.

The government has no real concern about the review suggested, because it would expect to have Audit Victoria under constant review, but the government does take issue with the notion that that review should necessarily be deferred for five years to give what the honourable member describes as some breathing space to the organisation. We do not believe there is a need for that breathing space. We expect that Audit Victoria will be under constant review.

I might say as an aside that there is a slight irony in this in another context, and that is that because Audit Victoria becomes a functionary of the government it is therefore subject to audit by the Auditor-General. That is a slight twist on what has been described thus far.

The government has no plans at all for the privatisation of Audit Victoria. That is an issue that will be determined in the future. There is, however,

something of a dilemma confronting our opponents, some of whom are saying that because of the criticism of the Auditor-General Audit Victoria will not be a qualified candidate for much of the public sector audit work. If that were the case it would be sad, because it would mean that the future of Audit Victoria was very clouded indeed.

We regard Audit Victoria as a commercial organisation and we would expect that its expertise would not be restricted to the public sector and it would market its wares to a much broader sector of the community. On that basis the structure into which it might evolve in the future is something we will approach with a great deal of interest but with no preconceived ideas.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — During the course of his contribution the minister did not indicate whether he could give an assurance that Audit Victoria would not be privatised prior to the next election. I again invite him to consider that question. I also find it rather strange, because I am almost certain that there was a government announcement or press release in which the notion of privatisation in two years was mentioned. If it is two years, that would probably take it to after the next election. It is important that that be clarified. If the minister is saying that no decision has been made and two years does not apply, perhaps he could give some assurance concerning the next election.

Secondly, I did not say at the beginning that amendment 13 is connected to amendment 14, but as the minister has mentioned it it is worth my mentioning it as well, to ensure that we do not have to deal with it again. What the opposition seeks to do in amendment 14 is take out paragraphs (c) and (d). Essentially they would allow Audit Victoria to provide audit services to persons other than authorities within or outside Victoria or Australia. While Audit Victoria is a public body, nobody would suggest that the Auditor-General's Office should perform audits outside Australia. No-one would suggest that the Auditor-General should perform work outside Victoria, let alone outside Australia, in the private sphere.

Given that this is a government-owned business, the notion that it will go off and seek to do business internationally while still a government-owned auditing company primarily doing audits for the Auditor-General is bizarre in the extreme.

I am happy to link these matters so that we can divide just once on this issue. Amendment 16 would provide Audit Victoria with powers under the Borrowing and Investment Powers Act 1987. What exactly does that mean? What is the opposition creating here? Are we creating a monster that will be able to go off-shore to borrow money in order to expand and potentially put the state at risk of significant exposure? The provision has been framed to allow Audit Victoria the power to do all those things — to provide audits outside Victoria and outside Australia. I do not think that is done by a public sector auditing firm anywhere else in the world. While it is in government hands the focus of Audit Victoria ought to be to audit the Victorian public purse. Unfortunately paragraphs (c) and (d) expand that ambit dramatically, and they also give powers under the Borrowing and Investment Powers Act.

Amendment 16 makes the statement that the powers under the Borrowing and Investment Powers Act should not be exercised except with the specific approval of the parliamentary committee and the Auditor-General, which would at least put some limit on Audit Victoria that would prevent it becoming a monster and going off and borrowing off-shore in order to expand.

The opposition is opposed to those paragraphs. I do not know whether the minister can give any assurances about future borrowing practices, but I will be interested in his response to the central question I asked him about an assurance that Audit Victoria will not be privatised prior to the next election.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! The Chair needs to clarify that the committee is now dealing with amendments 13, 14, 15 and 16.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, although amendment 15 has already been dealt with in a different form.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I cannot give the honourable member the assurance he seeks simply because it is something that will be determined in the future. I repeat that no decision has been made about the future of Audit Victoria. The question of and the time scale for privatisation were mentioned only in passing. One of the comments made by the Premier at the time confirmed that.

I quote from the report of a press conference held by the Premier on 28 October. On the principle of privatisation, he said:

> We may change our mind at the end of that but —

speaking of privatisation —

> that is our expectation. We will see how we go from there.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — 'Change our mind' at the end of what?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I think he was talking about the two-year period.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That suggests it will not be done before the two-year period.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — That is what it suggests, but privatisation and the two-year period were mentioned more as an aside than as a deliberate plan of government. On that basis I am not prepared to rule privatisation in or out before the next election. I simply make the point again that Audit Victoria will evolve in ways more extensive than could be determined in advance by government edict.

Committee divided on amendment:

Ayes, 10

Eren, Mr	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss (*Teller*)	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs (*Teller*)	Pullen, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr

Noes, 32

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr (*Teller*)	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr (*Teller*)	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Amendment negatived.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

17. Clause 9, page 9, line 7, omit "(1)".

Amendments 17, 18 and 19 deal with directives provided by the minister. The opposition agrees with proposed section 7E(1), which states:

> The Minister must not give directions to the Board relating to the carrying out by Audit Victoria of an audit of financial statements or a performance audit under this or any other Act ...

The minister says the provision is the strength of the legislation because it stipulates that the government cannot influence an audit conducted by Audit Victoria. The opposition's concern is that the bill will provide a general power of direction, which is the reason for amendment 18.

If there is a power relationship established in which the minister has the power to direct Audit Victoria it is a recognition of who is the boss, who controls Audit Victoria. Except for the restraint about the conduct of audits, other directions can be given about the way Audit Victoria operates, the amount of funds allocated to particular audit functions, the directions as to the use of resources and so on. Amendment 19 omits proposed subsections (2) and (3).

The opposition amendments will clarify that Audit Victoria is subject only to the control of the board. Most people would argue these are positive proposals that ought to be supported.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The net effect of amendments 17 to 20 is to remove the ministerial limited power of direction from proposed section 7E. I advise the committee that the government thought about this carefully but believes the balance achieved in the bill is appropriate. It will give Audit Victoria absolute independence in respect of audits, but at the same time make it subject to transparent directions for non-audit matters.

I am intrigued by the suggestion that Audit Victoria should not be subject to controls. It is a novel suggestion and is one that the government is not prepared to countenance.

The government has come to this position after a rational process and the government believes the balance in respect of ministerial power is appropriate.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — Does the minister have any idea when and how this notice in writing would be used to give a direction to Audit Victoria? I cannot think of an example where such a direction would be used.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — One matter that immediately springs to mind concerns borrowing powers. Given that we expect to send Audit Victoria into the real world of competition, the government is cognisant of the need to allow Audit Victoria to compete in the marketplace.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You already have that under the Borrowing and Investment Powers Act.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — The government is saying that it is subject to ministerial direction.

Committee divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 32

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr (*Teller*)	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr (*Teller*)	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Noes, 10

Eren, Mr	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr
McLean, Mrs (*Teller*)	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr (*Teller*)	Walpole, Mr

Amendment negatived.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — It may be prudent for the committee to deal with amendments 20 to 24 inclusive because they deal with the appointment of the board of directors and the way in which the board would operate. Therefore, I move:

20. Clause 9, page 9, lines 26 and 27, omit "not less than 5 and not more than 8" and insert "the Auditor-General and not less than 4 and not more than 7 other".

Amendment 20 seeks to install the Auditor-General as one of the members of the board. That would also apply to amendments 20 and 21. He would be one of the eight directors. Amendment 22 puts in place a requirement — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Amendment 21 has a different effect to what you just described.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Sorry. Amendment 20 has the effect of installing the Auditor-General as one of the eight directors. Amendment 21 installs the parliamentary Public Accounts and Estimates Committee as the committee which is to consult with the Auditor-General; it seeks to install the parliamentary committee as one of the persons or groups which makes recommendations about the appointment of directors. It installs the Auditor-General as a director and gives powers to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee to recommend the appointment of directors.

Amendment 22 seeks to install a new subsection whereby a person is not eligible to be appointed a director if he or she is directly or indirectly associated with an authorised person. That is a crucial provision because it effectively means the Auditor-General is required to appoint a group of authorised persons who are then to conduct audits of financial statements of the various government agencies. If a person is appointed as an authorised person — that is, that person is to audit a government agency — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Only when contracted to do so.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — But the appointment of an authorised person means that person is deemed qualified to do that. You cannot be both qualified to do audits in the private sector and also be a director of Audit Victoria. That does not make sense. It would be anti-competitive and it would create a conflict of interest in the

circumstances where Audit Victoria and a private firm were competing for the same work. The opposition believes the amendment is sensible.

Amendment 23 would have the effect of the Governor in Council appointing the Auditor-General as the chairperson of Audit Victoria. That is in keeping with the earlier amendment which puts the Auditor-General on the board.

Amendment 24 is consequential and removes the prescribed percentage of members of an accounting body, and so on. Insufficient accountability mechanisms have been provided. In particular, there is no limitation on an authorised person being also appointed a director. The minister may be able to shed some light on this, although he is not in favour of the Auditor-General being on the board of Audit Victoria.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The amendments go to the fundamental issue canvassed earlier in the debate — namely, the purchaser-provider split. The opposition is seeking to close the gap, this time via a slightly more ornate process.

The arguments have been canvassed, but I put it simply: the government does not accept the thrust of amendments 20 and 23 because that would put the Auditor-General on the board of Audit Victoria. We want Audit Victoria to be an independent and commercial organisation.

I hope Mr Theophanous would not suggest that the Auditor-General seek a position on the board of KPMG; that is the sort of equivalent he is suggesting. It is underscoring the fact that the opposition is not prepared to accept the fundamental distinction between purchaser and provider, and we are simply going around and around that issue.

For instance, amendment 21 requires that it be a committee of the Parliament rather than the minister that consults with the Auditor-General in respect of appointments to the board of Audit Victoria. I make the point again that Audit Victoria has no direct connection with Parliament. It is meant to be an independent organisation and on that basis has a closer contact with the executive rather than Parliament — and I do not apologise for that. Again, we are going back to the same sort of issue that we canvassed earlier.

The government does not accept the thrust of proposed amendments 22 and 24, which are directed at the resolution of conflict. We do not accept that conflict need arise, or if it does, proposed section 7L provides a mechanism to ensure that it does not impact on the decisions of the body. I make the point that proposed section 7F(2) requires that directors cannot be appointed if they have a direct or indirect connection with an authorised person, and we are opposing this on the basis that it would be unworkable.

In any event, let us go back to square one. To the extent that Mr Theophanous is concerned about conflict of interest, at the end of the day it shall be the Auditor-General who determines the question of conflict of interest because it is he and he alone who will determine the question of the contracting; and if he determines that there is a conflict of interest that he is not prepared to accept, that will be reflected in the decision he makes in respect of the letting of the contract. We are talking about issues at the margin. If we are not prepared to accept that the policy decision relates to a split in respect of purchaser and provider we will be here this time tomorrow, still talking these issues through. I believe the issues here have been canvassed.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I accept that the issue of control of Audit Victoria by the Auditor-General has been canvassed and that these amendments seek to place the Auditor-General directly into Audit Victoria. I accept that, but I do not accept the argument of the purchaser-provider split; that has been concocted by the government for its own purposes.

The conflict of interest question canvassed in regard to amendment 22 disturbs me because it is a different and separate issue. I hope the minister would not suggest that KPMG would be happy to have on its board a member from Arthur Andersen or one of the other firms. It would not be happy about that, and it would quickly say, 'There is a conflict of interest. You are not entitled to be on our board if you are on the board of another one of the big six'. All we are asking is why the government will not extend the same provision to Audit Victoria by specifying that a person ought not be appointed as a director if he also wants to be appointed as an authorised person.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — But you wanted the Auditor-General to be a director of Audit Victoria. Isn't that precisely the same issue? We are going

back around the same mulberry bush, and you've not accepted the first proposition.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is not the same issue at all because, unlike the government, the opposition puts the Auditor-General in a different category compared with the way the government sees him. We have had that argument. Using the minister's own terms, this is about the establishment of a private company or a statutory authority that is at arm's length from both the Auditor-General and the government. The opposition is saying that the board of that company should not have on it people who are also conducting audits for one of the big six. The minister is suggesting there is no problem with that.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I am not suggesting that. You are actually arguing for the Auditor-General to be on the board of Audit Victoria.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am happy to deal with this separately, but if the minister is insisting on not dealing with it separately, we can go through the argument on the Auditor-General first and then come to this argument and deal with it separately. The point is that, in the minister's own terms, Audit Victoria is meant to be separate from the Auditor-General. That is what the minister is suggesting. It will be owned by the government initially and involved in the bidding process. Isn't it reasonable to say that the members of the board of that company ought not to be people who are on the boards of other private sector accounting companies — their competitors — because of the obvious conflict of interest that involves? That is not an unreasonable question.

The minister can resolve this question, and then we can move on, by simply giving an undertaking to the committee that people who are authorised persons will not be appointed to the board of Audit Victoria. It is a fairly simple proposition. It means not having on the board of Audit Victoria people who have a conflict of interest.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I can give the committee this explanation. The question of appointments to Audit Victoria will be on agreement with the Auditor-General. That is the process we visualise.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That's not true. Are you saying by agreement with the Auditor-General?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I am saying after consultation with the Auditor-General.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You said 'by agreement'. There is a very big difference between the two terms.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — All right then, after consultation with the Auditor-General. If the unspeakable circumstance existed in which an inappropriate appointment of a director of Audit Victoria was effected against the recommendation of the Auditor-General, wouldn't the Auditor-General actually have the last laugh by simply deciding that because of his assessment of conflict of interest, Audit Victoria was not to be awarded the tender? The notion that this will all be done behind some closed door and then inflicted on the Auditor-General is nonsense because at the end of the process it is all dependent on a tender awarded by the Auditor-General. The opposition is jumping at shadows.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — The minister has really not responded to the scenario the opposition put to him that a person who is also a partner or another authorised person as described in the definitions of the bill can be appointed as a director of Audit Victoria without the agreement of the Auditor-General. That is where the conflict arises and the opposition is concerned about it. The second issue is that in privatising and flogging off Audit Victoria there could be a raft of authorised persons from, say, KPMG, which is the government's favoured company to take over Audit Victoria. What would happen if the Ken Spencers of the world or the directors of Crown Casino were appointed to the board of Audit Victoria in a bid to take it over through a privatisation process?

Again, that is of concern to members of the opposition. It would be absolutely inappropriate for the directors of an authorised company to also be directors of Audit Victoria, because they would know the exact financial position of Audit Victoria and could then report back to their particular company on that, be that company KPMG or any of the other five of the big six. Rather than enabling Audit Victoria to compete on equal terms, that would put it in a disadvantageous position compared with the big six accountancy firms.

If the government does not accept the amendment, a minister, even after consulting the Auditor-General, could appoint a person from a competitor organisation. That would be unacceptable to the

opposition. If the minister is prepared to tell the house that that will not occur and that a competitor will not get inside information through having a position on the board, the opposition will accept that. In any other circumstance that would be a minimalist position that would be required by any reasonable person.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I am prepared to give this commitment: I, as minister, have no intention of appointing as directors of Audit Victoria principals from the other big six accounting firms. It would be illogical to do so. However, I repeat that the best mechanism to ensure that any conflict of interest is minimised is the one requiring that there be consultation with the Auditor-General.

Hon. Pat Power — But not agreement.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — No, that there be consultation with the Auditor-General, and that would capture it in the first instance. If Audit Victoria is to be commercially viable, I presume it would expect to win business from the Auditor-General. If the Auditor-General says, 'No, I cannot appoint you because of a conflict of interest', I would have thought that would finish it once and for all.

I think we are jumping at shadows. In any event, to allow the committee to move on I give the commitment as the minister involved that no appointments to Audit Victoria will be drawn from the principals of the other six accounting firms.

Amendment negatived.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — Amendment 26 really is — —

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Amendment 26 has already been tested by amendment 22.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, it is similar, and it has already been canvassed. I move:

25. Clause 9, page 11, after line 6, insert —

    "; or

    (c) is nominated as a candidate for election as a member of the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council or of the Parliament of the Commonwealth or of another State or Territory or of a municipal council".

Amendment 25, which seeks to include paragraph (c), concerns the directors of Audit Victoria. While the organisation is in government hands I would not expect the minister to countenance a director nominating for those positions. The minister may be aware that the act does not allow the Auditor-General, for instance, to nominate as a candidate for election and still retain his position.

An honourable member interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — No, the Auditor-General cannot nominate for election as a member of the Assembly or the Council of this or any other Parliament and still retain his position.

This could be dealt with by the minister giving an assurance that he would not want a member of the board of a government-owned Audit Victoria seeking to be a candidate for election to the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council — or even the federal Parliament. Will the minister give an assurance that under those circumstances he would not think it desirable for that person to continue as a director of a government-owned Audit Victoria?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — We see the suggested amendment as excessive and unnecessary. After taking advice on the matter, we believe that that person would be ineligible to stand for election to the commonwealth Parliament as his office would be considered an office of profit under the Crown. Therefore, of itself the nomination would knock out his appointment as a member of the board. We would expect that a director who nominated as a candidate for election to the Legislative Assembly or the Legislative Council or a municipal council would stand down as a matter of course.

Amendment negatived.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

27. Clause 9, page 14, line 17, after "Board" insert "but the rate of annual remuneration of the chief executive officer must not exceed the rate of the annual remuneration of the Auditor-General".

This is an interesting amendment. Essentially it seeks to keep the government honest in its running of Audit Victoria. We never want to see the creation of another Four Million Dollar Man, as occurred with the chief executive of Tabcorp, who was appointed on a package worth about $4 million.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — $8 million.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It started off as $4 million but it finished up being $8 million — and it is considerably higher than that now. Ross Wilson has now earned well over $10 million from his association with Tabcorp. It was not a bad appointment for a person whose performance in South Australia could be described as fairly ordinary by any standards.

This amendment seeks to limit the annual remuneration, at least while Audit Victoria remains in government hands. It ought to limit the remuneration of the chief executive officer so that it does not exceed the rate of the annual remuneration of the Auditor-General. It is a reasonable proposal because the Auditor-General is, after all, the senior person responsible for the audits, and the audits are provided to him by Audit Victoria. The opposition argues that it is reasonable for the CEO to receive a salary no greater than that of the Auditor-General while the government owns Audit Victoria, and it would prevent the creation of a circumstance such as that relating to Ross Wilson. Incidentally, that is one of the few things that Alan Stockdale has been prepared to admit was a mistake by the government. This amendment would, one hopes, prevent that mistake from being repeated.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The government does not support the amendment. I do not take up the invitation to respond in respect of Ross Wilson but I certainly could on another occasion. I simply say that the government does not see the need for any restrictions to be placed on Audit Victoria. A deliberate decision has been taken to direct Audit Victoria in terms of its competitive position in the marketplace, but the government does not believe it is appropriate to start putting restrictions on how it might operate, particularly in this context.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The opposition is concerned that the minister is not prepared to give any assurance about the salary level of the chief executive of Audit Victoria, even as other salary packages offered to chief executives of departments or other government bodies. The opposition may therefore have to force the issue to a vote.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — The Auditor-General is currently in control of the people who will be transferred over to Audit Victoria. I do not know what salary he is paid but it would be an appropriate amount. If the salary of the CEO of Audit Victoria is much greater than that of the Auditor-General the message is sent that the worth of the Auditor-General is lower than that of the CEO of Audit Victoria. Certainly if the salary of the CEO of Audit Victoria is to be comparable with salaries in other government departments it should be comparable with what the current Auditor-General is being paid.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — How do you know that? You just said you don't know how much he is paid.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — I don't, but if that assurance is given the government can make the appropriate arrangement. I do not want to know and I have no interest in working out what salary the Auditor-General receives, but I do understand that if he is paid a certain amount and the CEO of Audit Victoria is paid double the amount with a bonus or other inducements it sends a clear message to the Auditor-General of what this government believes will be the position of the Auditor-General in the future.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — Mr Theophanous advised the minister that the opposition would see a need to call for a division on this issue unless the minister found it possible to give us and, more importantly, the community some general — not even particular — assurances. It is reasonable for people in this chamber to observe that there is significant community concern about the remuneration that is offered to particular chief executive officers who have been charged with the management of what might be described as delicate political strategies. Mr Theophanous indicated that if the minister believes the words in the proposed amendment are too prescriptive a general assurance would perhaps allow the opposition not to see a need to call for a division. However, *Hansard* will show that the minister responded by saying that the government was not prepared to put any restrictions in place. That is quite clearly saying to Mr Theophanous's amendment, (a) we reject it; (b) we are not prepared to give any parenthood undertaking; and (c) the board can pay its chief executive officer whatever it sees fit and we don't see that we have an obligation to provide any advice or riding instructions at all.

At almost 20 minutes to 5.00 a.m. I do not want another division; but if the minister rejects Mr Theophanous's invitation and indicates at the same time that so far as the government is concerned it will be open slather in relation to what the CEO is remunerated, I will support the call for a division.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I understand the opposition's intention to call for a division unless I am able to give a commitment in advance in respect of the salary package of the newly appointed CEO of Audit Victoria. I am unable to do that. Quite properly, the issue of the appointment and remuneration of the CEO should be determined by the board of Audit Victoria. Audit Victoria has not yet been established, much less its directors appointed, but already the members of the opposition are inviting me to determine in advance of what the — —

Hon. Pat Power — You are responding that you will place no restrictions on it. Don't put it on us. You have announced that there will be no restrictions.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — All I say is that in the government's view it would be quite inappropriate — in fact improper — to determine in advance what the salary package of the chief executive should be. It shall be a decision determined by the board, as is its proper function.

Committee divided on amendment:

Ayes, 8

Gould, Miss	Power, Mr	*(Teller)*
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr	
Nardella, Mr	Theophanous, Mr	
Nguyen, Mr *(Teller)*	Walpole, Mr	

Noes, 30

Asher, Ms	Hallam, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Best, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Bishop, Mr	Powell, Mrs *(Teller)*
Boardman, Mr	Ross, Dr
Bowden, Mr	Smith, Mr
Brideson, Mr *(Teller)*	Smith, Ms
Cover, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 10

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Amendment 28 will test amendments 28 to 33.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

28. Clause 10, lines 23 to 25, omit "must ensure that, for each authority, there is a person or firm who is appointed" and insert "may, for each authority, appoint himself or herself or a person or firm".

Amendment 28 is essentially about the Auditor-General giving himself power to conduct audits. That has been canvassed. Amendment 29 allows the Auditor-General to reappoint authorised persons. Again those issues have been canvassed. Amendment 30 is about the Auditor-General appointing himself or herself or a person or firm. Again that has been canvassed and was lost. The same applies to amendment 31. Amendment 32 inserts an officer of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office or another person or firm, and that has been canvassed. Amendment 33 is precisely the same thing. The issue involved in the amendments has already been canvassed and divided on.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 11

The CHAIRMAN — Order! I ask Mr Theophanous to move amendment 34, advise the committee what he believes the amendment tests and perhaps canvass other amendments.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The major issue the opposition wants to draw to the attention of the committee in this set of amendments relates to amendment 37, which seeks to remove the words 'after the day on which the financial statements were received by the authorised person for auditing'. It is suggested that the committee should deal with amendments 35 and 36 before going to amendment 37, on which the opposition will probably call for a division. I move:

34. Clause 11, lines 20 and 21, omit "the Auditor-General or".

35. Clause 11, line 30, after "authority" insert "or an officer of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office".

Amendments negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 12

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

36. Clause 12, line 7, omit "audit of the financial statements" and insert "financial audit".

The amendment has already been tested.

Amendment negatived.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

37. Clause 12, lines 17 to 19, omit "after the day on which the financial statements were received by the authorised person for auditing".

This is a matter of some concern to the opposition because the provision makes the legislation unworkable. The amendment addresses what the opposition sees as a flaw in the legislation. Proposed sections 9 and 9A place unrealistic time lines on the audit process. Clause 12 inserts new sections that place a three-week time line on a contractor for the completion of a financial audit. Proposed section 9(2) provides:

> The report —
>
> of an authorised person —
>
> must be made within 3 weeks after the day on which the financial statements were received by the authorised person for auditing.

The authorised person will get the financial statements from an agency and within three weeks that person must report under proposed section 9(1) to the Auditor-General. If proposed section 9A(1) is correct the Auditor-General then has one week to assess the work of the authorised person. I do not know whether the minister is aware of how many financial audits there are or what the time frame is for when they come in, but I am informed that about 500 financial audits come in within the space of a month at the end of the financial year.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — In fact you should expect that because they are required to report within a stipulated time.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They are required to report within three weeks, so we have a potential situation of the Auditor-General having 500 financial audits sitting on his desk and only one week in which to sign them off. Not only does he have only one week to sign them off but he also has no flexibility about exceeding the week.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — That is not quite true.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am sure the minister will explain his interpretation to the committee.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — There are reports being received by Parliament that indicate that time lines have not been met. He is required to report under the provisions of the act.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Under the bill the Auditor-General is required to report to Parliament within four weeks — effectively within a week of receiving the reports — from the day on which the financial statement is received by the authorised person of the authority, the minister responsible for the authority and the minister administering the section. Worse still, the bill provides that before making the report — this is all within a week — under proposed section 9A the Auditor-General may require the authorised person who made the report to make a further report.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Yes.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The Auditor-General may exercise powers under section 11 to obtain such information as he thinks fit. I remind members of the committee that those powers under section 11 are investigating powers. It is important to see what those powers are, Mr Forwood.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Do you think I do not know what they are?

Hon. R. M. Hallam — He can quote them to you without looking at the legislation.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I do not think he could, but for his information they include:

> ... may examine upon oath ... all persons he or she thinks fit to examine relating to all matters and things necessary ...

There is a whole range of powers, which include investigatory powers to bring people in under oath and so forth. The Auditor-General is supposed to do all this within a week.

Hon. Pat Power interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — For 500 reports. It is absurd. I am reliably informed that in other jurisdictions auditors-general have periods more

akin to two months than one week in which to sign off reports.

Hon. R. M. Hallam interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The minister says 'More fool them'. The fact is that the Auditor-General is required to sign the reports within a week. In his report on ministerial portfolios the Auditor-General highlighted the type of assessment that needs to be undertaken when assessing the work of contractors. He states that the Auditor-General should ensure that contractors maintain appropriate quality standards and ensure that the reports address the key financial reporting and management issues, identify issues that arise from individual audits and that have an impact on other government agencies, and ensure that significant and common financial management and accountability issues are brought to the attention of Parliament, ministers and central and individual agencies.

Because there is a 30 June deadline for public sector agencies the Auditor-General will be inundated with reports from contractors at a specific time of the year. The Auditor-General needs only one thing to get through all the reports — a dirty, big rubber stamp that he can keep banging and banging 500 times so he can send them off within a week. It is a very sad state of affairs if that is the government's idea of how the Auditor-General has not been nobbled.

It is impossible for the Auditor-General to assess the contractor reports he receives at this time of the year within one week unless he rubber-stamps them. He cannot use his powers under section 11, which Mr Forwood keeps telling us about. It should also be remembered that for the first time those contractors will be undertaking the financial audit of major government departments, key statutory authorities such as the Victorian Workcover Authority, the Treasury Corporation of Victoria, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Education Department. These are massive financial audits. The minister keeps saying yep as though it does not matter.

The watchdog will become a lap-dog with a dirty big rubber stamp. There will be no time for the Auditor-General to assess the audits. The time frame undermines the integrity of the public sector audit process. No other state has such a ridiculously tight time frame. In New South Wales the Auditor-General has 10 weeks to issue an opinion after he receives the accounts of statutory authorities. In Western Australia the Auditor-General has five months after receiving the accounts. The opposition is not suggesting Victoria should move to five months; it is suggesting the Auditor-General have four weeks, which is what he has now. That is what the opposition's amendment seeks to do. The government, by stealth, is reducing the Auditor-General's time to assess those audits to one week whereas the current legislation gives him four weeks. The opposition is concerned about the backdoor nobbling of the Auditor-General so that he will not have the time to assess those audits.

I understand the government may say the legislation imposes no penalties, but the committee should understand the Auditor-General is required to sign these reports within a week. It is not a matter of having an option — he is required to do that under the legislation. On occasions he may not be able to meet the deadline, in which case I am reliably informed that although no penalties are imposed a general penalty provision in the act effectively means the Auditor-General can be suspended from office. Section 5(2) of the Audit Act states:

> The Auditor-General may be suspended from office by the Governor in Council, but must not be removed from office except in accordance with this Act.

If the Auditor-General has not abided by the requirements of the act it is a ground for removing the Auditor-General. Section 5(3) states:

> The Minister must cause to be laid before each House of the Parliament a full statement of the grounds of any suspension of the Auditor-General within 7 sitting days of the House.

There could potentially be a circumstance where the poor old Auditor-General is given a week to assess the audits — the minister may even provide him with a big rubber stamp. Knowing what a principled person Mr Baragwanath is, I am sure he would not be prepared to use that rubber stamp. Instead, he would want to do the job properly. That would lead to the government having the capacity to issue disciplinary proceedings against the Auditor-General by suspending him and then using both houses of Parliament to remove him on the basis that he was not abiding by the requirements of the Audit Act in signing so many audits within a week. On that basis the opposition indicates its concern about this important restriction on the Auditor-General and urges the government to accept the amendment.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I will say this much for Mr Theophanous: he does really well; he has a very fertile imagination. To run the gauntlet as he did at 5.05 a.m. defies description.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Is that a compliment?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It is a compliment. I make the point that nothing is being done by stealth. For what it is worth, Mr Theophanous, in the detailed response provided by the Auditor-General to the Audit (Amendment) Bill there was no comment about the timing factor. You have brought a criticism that the Auditor-General did not see as necessary.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — We found a lot of things.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — The reason is found in the fact the time frame has not changed from that which applies now, except that three weeks of the currently provided four weeks shall relate to the authorised person — that is, the person doing the audit process — and the final week shall relate to the formalities required of the Auditor-General.

Some of the issues the honourable member brings to the committee could be countenanced but for one thing: the assumption that he seems to rely on, that the Auditor-General will not see the report until it is received from the authorised person; in other words, he shall have it for the first time in the week he is now required to formally respond. Of course, that is nonsensical. The notion that the Auditor-General will sit in a room somewhere waiting for the reports to lob on his desk went out with lace-up boots.

We now have an accepted concept of continuing auditing so that the audit process is running 12 months of the year and the Auditor-General shall be involved in that for 12 months of the year, at least in terms of supervision. It would be unthinkable that a report would come to him as a surprise after three weeks into the reporting process. The honourable member is again jumping at shadows to the extent that the time frame for the Auditor-General to report has not been changed. All the government has done is allocate the time for the process of the first report, with the Auditor-General then reporting on that report. Remember this, Mr Theophanous: if you want to run the line that we should give the Auditor-General another month, you may also ask why we don't go to the five months that is offered in Western Australia.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The opposition is not supporting that.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Somewhere you have to draw a line between the merit of the report and its timeliness. There is not much point in having the most intricate and detailed audit report if it arrives too late for real value to be gained.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The opposition is saying three weeks.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Effectively, it is saying seven weeks.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — An extra three weeks.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — The opposition is saying seven weeks and the government is saying we should retain the four weeks that is currently provided. The difference is that the first three weeks shall be formally allocated to the preparation of the report conducted by the authorised person actually doing the audit.

The notion that that should then lob on the Auditor-General's desk unannounced illustrates that the honourable member misunderstands the audit process because that is so far removed from the real world that it is almost laughable.

I say to the honourable member that this does not impose any greater challenge on the Auditor-General than currently exists. The Auditor-General will tell him that the four-week reporting period he now has is very tough but he accepts it on the basis that the report has to be timely. That means that he has to have his office organised in exactly the same way as do the BHPs of the world. They meet exactly the same time lines.

Those companies might be more expansive and complicated than the examples the committee was given of education and so on, so if they can organise themselves to get an audited report in within the time lines I do not see why the auditor in the public sector should be under any less stringent standards. The Auditor-General will acknowledge that the time lines imposed in the public sector should be exactly those expected of the audit standards out in the real world.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I find this quite extraordinary. The government has caused this problem.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — What problem?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The government has caused the problem by creating Audit Victoria and the contracting-out process and then saying, 'We don't want to expand it to seven weeks because it is currently four weeks'. It is currently four weeks and it could have stayed at four weeks if the government had not brought the legislation before the house.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I acknowledge that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am glad. However, the legislation is before the house and the government is using the crazy argument that the Auditor-General is somehow going to know what is happening with all the contractors that are running around government departments producing financial audits. The reality is that 500 audits will lob on his desk and the full three weeks will be taken up assessing those 500 audits. They will all come in at or near enough to the same time and he will finish up getting a week to process them. That is what will happen.

If the government is saying it did this deliberately, it makes me even more suspicious about its motives. I believe the Auditor-General will be very concerned about this proposal when the full implications of what it means come home to him.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — He will be even more concerned to learn that you expect he cannot meet the standards that are met by auditors out in the real world.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — There is no auditor anywhere in Australia or New Zealand who gets one week to process financial audits.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — He is getting four weeks.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The minister is misleading the house because the Auditor-General will get one week — the minister has already agreed that the first three weeks will be taken up, under proposed section 9(2), by the production of a report by the authorised person. Effectively the Auditor-General gets one week. There is no auditor anywhere, private or public, who gets one week to examine financial audits of organisations.

The opposition is very concerned that this will lead to a nobbling of the Auditor-General and believes the Auditor-General will agree with it on this point. I expect that when the issue is brought to his attention he will make his concerns known to the government. It is another practical example of the way the Auditor-General is being nobbled.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I agree with Mr Theophanous. It is unrealistic to expect any person who is given the limited resources provided to the Auditor-General under the bill to carry out the task of supervising up to 500 reports — the minister does not deny that estimate — to ensure they are accurate and that the contracts have been fulfilled by contractors, who will now undertake 100 per cent of the work. I would find it impossible to supervise that number of contracts and give an assurance to Parliament that the reports were a true and accurate reflection of the books at that time.

It is of concern to the opposition that there is a major flaw in the legislation. If the Auditor-General becomes aware that the provision will have that effect on his performance he will have additional problems with the bill. The opposition's amendment should be supported to make the legislation workable because the opposition has received advice that clause 12 will make the audit process unworkable for the Auditor-General.

Committee divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 30

Asher, Ms	Hallam, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Best, Mr	Lucas, Mr (*Teller*)
Birrell, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Bishop, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Ross, Dr
Bowden, Mr	Smith, Mr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Ms (*Teller*)
Cover, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Noes, 8

Eren, Mr	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss	Pullen, Mr (*Teller*)
Hogg, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Walpole, Mr (*Teller*)

Pairs

Craige, Mr	Power, Mr
Furletti, Mr	Nardella, Mr

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to; clauses 13 to 15 agreed to.

Clause 16

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

39. Clause 16, after line 18, insert —

> "(1A) The Auditor-General may undertake such further work as he or she thinks fit and prepare a report.".

Amendment 38 has already been tested. The purpose of amendment 39 is to make absolutely clear in the body of the bill the meaning of the words the Premier used in his second-reading speech when he said:

> The Auditor-General will ... undertake such further work as he or she thinks fit, and prepare a report.

The amendment would clarify what has already been said a number of times; but including the words in the legislation would put the matter beyond doubt. Given the hour, if the minister were prepared to say that the government stands by the words in the second-reading speech, we could probably move on.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I am relaxed about saying that the government stands by the words used in the second-reading speech. If that puts the issue beyond doubt, I am pleased. We think there is no need to include the suggested terminology in the legislation. The same is understood in the terms outlined in the second-reading speech.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 17

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

40. Clause 17, page 25, line 24, after "that" insert "significantly".

Again, some clarification would probably do. The concern is that proposed new section 16(5B) says:

> If the audit was conducted by Audit Victoria, the Audit-General must not include in a report under sub-section (5A) any matter that varies the report of Audit Victoria unless the Auditor-General ...

It then goes on. We think that is restrictive. If there were a minor variation such as a typographical change, a literal translation of the proposed new section would mean that the Auditor-General would have to give a copy of the report to the relevant authority at least 14 days before the transmission of the copy under proposed new section 16(5A). Proposed new section 16(5A)(b) talks about including:

> ... in the report the comments, or a summary in an agreed form, of the comments, (if any) of the authority.

We are concerned that the process could be cumbersome, particularly if minor alterations were being made by agreement with the contractor. That is the reason for the suggested inclusion of the word 'significantly'; but again, the minister may want to clarify his thinking on the issue.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I acknowledge that the honourable member outlined a circumstance that would be impractical. We want the system to work, and I hope we can find a way to ensure it does. We are not convinced that the suggested solution is appropriate, because the inclusion of the word 'significantly' would simply add another subjective factor.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You did not mind adding it in the Workcover legislation by including 'significant contributing factor'.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — The government is not convinced that that is the way through the problem. I give the committee a commitment that the government will watch the operation of the provision carefully. If the legislation proves to be impractical, we will look for a solution. I do not want to be pedantic, because the government wants it to work, but I am not sure that inserting the word 'significantly' will solve the problem. I am advised that a variation would not include typographical or similar errors.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 18

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

42. Clause 18, page 27, line 4, omit "authority" and insert "Auditor-General".

I advise the committee that amendments 41 and 42 have been dealt with. In moving amendment 43 I will canvass amendments 44 to 50. The amendments would change the reporting process. Amendment 42 would ensure that a copy of the audit report went to the Auditor-General, as occurs with financial audits. It would establish a process for performance audits similar to that which applies to financial audits. Amendment 43 proposes to omit proposed subsections (5) and (5A), which refer to copies of a report being given to the authority and to the report being dealt with in a specified time.

Under proposed new section 16(5B), after receiving a report from an authorised person the Auditor-General may require that person to provide a further report or may exercise powers under section 11 to obtain further information as he or she sees fit. Amendment 45 would insert proposed new subparagraph (c) to ensure the process is similar to that which applies to financial audits.

I do not know the rationale for the government's decision not to use the same process for performance audits and financial audits. Perhaps the minister can explain to the committee the reason for the difference. Amendments 46 to 50 are consequential on earlier amendments. They would ensure that the Auditor-General was given the report and was responsible for presenting it to Parliament.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — The principle is exactly the same as the principle behind financial audits. A performance audit will go to tender, and once the audit is completed the Auditor-General will satisfy himself that it has met the specifications. He will then report to Parliament in exactly the same way he does with a financial audit.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The Auditor-General will not receive the performance audit. The report will go to the authority, not to the Auditor-General.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — The report will end up with the Auditor-General after it has been through the process. The audit entity that wins the tender will finalise the process with the department and then report to the Auditor-General, who in turn will satisfy himself that it meets the specifications of the tender before reporting to Parliament. If the Auditor-General decides to make any changes he may talk to the department about them, but the principles will be identical to those involved in the conduct of financial audits.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I again put on the record the opposition's belief that the process is designed to nobble the Auditor-General's input in a number of ways. The Auditor-General will not receive a copy of the initial report until exchanges have taken place between the agency and the contractor. The agency will be given an opportunity to respond without the Auditor-General seeing the report. When the report is finally presented to the Auditor-General he will have seven days in which to deal with it. He will be required to cause a copy of it to be issued to each house of Parliament within seven sitting days of the making of the report. That will not mean the Auditor-General will prepare his own report; it will simply cause the performance audit to be tabled in Parliament.

Perhaps there is some power enabling the Auditor-General to prepare a report on a report, but the fact that the Auditor-General will not get a copy of the performance audit at the point at which it is given to the agency is a serious deficiency. He will not know what is going on until matters have presumably been sorted out between the agency and the contractor.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — The Auditor-General will be involved in the process as much as he cares to be, because he is the person who will do the scoping of the performance audit. The Auditor-General must make a report on the performance audit. He will be able to do that once he has it in his possession and has examined it. As I said earlier, the principle is exactly the same as that applying to financial audits.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — It effectively means the Auditor-General will not have a significant input into the performance audit process and that, in the end, it will become a matter between the agency and contractor to sort it out. You finish up getting a report where presumably some sweetheart deal or other deals have been done.

Hon. R. M. Hallam interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Auditors have pointed that out. Alan Talbot from Price Waterhouse said there was potential for such things to happen in the private sector. If Price Waterhouse is saying that, we should be concerned about those issues. The Auditor-General should be given the capacity to obtain copies of the reports of contractors at the same time as they go to government departments, so he can keep tab on what is happening, including

what negotiations are taking place between the contractors and departments. Under this bill the contractor does not have to give such a commitment.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 19

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

51. Clause 19, line 16, omit paragraph (b).

The amendment also tests amendment 52.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — This technical amendment relates to the removal in some sections of particular words. The best way of dealing with it is to read the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee's *Alert Digest* no. 11 on this issue. Page 3 states:

> Clause 19 — this clause ... removes the reference to section 13 from section 17 of the Audit Act. Currently, section 17(5) provides, inter alia, that section 13 applies to the independent audit of the Victorian Auditor-General's Office as if references in that section to the Auditor-General were references to the independent auditor. This is appropriate at the current time as section 13 applies specifically to the Auditor-General.
>
> However, by clause 15 of the Audit (Amendment) Bill, the current section 13 is to be replaced with a new provision. The new section contains the same requirements concerning the performance of functions under the Audit Act, but the terminology used makes no reference to the Auditor-General.
>
> As there will be no reference to the Auditor-General in section 13, the reference to that section in section 17 is redundant —

that means it will not be in the new clause —

> and for that reason, is to be removed.

It concludes:

> ... clauses 15 and 19 will become operative on the same date, 1 July 1998.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — Correct me if I am wrong, Mr Forwood, the effect of my amendment is that section 13 would remain?

Hon. Bill Forwood — It would put back the words but they would not refer to anything.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — But section 13 would remain in the act as it stands? Clause 19(1)(b) omits '13' from subsection (5), but section 17(5) stipulates that section 13 remains in the act. I do not read 'subject to any directions given by the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee'. Sections 1, 12, 13 and 14 apply to the independent auditor as if references in those sections to the Auditor-General were references to the independent auditor; '13' is taken out by the bill and my amendment would keep it in. That is how I understand it.

Section 13, which concerns auditing and confidentiality standards, states:

> The Auditor-General, in the performance of functions and exercise of powers, must apply the general auditing standards as issued by the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia from time to time.

The removal of section 13 would mean the act would no longer apply the independence of the auditor as if references in those sections to the Auditor-General were references to the independent auditor. In this instance, I take it 'independent auditor' is the contractor.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — Clause 15, at page 23 of the bill, substitutes proposed new section 13 which does not refer to the Auditor-General. For that reason, it needs to be taken out of the clauses we are dealing with. The Scrutiny of Act and Regulations Committee, when eventually it got its mind around the problem, unanimously recommended the removal of that provision.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 20

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

53. Clause 20, line 26, before "A" insert "(1)".

Amendment 53 is just a numbering exercise. Amendment 54 seeks to insert 'or make direct or indirect use for commercial benefit'. The committee has tested a similar provision, although it was not identical; the commercial conflict amendment was not quite the same because we dealt with directors. However, I hope the minister can give assurances at least that it will not be possible for people to make direct or indirect use of information for commercial benefit which they have acquired during the course

of their work, and that would include authorised persons as well as the Auditor-General and others.

Amendment 55 seeks to provide that the Auditor-General must not appoint a person as an authorised person unless the person has given to the Auditor-General a declaration in writing of pecuniary interests. This is quite an important amendment. We have not quite tested this provision. I do not know whether honourable members are aware, but currently the Auditor-General requires all his staff to provide him with a statement of pecuniary interests. This is not something he does not require of his own staff, and if he requires it of his own staff it is not inappropriate for the same standard to be applied to people whom he is declaring as authorised persons. A declaration of pecuniary interests would then allow the Auditor-General to determine whether a particular person was an appropriate person to be appointed as an authorised person. It may well be that this matter can be dealt with administratively, but I am certainly interested in hearing the minister's views on the two matters raised in amendments 54 and 55.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — My reading of the amendment is that amendments 53 and 55 effectively require the Auditor-General to secure a declaration of pecuniary interests from authorised persons. The government does not believe that to be necessary because I assume that would be a matter considered by the Auditor-General in his contractual relationships with the authorised persons in the first place and something that could be covered as a matter of course. Amendment 54 seeks to amend the improper use provisions. Again, the government does not believe that to be necessary given that it seems to be already covered by the definition of 'improper use'. On that basis, the government is not persuaded to accept the amendments.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — Given the lateness of the hour, the opposition does not intend to take this to a division, but I indicate in the strongest terms that we place on the record our concerns about people being appointed as authorised persons without providing a declaration of pecuniary interests and without it even being made clear to them that they cannot be involved in improper use of information that has been provided to them.

In fact, that sets a double standard because authorised persons will not have to provide pecuniary interest declarations, yet employees of the Auditor-General already have to do so. That is tantamount to saying that employees of ministers have to provide such statements but other senior people should not have to provide them. There is a fundamental contradiction; it is a recipe for problems in the future. I am placing the opposition's concerns on the record because when these problems develop, as invariably they will, we want to be able to say that we raised the issue during the course of the debate on the Audit Bill at 6.00 a.m.

Amendment negatived.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

54. Clause 20, page 29, line 7, after "communicate" insert "or make direct or indirect use for commercial benefit".

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 21

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

56. Clause 21, lines 15 to 18, omit proposed sub-section (1).

This is about freedom of information. Again I put on the record the opposition's concerns about this matter. We do not think Audit Victoria ought to be totally exempt from the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. At present, the Auditor-General's office is not exempt from the provisions of that act so far as it applies to the operations of the office itself. It is exempt from freedom of information in relation to other matters in the conduct of audits, but it is not exempt in relation to the administration of the office. Audit Victoria will be a government agency until it is privatised. Until that time it is absolutely appropriate for it to be covered by freedom of information, not in respect of the audits it conducts but in respect of its administration, in just the same way as the Auditor-General and his office are subject to it.

The purpose of these amendments is simply to allow freedom of information access in relation to the administration of Audit Victoria. They are sensible amendments and I have heard no argument to suggest that the administration of Audit Victoria should not be included in the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The government looked at this very carefully in the construction of the bill and recognised in advance that it would be a sensitive issue. I also acknowledge

that part of the Auditor-General's office is subject to freedom of information. But the government came to the conclusion that if it were to establish a truly independent and commercial organisation that was respected in the marketplace it had to remove any competitive disadvantage, or at least any disadvantage that was perceived to be there.

It was determined that to subject a component of Audit Victoria to the Freedom of Information Act would send a clear message to the other bodies that were using the organisation. We believed that would put the agency at a distinct disadvantage. On balance we decided to exempt Audit Victoria from the application of FOI — including those areas that could be described as being compatible with the Auditor-General. The decision was taken deliberately. I repeat, the driving factor was to put Audit Victoria in a position of competitive neutrality in terms of its entry into the market.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I find that argument extraordinary and in some respects disturbing. I would like the minister to give me other examples of government-owned businesses of this sort having been totally exempted from freedom of information provisions.

The administration of the Victorian Workcover Authority is not exempt from freedom of information, and a host of government bodies remain subject to FOI, at least in their administrative aspects. Perhaps the minister can identify examples of government-owned bodies — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You can identify the example if you want to use it.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I can identify it?

Hon. R. M. Hallam — If that is what you need.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — That is why we are asking you.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is your way of saying you don't have any examples.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — This is the first time it has happened?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am asking whether the precedent has been established anywhere else?

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I don't know.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — So far as I know, all government agencies are subject to freedom of information — —

Hon. Bill Forwood — So long as they are being competitively neutral and other audit firms are not subject to FOI. The idea is — —

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The Gas and Fuel Corporation is subject to FOI and the Workcover Authority is subject to FOI — and the same is true of lots of government agencies. I personally do not know of a government agency the administration of which is not subject to freedom of information.

If that is so, this is setting a precedent, which we should all be concerned about. If we were to say that to maintain competition, all government-owned bodies would not be subject to FOI, not even their administration, what sort of precedent would that set? I understand the other aspects of the audit and so on and that that is where the competition comes in. However, it would mean that every statutory authority could claim under competition policy — —

Hon. D. A. Nardella — The competitive neutrality that you talked about — —

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Under competitive neutrality they could claim they should be exempt from FOI all together. That would mean a horrendous erosion of the FOI act's coverage of statutory bodies. Unless the minister can identify other areas in which that has occurred, his explanation is certainly not acceptable to me.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I find it disturbing that some precedents are being set that will mean that any bodies that the government is looking at privatising in the future — Audit Victoria is one — will be exempt from the FOI act. Agencies that rightly should be covered by the FOI legislation could now be exempted as a result of this precedent.

The minister does not know of any other situation and cannot tell the house whether it has occurred elsewhere. We do not know because we have not been given examples — certainly not during the five years I have been in this house — of agencies which have been exempted from FOI but which should rightly be under the auspices of the act. It is disturbing that the precedent is being set by legislation that will radically change Audit Victoria and the role of the Auditor-General.

I can understand that confidential information that would give opposition companies a competitive advantage should not be available to those companies. We have no argument with that. But we have an argument with members of Parliament and members of the community losing their ability to use the FOI legislation because of the exemption of Audit Victoria.

The opposition does not believe it is acceptable that we go down that path. It would not be acceptable to the government if the tables were reversed. The government would not accept an FOI exemption for a body that Labor had set up. The first person to stand up and scream — even at this early hour — would be Mr Birrell, the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, who cut his teeth on FOI and used it extremely effectively in the early days of the Cain government. They will pay for it once we are in government, Mr Theophanous!

The further extension of exemptions is absolutely unacceptable. Despite the economic rationalist and competitive neutrality explanations, I do not understand why Audit Victoria should be exempt from FOI when it is a government agency. I ask the minister to explain that point. It is a simple point. The minister has not explained to the house why an exemption — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I have not explained it to your satisfaction; that is what you mean.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — No, you certainly have not, and you will not be able to.

Hon. Bill Forwood — So we disagree.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — All right. I will continue my opposition to the clause.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I highlight the fact that the minister started by saying the government had looked at the issue in detail, but he was not able to tell the committee whether there have been any precedents. It does not sound to me as though the issue has been examined in depth.

Committee divided on amendment:

Ayes, 30

Asher, Ms	Hallam, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Best, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Bishop, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Ross, Dr
Bowden, Mr	Smith, Mr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Ms
Cover, Mr (*Teller*)	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL. (*Teller*)	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Noes, 8

Eren, Mr	Nardella, Mr
Gould, Miss (*Teller*)	Pullen, Mr
Hogg, Mrs (*Teller*)	Theophanous, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Walpole, Mr

Pairs

Craige, Mr	Nguyen, Mr
Furletti, Mr	Power, Mr

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 22

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

61. Clause 22, lines 5 and 6, omit "after consultation with" and insert "with the agreement of".

Amendment 61 was canvassed in an earlier debate. The minister has commented on it. He initially thought that it required the agreement of the Auditor-General, but it requires only consultation. Again, this matter indicates that the government is never quite prepared to go to the point of giving the Auditor-General any real power or capacity to influence the course of events. The opposition therefore proposes that not only should the Auditor-General be consulted but his agreement should be required.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — Let me say briefly that the government does not accept the amendment, simply because it is impractical. In a circumstance where agreement could not be reached there would be a stalemate. In any event, the ultimate responsibility for the issues associated with the transfer of the staff rests with the independent officer, the Public Service Commissioner. The government thinks that is an

appropriate testing process to ensure that the best possible outcome is achieved.

Amendment negatived.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

62. Clause 22, line 15, omit "21" and insert "22".

63. Clause 22, line 19, omit "7M" and insert "7M(1)".

For the purpose of expedition, clauses 62 and 63 are technical amendments to what the opposition has identified as drafting errors. I am sure the government will agree that if those are drafting errors they will be rectified at some future date.

Amendments negatived

Clause agreed to.

Clause 23

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

64. Clause 23, line 24, omit "1998" and insert "2000".

Amendment 64 also tests amendments 65, 66 and 67. These were tested at the beginning by clause 1. They relate to the specific aspect of audits commenced before 1 July 1998.

I must put on record the concerns that have been expressed to the Opposition. I am sure Mr Forwood will be interested in them. The opposition believes a significant problem not covered by the transitional arrangements under this bill will arise because some of the performance audits commenced by the Auditor-General will not be completed by 1 July 1998. The opposition believes the Auditor-General will find himself in the absurd situation where on 1 July 1998 if he has not completed a particular audit himself that audit will not be able to be completed under the legislation.

The opposition has gone through this issue carefully. Perhaps Mr Forwood will try to clarify how it will work. Proposed section 26(1) states:

> This Act, as in force immediately before the commencement of section 10 of the **Audit (Amendment) Act 1997**, continues to apply to and in respect of an audit of the financial statements of an authority that is commenced before 1 July 1998.

The act applies to audits commenced before 1 July. Let us assume the Auditor-General commences an audit in June 1998, presumably the act will apply to that audit. Proposed section 26(2) states:

> The Auditor-General may authorise Audit Victoria to do, and Audit Victoria, in accordance with such an authority, may do, anything that under this Act as in force before 1 July 1998 may be done by a person authorised in that behalf by the Auditor-General.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You are about to read 26(3). This is a performance audit.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes. Proposed section 26(3) states:

> In relation to an audit of the financial statements of an authority or an audit under section 16 that is commenced before 1 July 1998 by Audit Victoria, being a person authorised by the Auditor-General, sections 11, 12, 13 and 14 apply as if a reference to the Auditor-General included a reference to Audit Victoria and to any officer or employee of Audit Victoria authorised by Audit Victoria to carry out the duties and functions of Audit Victoria as a person so authorised.

Amendment 66 is needed because it inserts the words:

> 2000 by the Auditor-General or Audit Victoria, this Act, as in force immediately before that date, continues to apply to and in respect of that audit.

Whether one includes 2000 or 1 July 1998 the opposition contends the amendment is needed to allow a transition to occur so that the Auditor-General can on 1 July 1998 hand over an audit to Audit Victoria for Audit Victoria to complete. The opposition has received advice that as the provision stands if the Auditor-General were to do that the transitional arrangements would not apply.

I do not know whether that will happen but it is the opposition's judgment that the Auditor-General will find himself in a position after 1 July 1998 where, on the one hand, he will have no authority to continue to conduct a performance audit and, on the other hand, he will not be able to simply hand that performance audit over to Audit Victoria for it to complete in the way the government thinks he will be able to do it. The issue has been identified in the amendments.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The government takes those comments on board. It is the government's intention that audits in process either by Audit Victoria or the Auditor-General by 1 July would be able to be finished. The honourable member has raised an issue that may well not be

covered by the amendments. I give him an undertaking that the government will look at that matter seriously, particularly in light of his comments. If necessary an amendment will be introduced in the autumn sessional period to ensure that any audits outstanding at 1 July can be completed. The government thanks the honourable member for his comments.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to; clause 24 agreed to.

Interjections from gallery.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! I direct that the upper gallery be cleared.

Persons escorted from gallery.

Clause 25

The CHAIRMAN — Order! I ask Mr Theophanous to move amendment 68, which will test amendments 69, 70 and 71.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

68. Clause 25, line 9, omit "for" and insert "after".

Amendments 68, 69, 70 and 71 are designed to make changes to the Financial Management Act.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You are trying to change section 25(j).

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The opposition is seeking to change the Financial Management Act. In line with other amendments, the amendments seek to include the Auditor-General's definition of 'authorised person' in relation to the Financial Management Act. They are consequential on other issues already dealt with.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — On that, we do agree.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to; clauses 26 to 28 agreed to; schedule agreed to.

Reported to house without amendment.

Reported adopted.

Third reading

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 31

Asher, Ms	Hallam, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Best, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Bishop, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Ross, Dr
Bowden, Mr	Smith, Mr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Ms (*Teller*)
Cover, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs (*Teller*)
Hall, Mr	

Noes, 7

Eren, Mr	Nardella, Mr (*Teller*)
Gould, Miss	Pullen, Mr (*Teller*)
Hogg, Mrs	Walpole, Mr
McLean, Mrs	

Pairs

Craige, Mr	Power, Mr
Furletti, Mr	Nguyen, Mr

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Geelong Hospital: hotel accommodation

Hon. JEAN McLEAN (Melbourne West) — I direct to the attention of the Minister for Health his

support for the decision to taxi maternity patients to the Ambassador Hotel maternity ward and ask: will the minister inform the house of the estimated cost to the Geelong Hospital of each bed for each mother and her baby or babies and how that will compare with the current cost per bed at the Geelong Hospital?

Geelong Hospital: hotel accommodation

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — I direct to the attention of the Minister for Health the Premier's comment about the Geelong Hospital Ambassador Hotel maternity ward. The hotel maternity ward sounded like part of a normal renovation process. Does the minister agree with the Premier that to taxi mothers and newborn babies to the hotel soon after birth is the normal procedure?

Geelong Hospital: hotel accommodation

Hon. T. E. EREN (Doutta Galla) — I ask the Minister for Health what consultation he had with the doctors, nurses, health professionals and administration staff at the Geelong Hospital over the experimental decision to taxi patients from the Geelong Hospital to the Ambassador Hotel maternity ward for the recuperation of newborn babies and their mothers?

Echuca Secondary College

Hon. D. T. WALPOLE (Melbourne) — I direct to the attention of the Minister for Finance, who is responsible for Workcover, a matter that I understand occurred early last week at the Echuca Secondary College when year 7 students aged approximately 13 to 14 years, under the supervision of a teacher, were involved in knocking down an old school building. The building contained asbestos, which made it an undesirable and unsafe action.

Parents rang the school about the matter and the Victorian Workcover Authority was contacted. I ask the minister to investigate the problem and to speak to his colleague in the other place, the Minister for Education, to ensure this does not happen again.

Mattan Hamilton Bond Pty Ltd

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I refer the Minister for Small Business, as the representative in this house of the Minister for Fair Trading, to the case of a Mr and Mrs Economidis who built a family home and moved in on 9 April 1995. This young couple have had problems with their builder and workmanship has been an issue. I have inspected the home and have a list of 26 problems ranging from brick mortar wearing out, water getting into the rear double door when it rains, paint running, the top floor cracking and water from the guttering overflowing onto the front veranda in heavy rain.

The builder is Matthew Pauchnik trading as Mattan Hamilton Bond Pty Ltd. The Economidis have sought damages via the legal system, but others have also been affected by this builder. I ask the minister to ensure this builder in particular, and builders in general, build at the highest standards demanded by consumers. I ask the minister to monitor Matthew Pauchnik's work and to take whatever action is necessary to ensure no other consumer is disadvantaged.

Responses

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — In response to Mrs McLean, my understanding is that no cost is associated with the alternative arrangements made by the Geelong Hospital.

In answer to Miss Gould, the hospital has taken a responsible approach; it is in the middle of a major development — a cause for celebration in Geelong — having been neglected for 10 years under the previous Labor government. The hospital has established alternative arrangements which provide mothers and their babies with all of the services they have access to in a normal hospital setting.

In answer to Mr Eren, I have had no consultation with doctors or nurses. The matter was not the subject of my decision. Such matters are handled by the hospitals; they are the ones charged with delivering services. In accordance with a long tradition, the Geelong Hospital operates in an effective and appropriate fashion and ensures the provision of high quality care to the patients in the Geelong area.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — Mr Walpole referred me to the circumstances in which students at a college in Echuca were seconded to take part in the demolition of an old school building. The honourable member says the students were exposed to asbestos. I treat the issue very seriously indeed. I will undertake the investigation that he suggests is appropriate. If it is established those students were exposed to an unnecessary risk, I will take the action suggested in the form of direct

discussions with my colleague, the Minister for Education.

Hon. LOUISE ASHER (Minister for Small Business) — I shall refer Mr Nardella's query to the Minister for Fair Trading.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 6.44 a.m. (Wednesday).

Wednesday, 10 December 1997

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. A. Chamberlain) took the chair at 10.02 a.m. and read the prayer.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — This morning on ABC radio the Leader of the Opposition insinuated that I deliberately abstained from voting on the second reading of the Auditor-General bill. Last night I fell asleep at my desk and missed the division by a couple of seconds. It was around midnight. I immediately went into the gallery to make it absolutely plain that I had inadvertently missed the vote. Everyone in the chamber understood what had happened.

This morning on ABC radio Mr Theophanous said something along the lines that I had not voted on the second reading and that he was not sure why. He said I may have been asleep but was probably uneasy about the legislation.

I wish to make it absolutely clear that I did not intend or wish to miss the vote. I would have voted with the government, as I did for the next, at least, 10 divisions that evening, including, most importantly, the third reading of the bill.

PETITIONS

Workcover: changes

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) and Hon. E. J. POWELL (North Eastern) presented petitions from certain citizens of Victoria requesting that in respect of Workcover that the government —

(a) reject any proposals to further limit access to common law for injuries or illnesses;

(b) maintain the right of workers to choose their own medical or health practitioner;

(c) improve access to, and levels of benefits, by restructuring payments to one level after 26 weeks;

(d) improve access to independent rehabilitation services and return-to-work opportunities;

(e) increase average premiums in line with the Australian average rather than reduce rights and entitlements; and

(f) improve health and safety standards and enforcement in the workplace.

(1189 signatures and 13 signatures respectively)

Laid on table.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Environment Conservation Council Act 1997 — Minister for Conservation and Land Management's request for the Environment Conservation Council to investigate Victoria's Box-Ironbark Forests and Woodland areas.

Marine Sciences Institute — Report 1995–96.

Statutory Rules under the following Acts of Parliament:

Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1984 — no. 140.

Country Fire Authority Act 1958 — no. 144.

Land Tax Act 1958 — no. 145.

Printers and Newspapers Act 1958 — no. 141.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — nos 142 and 143.

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994 — Ministers' exception certificates under section 8(4) in respect of Statutory Rules Nos 140 and 145/1997.

TAXI INDUSTRY: SAFETY

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I move:

That this house notes the government has failed to provide drivers in the taxi industry with a safe working environment.

In the final week of the spring sessional period the opposition moves this motion in response to clear evidence that our community is not a safe place for taxidrivers to go about their business. The motion will enable the government to demonstrate its claims and for the opposition to talk about its concerns. The opposition does not dispute the fact that since the Kennett government came to office in October 1992 a number of changes and commitments to safety have been made to the Victorian taxi industry, both for drivers and passengers. Much of what the Kennett government has said has been, in effect, rhetoric and there has been little real delivery on safety for taxidrivers.

Not only has there been rhetoric from the government, but its actions have been in contrast to the actions taken by governments in other states. We all acknowledge that driving a taxi can be a hazardous profession. I say that having had experience as a taxidriver with the former Northern Suburban Taxis, which subsequently became part of the Silver Top Taxi network. We all acknowledge that a person driving a taxi on his or her own is more vulnerable than if he or she were in a collective workplace. When significant amounts of cash are carried the temptation is strong for people to seek to victimise lone workers. Those circumstances are not limited to Melbourne, Victoria or Australia. Worldwide the profession of taxidriving is extremely problematic. For example, I was able to establish on the basis of written work by Terry Smythe, general manager of the Taxi Cab Board in Manitoba, Canada, that like the Australian experience, driving a taxi in that state is the most hazardous occupation, more hazardous by a significant margin than law enforcement officers, as they call their police in North America. I am not suggesting for one moment that the challenges that face the Kennett government in Victoria are not experienced in other countries.

In its first report, dated October 1993 and entitled *Developing a Safer Taxi Industry*, the Crime Prevention Committee made a number of recommendations on safety issues for taxidrivers. In the section headed 'Recommendations of the first report', the following are listed:

39. That all taxis be required to have fitted an approved duress alarm.

40. That a regular alarm testing regime be established by owners, operators and drivers.

41. That drivers receive regular training regarding the operation and action of the alarm.

42. That a green static light be affixed to the taxi dome and operated separately or in conjunction with the duress alarm.

43. That Victoria Police be made aware of the meaning and operation of the duress alarm and dome light.

44. That an approved driver protection screen be fitted to taxis at the written request of drivers.

45. That the Registrar undertake an evaluation of screens to further consider whether they should be mandatory ...

47. That the Taxi Registrar maintain consultation with the industry regarding global positioning systems and other technological advances.

I indicated that I was concerned to point out what action the Kennett coalition government had taken since it came to power in October 1992 and measure those achievements against what to this point has been largely rhetoric. At the outset I point out that the opposition gave notice of the motion yesterday, Tuesday, 9 December, and I am aware of a media stunt this morning — —

Hon. K. M. Smith — What you did to Graeme Stoney is a media stunt!

Hon. G. R. Craige — Are you accusing me of that, Pat? Stand up and be a real man instead of a mouse!

Hon. D. A. Nardella — He's more of a real man than you'll ever be!

The PRESIDENT — Order! I suggest that Mr Power be allowed to continue without assistance. The minister will get his chance to respond.

Hon. PAT POWER — On the comment made by Mr Smith, I appreciate the opportunity to say that I think that everybody was aware of the circumstances that Graeme Stoney was in last night. I make that absolutely clear: Mr Stoney inadvertently missed a division so far as I am concerned.

Hon. K. M. Smith — Thank you.

Hon. PAT POWER — However, notice was given of the motion yesterday, Tuesday, 9 December, and this morning there will be in the car park a media event about taxis and cameras. I wait with interest to hear the minister explain the circumstances of that event.

Hon. G. R. Craige — You should have moved the Atkinson one, shouldn't you?

Hon. PAT POWER — I take up the interjection of the minister that this chamber would have been more beneficially using its time this morning if it were debating a motion about Mr Atkinson. It may be the view of the minister that that would be a more beneficial use of the time that the opposition has to raise matters for debate but I disagree with him. I make it plain that any debate in this chamber about safety issues relating to taxis or safe working circumstances for taxidrivers is very important. It is much more important than the issue the minister indicated would have been his preference for the opposition to raise. I make it clear that if this

government, on 10 December 1997, some five years after it came to office, is about to make some substantial contribution to safe working circumstances for taxidrivers the opposition will welcome that and will not hesitate in commending the government for its actions.

The purpose of the motion is to indicate that, despite the minister's announcement about the media event this morning, this government has concentrated on rhetoric and has been unable or perhaps not prepared to deliver safe working circumstances for taxidrivers.

I refer again to the recommendations that I read from the report of October 1993. It has been recognised by many people associated with the taxi industry that the fitting of taxi duress alarms is hardly a contribution to the safety of the taxidriver at all. Currently when a person seeks to perpetrate a crime on a taxidriver that person orchestrates and engineers a situation where the crime occurs in an isolated part of suburban Melbourne where it is extremely unlikely that an activated duress alarm or green static light would be noticed by any citizen, whether passing or in the neighbourhood. It is not the argument of the opposition this morning to contest that some action has been taken by the government about duress alarms, but it would be interesting to know whether the minister is able to give an assurance that all operating taxis are fitted with duress alarms that are in full working order.

As I said, recommendation 44 is:

> That an approved driver protection screen be fitted to taxis at the request of drivers.

The opposition has raised the issue of protective screens in this chamber before during debate, during question time and on the adjournment. I accept that opinion on whether those screens are effective is divided — that is, whether they provide some protection or they might entrap a driver who might be attacked. However, the recommendation of the Crime Prevention Committee was that if a driver submitted a written request a protective screen should be made available.

I know that the minister's response will be to gain protection by indicating that there are no approved driver protection screens available in Australia. One needs to ask why that is so. There certainly will not be such a product on sale unless there is a market for that product.

Recommendation 47 refers to the global positioning system (GPS). Again, the minister would acknowledge that most opinion in the taxi industry is that the global positioning system is important for tracking or locating a taxi. I do not believe the minister will be able to assure the house that GPS in any sense provides a safe working environment for a taxidriver. It may mean that after an assault the emergency services would be able to get to the injured taxidriver more quickly, but members of the opposition are much more concerned about intervention and prevention. We are not so much concerned about how quickly emergency services can get to a vehicle to find the injured driver or — heaven forbid — a taxidriver who has died as a consequence of an assault.

It is not just the opposition and many taxidrivers who are concerned about a safe working environment. The Victorian Taxi Association, the organisation that represents the owners who provide the vehicles that are the basis for the industry, shares a concern about providing a safe working environment for taxidrivers. It cannot be disputed that the owners of taxis have a considerable financial investment in the purchase and licensing of the vehicles and in ensuring that they continue to meet the regime of regulation required by the Victorian Taxi Directorate.

The Victorian Taxi Association is to be complimented for its commitment to and its understanding of how important taxidrivers are to ensuring that owners receive proper returns for their significant financial investments. Recently the executive director of the association attended the ALP state conference as a business observer. During that conference he sought to meet with me to discuss a range of matters of mutual interest affecting public transport and taxis in particular. It was interesting and heartening to hear the chief executive officer of the association say that in his view taxis are part of the public transport network and that in a modern city we need complementary modes to move people through the public system.

The Kennett government has a lot to learn about transport planning based on the experience and views of the association. At major events, whether it is the Australian Open — which is just a month away — a one-off event like the Bledisloe Cup or a major entertainment event at the Crown Casino complex or at the national tennis centre, the association knows that if large numbers of people are to be moved efficiently and effectively a proper

relationship must exist between trains, trams, buses and taxis.

It is important to tie that in to the safety aspect. Neil Sach of the Victorian Taxi Association indicated clearly that, because of the state government's attitude that public transport will not operate after midnight to cater for major events, we experience the Bledisloe Cup or Australian Open examples where insufficient taxis are available to meet the urgent demand of commuters to travel home or to wherever their destinations might be.

We have all witnessed long queues of people tapping their toes as they wait for taxis to arrive at the ranks. The association pointed out that people forced to wait in those circumstances become extremely frustrated. In some cases — perhaps prompted by their being tired and emotional at the time — commuters take out their frustration not just on the vehicles but frequently on the drivers. Therefore, we need to understand that there are structural reasons why taxidrivers find themselves in unsafe workplaces. The Victorian Taxi Association holds the view, which is shared by the opposition, that the government needs to have a much broader and much more visionary view about the role taxis play in our public transport structure.

The next time there is a major event in Melbourne of the kind I described I have not the slightest doubt that if the Minister for Roads and Ports were able to convince his colleague the Minister for Transport in another place that trains, trams and buses ought to operate until — within reasonable terms — there is no longer commuter demand, that would allow taxis to play a much more effective role in transporting people to their destinations. Not only would taxis be able to play a more effective role, it would certainly mean the frustration and tension resulting from people waiting inordinate amounts of time simply would not exist.

Notwithstanding the announcement the minister will make about the car park event this morning, the Victorian Taxi Association has been very critical of the government's commitment to rhetoric as distinct from its delivery in relation to driver safety. I am not aware of what the association tells the minister, but I am certainly aware of what it tells the opposition. The association supports the use of technology in Victorian taxis. I refer to camera technology, which, as the minister will be able to confirm, is available in Melbourne. As the minister will also be able to confirm, camera technology is being used by the Court government in Western Australia.

We need to understand that we are not talking about video technology, because that technology is outdated. It is not an appropriate kind of technology. If the Kennett government had had a strong commitment to safe working environments, that technology was available and could have been placed in taxis since the government came to office in 1992. However, one could ask: why should we expect this government to be concerned about the safe working environment of taxidrivers when it has little or no commitment to safe working environments for any Victorian workers?

The next major bill this chamber will be debating is the Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill, which reveals not only that the government does not have a commitment to safe workplaces, but that it intends to disadvantage — you could argue punish — those injured as a consequence of unsafe working environments. Therefore, it is a bit naive of the opposition, the association and taxidrivers and their families to believe the government would respond to a clearly demonstrated need. Technology that addresses the understandable issues of privacy is available in Melbourne. That technology could be applied in taxis discreetly and with integrity so that taxidrivers feel a strong sense of protection as they go about their work. It would enable still camera shots to be taken periodically and for those shots to be stored but not retained which would therefore address the privacy issue. It is possible for this technology to be structured in a way that would enable taxidrivers who feel threatened or in potentially threatening situations to activate the cameras to take photos more frequently.

We all understand that in commercial and industrial complexes that kind of photographic technology is used for two reasons. People would accept that it is used mainly as a deterrent. People in the retail clothing sector would be able to provide statistical evidence of the reduction in shoplifting when cameras are present. Therefore, cameras have a strong role to play as a disincentive. However, more importantly, experience in the banking sector has shown that cameras have a significant capacity to provide evidence which is admissible in court and which can lead to convictions. That is a desirable scenario. We want taxidrivers to feel that as a consequence of the camera technology at their disposal there will be a disincentive for their becoming victims and in the event of their becoming victims the likelihood of there being photographic evidence which is admissible in court and which could lead to a conviction will be in place. If it were

well known throughout the community that camera technology in taxis made it extremely likely that people committing assaults could be identified and their photographs would be admissible in court and would most certainly lead to convictions it would provide a valuable disincentive. A regime of protection in the form of camera technology is needed in taxis. That will make it more and more unlikely that an assault will occur and, in circumstances where an assault does occur, a conviction will be more likely.

I know the Minister for Roads and Ports has a great deal of affection for the Transport Workers Union; I know he considers that union to be a very responsible and progressive industrial organisation. I notice the minister is nodding in agreement. The Transport Workers Union is also concerned about the safety of taxidrivers. Along with all unions, the TWU is deeply committed to the notion of workers being provided with a safe working environment and is extremely concerned about the lack of commitment the Kennett coalition government has to providing such an environment. It is also deeply concerned about the preparedness of the government to disadvantage and punish those workers who are injured as a consequence of being required to work in unsafe environments. As recently as yesterday the TWU put to me — —

Hon. G. R. Craige — Another stunt! Was that you ringing Bill yesterday?

Hon. PAT POWER — The minister is implying that Bill Noonan, the secretary and treasurer of the Victorian branch of the TWU, sits in his office waiting for phone calls from politicians. He certainly does not wait for phone calls from the minister. Mr Noonan is much too busy looking after industrial issues to be sitting around waiting for phone calls from any politicians.

Along with other unions that operate on the waterfront, the TWU is deeply concerned about the hysterical support given by the Premier and the Minister for Roads and Ports to the outrageous activities that are occurring off shore. The TWU pays a lot of attention to the decisions and actions of the Kennett government. Along with the maritime unions and other organisations involved with the waterfront, including the Electrical Trades Union, the TWU is extremely concerned about the support of the government for the training of secret agents in Dubai.

The TWU has advised me that its members are deeply concerned that the Minister for Roads and Ports has been sitting for three months on a number of recommendations that are before him. They indicated to me yesterday that that was outrageous and that the minister was not doing his job. They want to know what the minister does with his time. They said they were deeply offended that some of the recent meetings with the minister had been cancelled. I told them I thought they had every right to be offended and that it was completely inappropriate for the minister to stand up an organisation so deeply committed to the smooth running of transport in this state, particularly in relation to taxis and the provision of a safe working environment in taxis. I will be delighted to advise the TWU this afternoon that the minister will no longer cancel meetings and that he will no longer sit on recommendations that are before him.

I shall outline some real examples of problems taxidrivers face. The opposition spokesperson on transport, Mr Peter Batchelor, and I were approached by a taxidriver who has been hospitalised twice while working. He has not received compensation for either of those attacks. I have met with the driver and he is in constant fear whenever he works his shift. He said to me — the minister might be able to confirm this — that, with his deep commitment to improving the taxi industry, the Premier gave a commitment that protective screens for taxis would be in place by December 1994. I know that at that time the responsibility for this portfolio was allocated to the National Party and, therefore, the current minister may not be able to provide clear advice on this matter. The taxidriver is deeply concerned that the Premier's commitment has not come to fruition. He lives in the northern suburbs and was deeply distressed by the circumstances of the attack on Peter Coe, a taxidriver from Preston who was stabbed to death in 1995.

Hon. G. R. Craige — Do you want me to respond and get into the detail of how that happened so you can then understand the issue?

Hon. PAT POWER — I understand the issue very well. I certainly do not want to add to the sadness and trauma that Peter Coe's family has experienced. I am simply bringing to this house an issue that was brought to my attention by a taxidriver who, in good faith, accepted the word of the Premier who said that protective screens would be in place by December 1994.

As I said, this taxidriver has been seeking to have a screen installed in his taxi since 1993. I shall quote from the report of the Crime Prevention Committee of October 1993 on developing a safer taxi industry. Recommendation 44 states:

> That an approved driver protection screen be fitted to taxis at the written request of drivers.

A taxidriver who has been hospitalised twice as a consequence of being attacked and who is in constant fear while working his shift has been seeking to have a protective screen installed since 1993.

As I said at the outset, the opposition does not share the view of the Minister for Roads and Ports that the opposition would have been better using its time this morning if it had debated the motion about Mr Atkinson. I have no difficulty in indicating that this is an important issue. As a consequence of this motion appearing on the notice paper, it may well be that the minister is able to make some announcement this morning in relation to camera technology. I will wait with interest to hear what he has to report. I make it plain that members of the opposition will welcome any initiative the government takes which demonstrates to the taxi industry, especially to drivers and their families, that the rhetoric is over and action is beginning.

This is an important issue. If the placing of this motion on the notice paper has resulted in some action at last for taxidrivers in regard to making their working environment safer, that is to be applauded. The motion is simple:

> That this house notes the government has failed to provide drivers in the taxi industry with a safe working environment.

I do not believe it is possible for this house to do anything other than support the motion.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Minister for Roads and Ports) — The government opposes the motion. Mr Power's contribution in the debate clearly demonstrated his lack of knowledge.

Hon. Pat Power interjected.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — I hope Mr Power will allow me to present my case. I place on the record that yesterday the Labor Party had the option of moving either a motion in the name of the Leader of the Opposition on Mr Bruce Atkinson or the motion moved today by Mr Power. Let it be on the record that Mr Power had the numbers in caucus and rolled the Leader of the Opposition on the issue.

In 1985 the Labor government passed the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The legislation dealt specifically with the duties and responsibilities of employers of self-employed people, particularly taxidrivers, and placed an onus on such employers. The legislation had the high-profile aims of protecting and improving conditions in the workplace, improving conditions for workers and introducing a new workers compensation regime.

What did the Labor Party do to provide safe working conditions for taxidrivers in the period 1985 to 1992? Not one thing! In those seven years Labor did nothing to back up the real commitment it made to self-employed people in clause 22 of its platform on occupational health and safety. Even worse is what the Labor Party intended to do in 1992. In 1991 Labor did a lot of work in preparation for legislation to be introduced in 1992. Thank goodness for the 1992 election because if it had not taken place and the coalition government had not been elected today we would have a deregulated taxi industry.

Although today we have heard a lot of rhetoric from the ALP about how much it cares for taxidrivers it did nothing about the legislation it had introduced in 1985 concerning self-employed taxidrivers and intended to introduce legislation it had drafted in 1991 to deregulate the taxi industry.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — You would have supported it.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — Not me.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Like the tow trucks that you didn't support.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — Not me. I have been called the Black Regulator in respect of the taxi industry. I do not take offence to that because my mission is to do the things that Labor did not do, yet opposition members are accusing the government of not doing anything at all and using window dressing. I will go through each issue in depth so opposition members can understand what we have done, because they have done no research. They have spoken to Mr Sach. However, it proves my point because his name is — —

Hon. Pat Power — Why does he call you 'Geoff Craigee'?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — He does not call me that. It is important to get on the table the facts about how badly the opposition performed in respect of the taxi industry when in government. Following the government's election in 1992 the Honourable Alan Brown, the then Minister for Transport, referred the issue of taxidriver safety to the parliamentary Crime Prevention Committee, as it then was. As a new minister in a coalition government he saw a real need to thoroughly investigate the issue of taxidriver safety. Under the chairmanship of Mr Ken Smith an extensive investigation was undertaken of the taxi industry for the first time. The committee looked at the important issue of taxidriver safety, something all honourable members know the Labor Party had no interest in then and today has done nothing about except put a very flimsy argument.

In 1992 the Crime Prevention Committee extensively investigated the safety aspects of the taxi industry. Some of the issues have been addressed already and some are still on the table. In 1993, while the investigation was still on foot, the government announced that taxis would be part of the public transport network and would be included in planning for future major events. That had never happened previously. Taxis are now considered part of the public transport network.

I will go through some of the issues raised during that 1992 investigation into taxidriver safety, respond to the issues raised by Mr Power and deal with initiatives in which the government has been instrumental since its election. Mr Nardella made a very valuable contribution to the work of the committee and was involved in its recommendations. The committee recognised that its investigation was ground-breaking research and that the project was needed to provide a base for the state's forward planning on taxidriver safety.

One of the first recommendations of the committee concerned the collation of information. Perhaps I should remind honourable members who was in government prior to 1992. At that time information about taxidriver deaths was not collected separately but treated as part of the general figures. A person's profession could not be identified from the figures. In 1993 the police began to collect separate data, which meant that taxidriver deaths could be identified. I point out that there is a separate collection point for assaults and robberies. Anything to do with a taxidriver can be located on the computer, whether it involves a runner, an assault or a crash. That allows the police to collate information relevant to the industry. It has been beneficial from our point of view, especially in relation to the recent inquiry conducted by the Victorian Taxi Driver Safety Committee, which I will refer to shortly. The committee found much of that information invaluable in drawing up its recommendations.

One of the keys to giving the administration of the industry a focus and creating a cooperative approach between the government and the Victorian Taxi Association, was the establishment of the Victorian Taxi Directorate. Under the previous Labor government Vicroads had responsibility for taxis. There was no identified, separate organisation or group responsible for taxis. Most of the Vicroads staff had a multitude of different responsibilities involving taxis, motorcycles and boats.

The government believed that the industry had to be treated separately if any reform process was to proceed. That is why the Victorian Taxi Directorate was established. It has been one of the keys to moving the taxi industry into the 21st century and making it one of the world's best. At the same time the government has not walked away from the important issue of the role of taxidrivers in the industry.

There has been a great deal of cooperation between the Victorian Taxi Association and the Victorian Taxi Directorate. More importantly, the association's cooperation in the reform process has been appreciated, because most of the changes have been achieved through cooperation rather than the introduction of harsh legislation or regulations. As I said, the establishment of a designated directorate to deal with taxi matters was a key factor in giving the industry a focus within the bureaucracy. Other states have followed our lead because they see real merit in the process.

All taxis have been fitted with duress alarms as part of the regulations — and they have to be in working condition. It is an offence not to have them fitted and in working order, and penalties apply. We continually carry out enforcement procedures, and to date we have not found a taxi that has not had a duress alarm fitted and in working condition. Mr Power claimed the alarms do not work. The government's philosophy is that they are only some of a number of pieces in the jigsaw of taxidriver safety. This was also the Crime Prevention Committee's philosophy.

It is not a matter of one issue versus another. It is a matter of putting all the pieces together to maximise

the safety of drivers. Duress alarms are part of that jigsaw, but you have to ensure you add other safety components — and that is what the government is doing. It is bringing together the other components to try to have a total picture for the safety of taxidrivers. We have never claimed that duress alarms are the only devices that are needed and that they will solve all the problems. They are small parts of the jigsaw.

Duress alarms were accepted in a form different from that recommended by the committee. Experience has shown that a flashing revolving light on a vehicle has some downsides. For example, if it reflects on a building or another vehicle in the vicinity it immediately warns the perpetrator. A great deal of investigation was undertaken to work out how best to get the message to the public that the driver was in trouble without warning the perpetrator in the vehicle.

All vehicles are now fitted with boot releases, with the exception of station wagons, which of course is commonsense. Mr Power may have difficulty understanding why that is so, but most people understand that there is a significant difference between boot releases on station wagons and sedans. Sedans are now fitted with internal boot releases, because a number of incidents occurred in which taxidrivers were locked in the boots of their taxis. They are another part of the jigsaw. As Mr Power rightly said, many of these things are about deterrents and about eliminating opportunities for would-be perpetrators of crime so that you end up with an overall safety picture.

Duress alarms are in, boot releases are in, the Victorian Taxi Directorate has been established and the police now keep separate statistics on taxidrivers. They are four innovations. Let's keep going, because it is important. The government has been accused of relying on rhetoric rather than reality. I do not view all that as rhetoric, because the changes are a reality.

Hon. Pat Power — So far you have complimented Bill Baxter, but have you done anything?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — I do not want to place all that on the record, other than to say that since 1993 I have had responsibility for the taxi industry.

Hon. Pat Power — No, you haven't.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — I have had responsibility for the taxi industry since then, working with the then Minister for Roads and Ports and the Premier.

Hon. Pat Power — Your apprenticeship.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — That was my apprenticeship. It was a very rewarding time, because I gained valuable experience of a vital industry.

Hon. Pat Power — Was it your recommendation to deregulate the tow truck industry so that, as minister, you would have to re-regulate?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — No, it was not. The last lot was mine. It is important to place on the record the cooperation I received in my early days of looking at the taxi industry, as well as the many friendships I have struck up with taxidrivers.

Hon. Pat Power — Name one.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — I can name plenty.

Hon. Pat Power — Name him.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — You want me to name him? Him or the many? Which do you want me to name?

Hon. Pat Power — Name him.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — Last week I met an interesting character with whom I struck up a relationship. The industry is unique.

Hon. Pat Power — Which branch of the Liberal Party does he belong to?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — He does not belong to the Liberal Party. The taxi industry has some magnificent characters. They are great ambassadors for the city, the state and for us as part of the human race. They are a vital part of the total transport network. In many cases taxidrivers are much more interesting than train, tram or bus drivers because of the relationship one has with them. That is recognised by most members of Parliament.

As Mr Power said, training is an important part of the industry. It is about being pre-emptive and ensuring that the driver is better equipped to handle issues. Training is now compulsory and drivers must pass an English test and a knowledge of Melbourne test before undertaking a 40-hour TAFE

course, which involves two issues — dealing with customers, particularly difficult customers, and making assessments of their environment. In other words, when a taxidriver arrives at a location he must assess the environment around him and decide whether he should continue to pick up his fare.

Two important government initiatives have helped to change the environment. The first is the safety in taxi ranks program in King Street. Two ranks have been installed and are equipped with surveillance cameras, emergency telephones, extra lighting and security guards. The work has been done in cooperation with the Victorian Taxi Association, the Melbourne City Council, the Victoria Police and nightclub owners. Taxidrivers were making assessments about King Street and did not want to enter it to pick up the many young people who have a good time at the nightclubs in that street and want to return home in the early or late hours of the morning. The government had to make it a safe environment for taxidrivers and clients and ensure that future passengers would feel safe when lining up to catch taxis in the early hours of the morning. This government initiative is working exceptionally well.

The government also established taxi ranks at 24-hour convenience stores. Many taxi ranks are at railway stations, but trains stop running at 12.30 a.m. so they are often inappropriate locations because of poor lighting and the lack of activity. With the assistance of 7 Eleven stores, McDonalds and other convenience stores, safe taxi ranks were established at convenience stores where there is plenty of lighting and considerable activity so that the clients and the taxidrivers feel they are in a user-friendly environment. That initiative has been well received and other states are looking at the Victorian experience with the idea of introducing similar systems. A similar scheme is being introduced in Montreal, Canada. This is the government that is full of rhetoric and has not done anything about taxidriver safety since 1992!

Another significant government initiative is the global positioning system. Mr Power said that it is okay, but it is not such a good tool for taxidriver safety. There is some dispute about that. Some people say it is an important tool for taxidriver safety because the location of the taxi is known at all times. GPS has a dual role: it ensures the central organisation knows the whereabouts of the taxi and therefore of the driver, which helps to bring the taxi to the client more quickly. Black Cabs and Silver Top Taxi Service Ltd have installed GPS and it is working well. Some taxidrivers do not like it because it tells the company and the depot where taxis are at all times. We had some initial problems with the system, but since it has been upgraded it is working very effectively.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — What was wrong with it before it was upgraded?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — GPS operates effectively at sea, which is why ships are fitted with the system.

Hon. Pat Power — That is why you have some knowledge of it.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — That is right. At sea the transmission from the reception to the satellite is uninterrupted, but in built-up areas the transmission can be interrupted and a stronger transmitter is needed to make sure the transmission gets to the satellite. The technology was developed by the United States army and the services have been dealing with GPS for a long time, so having spent some 20 years in the Royal Australian Navy I knew about it as a tool used for other purposes. The transmitter equipment in taxicabs has been upgraded to make it more effective, and there are fewer breaks in the system. Sometimes there was a long break in transmission, but now the time off is minimal and the system can pick up the cabs more quickly.

Significant changes have occurred with the global positioning system. The opposition rubbishes the government for its so-called rhetoric, but the GPS is up and operating.

The government and the Victorian Taxi Association recognised the importance of the taxi industry involvement in Melbourne's major events. I personally intervened on several occasions to ensure the taxi industry was included as a part of the planning of transportation needs for people attending the spring racing carnival, the Australian Open tennis, the grand prix or the Crown Casino complex.

Today we still tend to fail to take into account the taxi industry when planning issues are being considered. More work should be done to develop our taxi ranks. I am pleased that the Crown Casino complex has recognised the importance of planning to accommodate its taxi ranks. The changes being made there are as a result of a partnership between the taxi industry and the government.

Also, significant changes have been made to taxi ranks at Melbourne Airport — one of the most efficient airports in the world when it comes to moving taxis through its precincts. Modern technology which has been developed in cooperation with the taxi industry and the association has been introduced at the airport. We have worked tirelessly to ensure Victoria has state-of-the-art technology at the airport to accommodate the large number of taxis that gather there. Mr Power has probably not even seen the taxis operate at Melbourne Airport; perhaps I should take him out there so he can understand the importance with which the government regards the Victorian taxi industry.

I refer to Mr Power's comments about the Transport Workers Union of Australia. I respect the TWU's Bill Noonan enormously and I am disappointed he said I broke a couple of appointments to meet him. If that is the case, I apologise to him. I will contact him by telephone this afternoon and will arrange to see him. I will certainly contact him quickly. I have a great deal of respect for the TWU involvement in the heavy vehicle industry.

Honourable members may like to guess how many of the 17 000 taxi certificate licence holders are TWU members. The TWU inherited its members from another association — it did not do the hard work and sign them on; others did the hard work. The TWU has about 500 members.

Hon. Pat Power — Union amalgamations.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — That's not many members, but I have quite rightly given them a position on our Victorian Taxi Driver Safety Committee, as we have done with other groups who represent Victorian drivers. It is important to understand that the TWU has only about 500 members of the 17 000 taxidrivers in Victoria. Mr Power said he had been informed by a taxidriver that the Premier said in May 1994 taxis would be fitted with screens.

Hon. Pat Power — The Premier said that by December 1994 taxis would be fitted with screens.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — I assure the house that the Premier has not made such a statement.

Hon. Pat Power — He ought to make himself clear.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — Perhaps you are not clear, but I am clear on this, Mr Power.

Hon. Pat Power — You are criticising taxidrivers.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — No, I am not one to criticise taxidrivers because I have the utmost respect for the majority of them; they behave well and are vital to our public transport network.

During his contribution to the debate Mr Power made certain statements that I must say are again incorrect, as were unfortunately most of his statements this morning — in particular, when it comes to cameras in taxis.

He said that the Western Australian system was operational. The Western Australian digital system has encountered significant problems and in fact, the government has had to — —

Hon. Pat Power interjected.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — You made the statement. I am telling the house that is not true.

Hon. Pat Power — We would not expect the Court government to do it very well.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — It found faults within the digital system and published new specifications for a tender to supply a camera system in WA cabs. It is important, when one talks about cameras, to recognise that no state has introduced cameras into cabs. South Australia has carried out a trial.

I am pleased to advise the house of an initiative to be launched today. It is unfortunate that Mr Power won the day over Mr Theophanous in moving his motion today; I even had a dorothy dixer ready for question time this afternoon!

Hon. Pat Power — You got it together yesterday afternoon; come clean.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — It was no media stunt because I take taxidriver safety seriously, as does the taxi industry. Nobody in that industry could ever accuse me of not taking taxidriver safety seriously.

Today the government has commenced a trial in six cabs of different types of surveillance cameras. The trial will be carried out for three months. The installed variety of cameras will allow us to assess the best form of surveillance cameras in cabs. Mr Power understands some of the issues involved

with taxis, especially cameras. We need them not only as a deterrent but to have a filmed record to assist in launching any necessary prosecutions.

Also this morning I released a report entitled *Taxidriver Survey — Victoria* prepared for the Victorian Taxi Driver Safety Committee by Dr Fiona Haines from the criminology department of the University of Melbourne. The report reveals that 58 per cent of people who had been assaulted and 57 per cent of those who had been robbed in taxis want cameras installed. Therefore, as this report highlights, the government has commenced a trial of surveillance cameras in taxis.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — What did the survey say about screens?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — Hang on! I will talk about them and Mr Furletti will further elaborate on the installation of screens in taxis. As Mr Nardella found in his survey, the Victorian Taxi Driver Safety Committee report revealed a mixed view in the community on the use of screens. Some people like them, others do not. If a taxidriver requests a screen, it should be installed. A national standard for screens has now been developed. Earlier this year in New South Wales there was a lot of hot air about making screens compulsory. However, the program has still not commenced, simply because they did what so many other people do — yelled first and then realised that safety requirements applied to the installation of safety screens in cabs. The last thing we want to do is put a capsule in a taxi that entraps the driver.

Hon. Pat Power — I could not agree more.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — I will make sure that the protection of the taxidriver is paramount. That also means ensuring that when an incident occurs the driver can easily get out of the taxi. I will pursue that.

Hon. Pat Power — You have our support.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — We now have a model that we believe will be successful. It is a matter of putting production lines in place and seeing how they work. The government is committed to taxidriver safety. It is important that cab companies install a variety of screens. Dandenong Cabs still has some screens installed, and we have seen other varieties. Clearly, we have to be able to meet national standards, which also means looking at airconditioning for Queensland drivers compared with airconditioning for drivers in Victoria, which relates to a heat issue.

We should not draw too much from some of the incidents that have led to the deaths of taxidrivers. It is important to note that a lot of those incidents have occurred outside cabs, not inside. It is unfair to associate the deaths of individual taxidrivers with the lack of safety screens. In most cases the driver would not have been saved by a screen, simply because either he had left the taxi or the perpetrator had assaulted him through an open window. In those circumstances it would not have mattered whether or not a screen had been installed.

We should always be careful about drawing too much from individual cases of taxidrivers who have been murdered when all the facts are not available — although the facts are pretty clear in the majority of cases. It is irresponsible for members of this chamber to refer to particular taxidriver deaths without explaining the full details but implying that safety screens would have made a difference. In reality, in the majority of cases they would not have.

In conclusion, I again refer to the accusation that we rely on rhetoric. Today I have clearly pointed out to the public, including those who will read the debate, that the government has done much more than the Labor government ever did in its 10 years in office, and we will continue to improve the safety of taxidrivers. The government therefore opposes the motion.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I support the motion moved by Mr Power. I was a member of the former Crime Prevention Committee, which examined and reported to Parliament on various issues concerning the taxi industry. Many of the committee's recommendations have been gradually implemented.

Members of the committee travelled to Sydney to talk to representatives of the New South Wales taxi industry, including taxidrivers. We also travelled around Victoria to talk to both metropolitan and country taxi operators and drivers. During that period we attempted to use the taxi service wherever possible.

One of the amazing things we found was the lack of taxidriver training. In some instances drivers had a poor knowledge of locations — especially interstate. In the heart of Sydney we came across drivers who did not know where Woolloomooloo was. Saying 'Take me to Woolloomooloo' in Sydney is like

saying, 'Take me to East Melbourne', here. That is how far Woolloomooloo is from the centre of Sydney!

Those drivers did not project a good image for their state. A person from interstate or from overseas would have been disappointed with the level of service provided by and the local knowledge of those taxidrivers. We had to direct our taxidrivers not only to Woolloomooloo but to Woolloomooloo Waters, where we were staying. That was unacceptable. We had the same sorts of experiences in Victoria.

The opposition acknowledges the amount of work that has gone into investigating the taxi industry. I congratulate Mr Smith for his leadership of the Crime Prevention Committee — Ken and I have a mutual support society. His commitment, along with that of the other members of the committee, to the task of examining and recommending improvements to the taxi industry is generally recognised.

As I said, the committee's report has been the basis for many of the changes the government has made in the area of taxi safety. The global positioning system is important. If a driver is in distress it is vital to know roughly where he or she is in the metropolitan or country area. Duress alarms are also necessary, as are the visual display units that are placed on the rear windows. When the driver presses the duress alarm a message flashes — 'Call the police, driver in duress' or 'Driver in danger'. They are important steps in protecting taxidrivers. Those are the sorts of issues the committee looked at during its inquiry.

The minister needs to continue pushing through the reforms to the taxi industry — especially in some of the smaller companies. They are the ones who scrimp and save; they are the ones who are not prepared to spend money, whether on a global positioning system, cameras, screens or other safety mechanisms requested by drivers.

The recommendation to supply taxidrivers with screens when they are requested has not been implemented, although suitable screens are available. One of the problems highlighted in the report was that many of the drivers were attacked from behind, either with knives or perhaps by assailants trying to strangle the drivers by pinning them down with the seat belt. A number of the screens can take that possibility into account, and taxidrivers have been requesting their employers to install the screens. They are easily detachable, effective and not expensive to install, but the owners, for whatever reason, do not see fit to do so.

I urge the minister to look seriously, even in the interim, at the existing screens with the view of strongly encouraging owners to install them if drivers want them fitted for their own protection or safety or for their perceptions of safety. That should occur particularly because of what the minister said about taxidrivers moving out of their cabs and being attacked.

Another issue that was raised in the report and continues to be raised is that of cabs for disabled people. Members of the community I represent tell me they find it extremely difficult to book cabs for disabled people and, once the cabs are booked, to have them turn up on time, which often results in missed appointments.

Hon. G. R. Craige — Which company is that?

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — It is a general comment, and there has also been considerable information about it on the radio. The minister will find that his press-clipping service will help him, and a lot of information can be picked up on 3LO.

The government should also increase the number of taxis to assist disabled people because probably the only way they can get around is by using taxi transport. I have heard on radio of cases where people feel frustrated and isolated because of the lack of cabs for the disabled.

The opposition welcomes the survey and the proposed camera trials in six taxis. The report has recommended that screens be installed in taxis, and it is good to see that the Victorian Taxi Directorate continues that process even though it has meant that a number of people are no longer driving cabs. More needs to be done, which is why it is important for all members support the motion.

Hon. C. A. FURLETTI (Templestowe) — I am very pleased to be afforded the opportunity to oppose the motion moved by the opposition. As was so accurately pointed out by the Minister for Roads and Ports, when in government for 10 years the Labor Party did nothing about the safety of drivers in the taxi industry. As the minister pointed out, shortly after coming to government the then Minister for Transport, Mr Alan Brown, recognised the problem in the taxi industry and immediately commissioned on terms of reference a committee to

investigate and report on the industry. The Crime Prevention Committee, as it then was, was chaired by Mr Ken Smith and reported in October 1993 on developing a safer taxi industry in Victoria.

The committee's report is significant. It contained 73 recommendations, the majority of which were approved and many of which were implemented. Along with the recommendations mentioned by the Minister for Roads and Ports were others including the establishment of a comments and complaints hotline to the Victorian directorate, the introduction of strict probity requirements for would-be taxidrivers and — one to which scant regard has been paid this morning — the introduction of education for certification and training of drivers in what I call personal skills and incident reporting, which plays a major role in driver safety. Further recommendations to be implemented include zero blood alcohol levels for working taxidrivers and the customer benefits of a uniform dress code, colour code and cleanliness. There is also a practice of holding strict annual and more frequent roadworthy inspections of taxis and auditing of roadworthy checks on the basis of the age of the vehicle.

In my view the major recommendation of the Crime Prevention Committee was the establishment of a registry in the form of the Victorian Taxi Directorate. To suggest, as does the opposition, that the government has done nothing for driver safety is a nonsense. The facts speak for themselves: the report of the Crime Prevention Committee was tabled in October 1993. I congratulate that committee and two of its members who are present today, Mr Ken Smith and Mr Don Nardella. As a result of the main recommendation to establish a registry, in December 1993 Mr Bill Baxter, who was then the Minister for Roads and Ports, announced the government's intention to establish a Victorian directorate, and by February 1994 the Victorian Taxi Directorate was open for business as the watchdog of the taxi industry with a commitment to establishing a world-class taxi service for Victoria. If, as Mr Power suggested, that is rhetoric, clearly he needs to learn the meaning of the word. The Victorian Taxi Directorate then decided to work towards establishing the Victorian Taxi Driver Safety Committee in February 1995.

Debate interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

LAND (RESERVATIONS AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 4 December; motion of Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology).

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — The Land (Reservations and Other Matters) Bill is a small but important piece of legislation. It is not the opposition's intention to oppose the bill although I shall move a reasoned amendment at an appropriate point to express concern about particular issues.

The bill revokes the reservations on 20 parcels of Crown land right across Victoria. Even though, as I said, it is not the opposition's intention to oppose the bill, it has some concerns about the process that has been used. The government is engaging in a massive sell off of Crown land across the state. The opposition is concerned because the public knows nothing about the sell off and it has not been able to gain access to any of the due processes to establish whether the properties are surplus and should have been identified for sell off.

Formerly, a public consultation process would have been held, but that process has now been abandoned. Community groups with interest in land issues, heritage or conservation values and organisations such as the National Trust have in the past been able to have access to a list of the land that is to be put up for sale. In the past time was given for those individuals and interest groups to check on whether the land had conservation or heritage value.

The government is sidestepping — indeed abandoning — the process of open community consultation. It is proceeding at full pace with a massive sell off without any meaningful or proper public consultation and as a result the public has been cut out of the process. It is not allowed to know about the process. The former Land Conservation Council would carefully ask for public opinion and it would seek public submissions in three separate stages.

This action has had an impact on local government. A letter was sent to all councils on 1 September 1995 by the former Minister for Conservation and Environment, now the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, and the former Minister for Local Government, now the Minister for Finance, which spelled out what local government was to do. There

was to be a progressive review of Crown land throughout the state. The letter said local councils would be given a list of Crown land assets in their respective regions with the aim of identifying which should remain as Crown land under the Crown Land Reserves Act.

The letter said that parks and gardens, community centres, sporting facilities, libraries, public halls and municipal offices would all be treated in the way that was outlined in the letter, and the councils would have the option to either buy or lease the land. That horrendous letter from the former minister backed councils into a corner by telling them they must lease or buy the land! The general public was not to be consulted at all.

The earth certainly moved that day. That may well have been the day the former ministers sent the despicable letter to councils! The land in question affects Albert Park and public access to parks as well as changes to the master plan. The Albert Park community, stressed as it is, has not been consulted! Therefore, in relation to the land in question in Albert Park, I move:

> That all the words after 'That' be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until:
>
> (a) a system of public consultation is put in place to consider all proposals to revoke permanent reservations of Crown lands and to sell Crown land; and
>
> (b) public consultation has taken place with the Albert Park community about changes to the master plan regarding the land to be granted to MacRobertson Girls High School, the golf course and the future of a passive recreation area designated as the village green picnic area'.

Although the opposition does not oppose the bill it moves the reasoned amendment to indicate its concern about the process. Several of the parcels of Crown land referred to in the bill are obvious examples of the process of forcing local councils to identify their operational sites and then lease or buy them.

Clause 6 refers to land at Penshurst, with which all members would be familiar — the site of the old Mount Rouse shire offices. The old bluestone building is used as an office by the successor body, the Shire of Southern Grampians. The Southern Grampians Shire Council has no alternative but to purchase the land because there is a council-owned building on the site. This is a further example of a council being pushed into a corner.

In central Bendigo land is being used as a car park by the City of Greater Bendigo. The government is forcing that municipality to use ratepayer funds to buy or lease land that it has had access to for many years. The old shire hall at Rosedale is now operating as a preschool and an adjoining property has been sold.

At Bannockburn the original council offices are being sold to the successor, the Golden Plains municipality. That process should have included public consultation. Land at Heatherton is in exactly the same situation; it is undeveloped land on the edge of a green wedge that acts as a buffer zone and it is not appropriate that it be used for residential purposes. The Kingston conservation coalition group knew nothing about the proposal despite the fact that organisation should have been involved in every conservation issue in the City of Kingston. The East Malvern Bowling Club is a Crown land site. The Stonnington City Council has been forced to consider offering $300 000 to buy part of the vacant block and $100 000 to transfer it to parkland.

The bill excises land from Albert Park and reserves it for use by MacRobertson Girls High School to compensate the school for the loss of parkland when the grand prix was imposed on the park. The location of the land proposed in the bill varies from the master plan because of changes made to the adjacent golf course and to the use of the park for the grand prix. No public consultation occurred. The bill also contains two examples of changes to public ownership of river frontages.

In Gruyere an adjoining land-holder will purchase land comprising two unused roads as part of a declaration made in 1881 protecting all river frontages throughout Victoria. Similarly, in Wangaratta an old reservation has protected land for public purposes. In both cases there is no public access to the land in question and the land is abutted on both sides by freehold title. No public consultation took place. The land is river frontage but the government has lifted the environmental protection along river frontages by allowing 35-year leases which result in public land being handed over to landowners without the necessary environmental protection.

At Grantville the reservation is being lifted on a small area of land that formerly contained an old public hall. The site was reserved for a mechanics

institute and a free library. The land abuts the very important Culvert Creek, part of the Lang Lang–Grantville wildlife corridor. This corridor is important locally and the land should be viewed in that context. The wildlife corridor has been recognised in the Land Conservation Council report on Western Port and in the Grantville urban and regional strategy. Once again, however, no public consultation has taken place in relation to lifting that reservation. At Mangalore a parcel of land, part of a flora and fauna reserve, is being taken away for widening of the Goulburn Valley Highway. The reserve in question is mainly box-ironbark woodland, which is significant and which currently is inadequately reserved in the national park system. A local committee of management is needed.

In Carlton at Argyle Square the reservation is to be lifted to allow the construction of a car park for 484 short-term car park spaces. The opposition wants to put on the public record its acknowledgment and congratulations for the public consultation process the democratically elected Melbourne City Council ensured took place in relation to this development. The process that the Melbourne City Council applied in relation to Argyle Square ought to have been replicated in relation to the other parcels of land that are addressed in the Land (Reservations and other Matters) Bill. The style of the Melbourne City Council is in stark contrast to the process undertaken by the government's commitment to a process that excludes public consultation and consideration of community views.

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) — I thank Mr Power for not opposing the bill. I focus my remarks about public consultation in the context of a specific issue in Albert Park that was mentioned. The matter came to the fore when I was Minister for Conservation and Environment.

Hon. Pat Power — Shame!

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — I take with a grain of salt the indignation of the honourable member. The MacRobertson Girls High School land expansion possibility has been on the horizon for well over a decade. It was widely understood that MacRobs would probably need some land; it is one of Australia's most outstanding government schools with a well-deserved reputation.

When I was Minister for Conservation and Environment I was approached by representatives of the school and the then Minister for Education, Don Hayward. The school needed to expand; and the only practical place it could possibly expand was into Albert Park. That move was considered in the context of a strategic and master planning process for Albert Park. From memory, it was well before any decision had been made on an annual grand prix event at Albert Park.

The government consulted broadly in the master planning and strategy process, and the community was actively involved. We issued a draft plan for changes to Albert Park, vis-a-vis, MacRobertson Girls High School. It could have always been a controversial issue but it had public support. There was consultation and a genuine attempt to ensure that people knew that it was appropriate the land be preserved for potential expansion of the school. I do not know if a financial plan was in place at the time of the project. This measure will be good for education as well as for Albert Park.

Over the past four years radical changes have taken place to Albert Park, all for the better. The place was a dive! On my first inspection in late 1992 as the then Minister for Conservation and Environment, the bike paths were unusable or not provided, the walking paths were dangerous, cars were parked on public open space because there was no car parking or perimeter fencing, the toilet effluent leached into the parkland and the lake because the toilets were not connected to the sewer, powerlines strangled the trees, management was chaotic and the quality and presentation of the parkland was a disgrace. That is why I was committed to having something done. Large amounts of money have now been expended in vastly improving the land as public land because of a combination of events including the grand prix.

I note the criticism for the lack of consultation, but 'consultation' is not a code word for 'unanimous agreement'. That will never happen. I cannot recall receiving a letter disagreeing with the decision I made on allocating land for MacRobertson Girls High School. A search of the archives may show there was such a letter, but if it were the case I would remember that it created anger. I oppose the reasoned amendment and look forward to the passage of the bill.

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) — By leave, I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

I thank honourable members for their contributions.

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

EDUCATION (STATE SCHOOLS) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 December; motion of Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health).

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — The opposition opposes the Education (State Schools) Bill not only for what it is but because the government is hiding behind the guise of introducing regulatory powers. In reality it is discriminating against disabled students. The legislation complements the government's vindictive legal strategy towards students at special schools who took the government to the Supreme Court.

The legislation will do nothing to improve one of the most vulnerable groups in our society — children with disabilities. The government is discriminating against them by reducing their rights and options and, in particular, narrowing their life opportunities. The legislation is disgraceful and the opposition is appalled that the government should use its numbers in this and the other place to pass such legislation. It will be interesting to note the government members who support and vote for the legislation. Previously, government members have shown compassion towards intellectually disabled children, but will they support this legislation? What compassion will they show in the future? What hypocrites! By supporting this legislation they will show that they are the lackeys of the Premier.

The only reason the bill has been introduced is that a number of students from the Berendale special school took the government to the Supreme Court over the introduction of the Futures for Young Adults program. The government lost the case because Mr Justice Beach was not sympathetic towards the government. What did the government do? It used its usual jackboot approach and introduced legislation to stop other children from continuing school beyond the age of 18 years. The children, their carers and parents wanted to take the government to the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, but the government did not want that to take place and put the school, the students and the parents to the cost of having to go to the Supreme Court which put them at serious financial risk.

The government lost the case. Mr Justice Beach found that the government's policies were discriminatory. The government then introduced legislation to prevent anybody else from going to the Supreme Court. The government has done that before. It is a case of deja vu. It was also found that the government discriminated against the Northland Secondary School, another vulnerable group in our community. The government's treatment in attempting to close the school was harsh because it denied those students an education. That school closure was challenged on the grounds of unfairness and discrimination, as is the position in this case. The Supreme Court appropriately found in favour of the complainants and said that the vulnerable students should not be subjected to such treatment.

The government is using its numbers in Parliament to plug up the holes by introducing legislation because it did not get its own way and discovered that people were prepared to take it to court over its proposals to introduce the Futures for Young Adults program. The bill is an indication that the government does not care about and is not performing its proper role of protecting the community. It is not ensuring, as it should, that any bill it introduces is for the betterment of the community. Legislation is supposed to benefit and enrich the community, not isolate people and discriminate against them.

The Futures for Young Adults program affects 80-odd schools in Victoria, mainly in the metropolitan area. It was abundantly clear when the program was announced that it was discriminatory. Mr Justice Beach said that the students affected by it would be effectively expelled from school when they reached 18.

More than anyone else the parents are committed to their children's ongoing development — their transition from secondary school to a further education program, being able to live in the community, learning to handle money, use public

transport and acquire other necessary life skills. It takes time for special kids to learn and to adjust to changes. The proposed legislation will allow the government to implement a policy by which it will throw those children out of school when they reach 18.

The inefficiencies in the department have meant that the deadline for the introduction of the program that will result in the expulsion of students has been delayed until this year. Only short notice was given to parents and teachers to allow them to help the children adjust to the transition. I repeat that Mr Justice Beach said in his decision that the government's policy was discriminatory.

The opposition has received correspondence from parents expressing concern about the discrimination against their children. Mr Ian and Ms Kate Woodward wrote to the Treasurer in December of last year. I will read from the letter, which clearly sets out the concerns of parents of children at the Berendale special school in Moorabbin:

> We enrolled our daughter at Berendale two years ago, when she was 16, specifically because we believed she needed the security and continuity of a four-year program. We still believe that, but we have been told (although not in writing) that all 18-year-olds are to be removed from special schools by 30 June under the 'Futures for Young Adults' program and the decision to transfer responsibility for students with disabilities who are aged 18 or over from the Department of Education to the Department of Human Services.

Mr Woodward goes on to outline his position and his relationship with Berendale:

> We are not objecting to the program itself; from what we have been able to learn of it so far, it appears to be a welcome improvement on the range of options available to the disabled once they have finished school. However, we do have very strong objections to some aspects of the way the policy has been formulated and is to be implemented.
>
> First, it is arrogant and ill-informed to believe that all young people are ready to move on from school as soon as they turn 18. All kids mature at different rates and what the architects of this policy fail (or refuse) to realise is that most children with disabilities have a very disrupted school life, frequently changing schools a number of times and often missing long periods of schooling through hospitalisation or some other form of treatment. By the time they reach 18, many of them have had only three or four years of effective schooling. This is something that is far too important to be determined by such a meaningless and arbitrary criterion.
>
> Second, it is grossly unfair to be given so little notice. A letter from the Minister for Youth and Community Services announcing the program — the first that some parents had heard of the change — was dated 11 November (barely a month before the end of the school year) and our only opportunity to obtain some details was a meeting with a representative from the Department of Human Services at Berendale last night (on the eve of the very last day of term)! Anyone who has ever had anything but the most perfunctory contact would be well aware that many people with intellectual disabilities react poorly to uncertainty and change; they need time to come to terms with new situations and to feel confident and secure. Students, parents and the schools need to have the option of at least a full year to plan, prepare and adjust to such a major change as this.
>
> Finally, and most importantly, it is blatantly discriminatory that students with disabilities should be arbitrarily removed from special schools at the end of the year in which they turn 18; this is not a restriction that is imposed on others in the education system. And the injustice is even greater for those who are unfortunate enough to have their birthday towards the end of the year, as they are to be kicked out almost immediately they turn 18, while someone whose birthday happens to be in January can remain until they are almost 19.

Those three or four points clearly set out what is wrong with the government's proposal. Those concerns were substantiated by Mr Justice Beach in his decision. He found that the government's policy was discriminatory and sought to establish a two-class system of education. Some students will have to leave special schools when they reach the age of 18 years, but that will not be the case in mainstream education.

As Mr Woodward explains, his daughter and other people with intellectual disabilities take time to adjust to such changes and the changes should not be imposed on them. I have an eight-year-old nephew who is autistic. I know what my brother and sister-in-law have to do to help him get through his daily routine. He attends two different schools over five days of the week and they have to ensure he knows exactly what to do on Monday, Tuesday and every other day of the week. It takes a long time to do all that.

His timetable is going to change in the new school year and they will have to work through that over the next couple of months to prepare him for those changes. I understand and appreciate what the Woodward family says and what Mr Justice Beach said in his decision — that it takes time to adjust to those sorts of changes and the policy discriminates against the students involved.

The Supreme Court found that the government's proposal was discriminatory in allowing one group of VCE students to stay at school beyond the age of 18 yet denying the same right to another group of students if they have not already started VCE. It is a two-class system — what is good for one group of people is not necessarily good for another — and it is discriminatory. That is what the government's policy and the legislation are all about.

The government's policy discriminates against intellectually disabled children because they fall into a particular category. An 18-year-old who is in year 10 will not get the opportunity to be involved in the VCE. The crux of Mr Justice Beach's decision is that expelling students when they attain the age of 18 is detrimental to them and discriminates against them, especially as the policy is directed at intellectually disabled students. The policy obviously does not apply to mainstream situations, so there are two groups of students.

The opposition has received a letter from Pamela Miller and Charles Rodger, who have a child at the Montague Continuing Education Centre in South Melbourne, raising their concerns. The letter describes the nature of the school, and states:

> The school accepts students from 16 years of age but some students do not start there until 17, 18 or even older — either because they haven't known of the school or they simply haven't been ready.

The letter goes on:

> Montague is an excellent school for those who need independent living skills, social and personal relationship tuition. It also offers VCE subjects from units 1 and 2, work experience and a transition program to Western TAFE. The programs offered at the school are well designed and particularly suited to the students. The teachers are innovative and dedicated and are constantly improving methods of assisting those with learning difficulties.
>
> We have seen our daughter achieve wonderful success at Montague, and many of her classmates, too. Nonetheless, we don't believe she is yet ready to proceed full time to a TAFE college.
>
> There are well over 20 students at Montague who are over 18 and have planned, during 1996, that another year at the school is necessary to consolidate skills, broaden life experiences, instil more confidence, increase VCE units and encourage a study and work ethic mentality.
>
> Eighteen is such an arbitrary age, especially for those with an intellectual disability. Although these people are classed as young adults, they still need parents and carers to help them manage their lives and guide them in many everyday decisions, including schooling.

The letter continues:

> The introduction of the 18-plus program came very suddenly. Potential alternative providers haven't had time to plan and establish suitable programs. Where is there any other organisation that can provide the sort of program offered by Montague? Also we, as parents, have not had the opportunity to identify or evaluate other possible programs.
>
> As our daughter is a slow learner, with a short-term memory problem, she needs a longer time in which to learn; she repeated some years at school, and it worked well for her. Our daughter needs this extra year at Montague.
>
> We do not want our daughter to stay on at school indefinitely. We wish to see her grow, achieve and move on to the next level as she is ready. From our discussions with parents of other Montague students, we believe that they hold similar views.

That letter clearly sets out the concerns of the parents in this case and what their child needs. Their 18-year-old daughter has repeated years at school but has eventually passed and been able to learn. They acknowledge that she will take longer to learn things.

By introducing the legislation the government will prevent the students of whom I have spoken continuing in school. Normally one would expect those children to be allowed to remain at school until the age of 21 to allow them to grow into young adults and complete their VCE, especially students in special schools, yet the department says they are out. They will be expelled, gone — and that's it. When they turn 18, out they will go.

Victoria has a bad government. The government should not be using its majority in both houses to ram the bill through. It is an outrageous abuse of its power. It is an outrage for the government to treat Victorians in this way, especially these special intellectually disabled children. As the parents who have a daughter at the Montague centre said in their letter, parents do not put their kids through school just for the sake of it. Parents want their children to learn and move on — to be able to move forward and live normal lives.

The opposition is proposing a reasoned amendment because the government has introduced the legislation before the results are known of an appeal to the Supreme Court from a decision that found the government's policy to be discriminatory and without the regulations the legislation is based upon having been put before the house. Therefore, I move:

> That all the words after 'That' be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the outcome of proceedings known as *Stuart Bacon and Ors v. State of Victoria (Department of Education)* (No. 6691 of 1997) in the Supreme Court of Victoria and the draft regulations proposed under the legislation are tabled in this house'.

The opposition has moved the reasoned amendment for the reasons set out in it. The government did not like the outcome of the court case so it has introduced legislation to get around it. It is inappropriate for the government to proceed with the bill before the appeal process has been completed. The Supreme Court found the government guilty of discrimination, yet the government has ignored the court and introduced the legislation. Mr Justice Beach's decision could be overturned or upheld. The government should not treat the courts in the way it treats Victorians generally and these students in particular — with contempt. The government is treating the Supreme Court with contempt. It did not like the court's decision and has introduced legislation to get around it. A couple of other students have started proceedings that have not yet gone as far as the Supreme Court. It is a question of the stage those proceedings are at, as well.

Much of the second-reading speech refers to the regulations. We are not sure whether they will increase discrimination or reduce it because they have not been tabled. Every government member ought to be ashamed about supporting the legislation.

The bill affects intellectually disabled children, who are some of the most vulnerable people in our society. They are treated as second-class citizens because they take a little longer to learn and a little longer to adjust to things. It is now the end of the school year and year 12 VCE students are finishing school. In the early part of next year they will commence university, TAFE or wherever.

Universities and TAFE colleges do not necessarily have the support systems that are found in mainstream schools and even special schools, so they will find leaving the mainstream intimidating. However, they will manage a lot better than those special children who take a little longer to fit into the integration process. They will be forced out of their schools before they have had a chance to take part in transitional learning programs. Because of that they will not be appropriately prepared to enter tertiary or further education or some form of employment and manage money and transport and the every day things we take for granted.

As was said in the letters I referred to, those students receive their training from dedicated teachers and principals. Members of the opposition received a number of telephone calls from principals of special schools who were not too impressed with the views expressed by the honourable member for Ripon in another place when the bill was debated in that chamber. They were displeased with him because he said principals were more interested in their global budgets than in their students. Judging from the telephone calls we received from principals, I am sure the honourable member for Ripon will receive one or two calls. Fancy saying the principals of those schools are more interested in their global budgets than in the students they care for. They are a dedicated bunch of teachers. To be able to teach in special school they, too, have to be special. His comments were absolutely outrageous!

At the time the opposition raised concerns about the program and the subsequent transfer of funds from the Department of Education to the Department of Human Services. We strongly opposed the program and suggested that the government immediately withdraw it. The Minister for Education said that if as a result of the decision by Mr Justice Beach in the Supreme Court the government had to go back down the same track, it would cost $34 million. He was a bit worried about that money having to come out of the education budget.

The interesting thing is when you examine the transfer from the Department of Education to the

Department of Human Services you find the sum was not $34 million but only $17 million — so in the process of transferring it, the government cut the funding by 50 per cent. When the Supreme Court decision was handed down the minister said it could cost the government $34 million, yet only $17 million was transferred from the Department of Education to the Department of Human Services. The government has done the usual thing and cut funds.

The government has imposed on those students a program that has not been properly developed. Because of that the government could not assist schools to implement it. Rather, it has been a case of the government saying, 'Wham, bam, when you hit 18, out the door you go!'. A meeting of special school principals unanimously agreed to recommend to the government that it ought to extend the transitional program to cover the years from 18 to 21 to ensure consistency. If the government had accepted that recommendation, it would not be in the situation it is now in of implementing a policy that discriminates against one group of students.

Legislation was passed only recently to allow VCE students to stay on in mainstream schools until they are 21. The special school principals spoke to the department to try to get it to take a reasonable, fair and non-discriminatory approach, but it would not listen. That is why the case ended up in the Supreme Court, where Mr Justice Beach found the government guilty of discrimination.

Without any idea of what ought to be put in place, the government introduced the program with its usual sledgehammer approach. It did not care what the courts said or whether a student was 18 years of age and had not started his or her VCE. Its approach was, 'Sorry, once you reach 18, you will be expelled. Out the door you go'.

The opposition strongly opposes the bill. Debate should not proceed until the regulations have been tabled. The case before the Court of Appeal is not finalised. Every government member ought to oppose the bill for the same reasons given by Mr Justice Beach: it is discriminatory and it prevents young intellectually disabled children from completing their schooling. The bill depends on regulations that are not even in place and it tries to get around the consequences of an appeal against a Supreme Court decision that has not even been heard. I urge all honourable members to support the reasoned amendment and oppose the bill.

Sitting suspended 12.59 p.m. until to 2.02 p.m.

Hon. ANDREW BRIDESON (Waverley) — I support the bill and oppose the reasoned amendment. I shall comment briefly on the false assertions made by Miss Gould, take the house through clauses 1, 3 and 4 of the bill and place the department's age-based policies on the record.

Miss Gould missed the mark on quite a few statements she made. One of those statements which was absolute nonsense and could not be further from the truth was that the government does not care about students with impairments and disabilities. She is quite wrong — it does.

As a result of policies established by a committee in 1989 when a former Premier, Joan Kirner, was Minister for Education, the current government implemented two recommendations on which it has based its policies. Those recommendations emanated from a report entitled *Report of the working party on students with intellectual disability aged over 18 in Ministry of Education Office of Schools Administration Special Schools (report).*

The two recommendations are outlined in the second-reading speech, and I will put them on the record again. Recommendation 1 was as follows:

> The Office of Schools Administration provide programs for students in special schools for students with intellectual disabilities up to and including the year in which they turn 18 years. This is in line with existing Ministry of Education policy that school programs should be provided for students with an intellectual disability from approximately five years to approximately 18 years of age.

Recommendation 2 is:

> The Division of Further Education take responsibility for the development of literacy, numeracy, special interest and leisure skills programs and take over those elements of school programs for these adult students.

If my memory serves me correctly, Evan Walker was the minister responsible for post-secondary education at the time and Peter Spyker was the Minister for Community Services. They were the people who encouraged the government to produce that report and who accepted the recommendations, and we were the people, in government, who implemented them. Therefore, the opposition is arguing against policies it played a significant part in formulating.

Miss Gould also said that the government had shown callous disregard — I do not know whether they were her exact words — by having thrown out, expelled and arbitrarily removed students over the age of 18 with impairments from their special school settings. Nothing could be further from the truth. Only yesterday I spoke with a special school principal in my electorate and went through this specific issue with him. He assured me that over a period all students were placed in adult institutions that could accommodate them and the programs were so flexible that they could be built around the students. He told me that in no way were students expelled or forced out as asserted by Miss Gould.

Miss Gould also produced a couple of letters outlining difficulties that some parents foresaw in the changes to the Futures for Young Adults program. Yes, we would agree that many teachers, parents and principals were apprehensive about the changes, as most of us are about any form of change, but we need to look further down the track before we make judgments about those changes.

I am advised that some 1270 students out of approximately 1280 made the transition from one educational institution to another, and they have done so with remarkable results. The only people who seem to have been unhappy with the program were the students or parents of the students from the Berendale special school who took the court action. It appears from my reading of speeches in the other place that government members have interviewed parents, visited schools and seen the success of this program, which puts the lie to the statements made by Miss Gould.

Clause 1 sets out the main purpose of the bill, which is to amend the Education Act 1958. Clause 3 inserts new section 25C and its purpose is twofold. It provides, firstly, that a school principal may refuse to enrol a person or allow that person to attend a state school if the person is not within the age requirements of the regulations to be made under this new section. Secondly, it makes regulations concerning the age requirements for persons to enrol at or attend state schools.

The bill is designed that way because under the Department of Education age-based policies principals now have discretion to enrol students who do not fall within the age policy. However, I make three additional points. Firstly, such students are not counted for enrolment purposes for funding by the department; secondly, the students do not receive any funding from the department; and thirdly, the principal is unable to use the school's global budget for the provision of any services for the student, and the principal is aware of that.

Proposed section 25C authorises regulations that prohibit the enrolment of persons at state schools. They state that persons are not entitled to be enrolled, thereby leaving the principal with the discretion. Proposed section 25C(1) provides that the principal may refuse to enrol such a person.

Clause 4 inserts proposed section 85, which will ensure that the provision does not affect the rights and obligations of the parties in the proceeding known as *Stuart Bacon and ors v. State of Victoria (Department of Education)*. I place on record a summary of those proceedings because it is important for Parliament to understand why the bill is not being rammed through Parliament, as Miss Gould said, but will pass in the normal way so that the education of students with impairments or disabilities can proceed in an orderly fashion as a result of the court case.

In 1992, Berendale special school, a state school established under the Education Act, introduced the 18-plus transition program. The program is designed to assist mildly intellectually impaired adults transfer to the adult community by teaching independence in travelling, banking, purchasing food, communication skills and extended work placements. The program provides those young adults with what we know as everyday living skills. The 18-plus program at Berendale ran for five years and six months, ending on 30 June this year.

Under the age-based policy of the Department of Education announced in November 1996, three students at Berendale were required to leave the school and had the option of enrolling in the Futures for Young Adults program. Nine students from Berendale special school commenced proceedings in the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal claiming direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of age. The matter was referred to the Supreme Court as a special complaint under section 126 of the Equal Opportunity Act. Mr Justice Beach handed down his decision on 7 November 1997 and held that the Department of Education's age-based policy announced in November 1996 constituted direct and indirect discrimination against the complainants. The court made orders requiring the department to permit the complainants to return to Berendale; to reinstate the Berendale transition 18-plus program; and to include the complainant's in Berendale's

school global funding. Orders were also made for legal costs.

The Department of Education appealed to the Full Court of the Supreme Court and has been successful in obtaining an order for an expedited hearing. It is anticipated the hearing will be held early next year. It is important to note the proposed legislation does not overturn the Supreme Court's decision in respect of the complainants at Berendale. The Supreme Court's decision operates in respect of those complainants and, subject to the outcome of the appeal to the full court, the department will need to comply with the Supreme Court's decision in respect of those complainants. At all times the government is abiding by the Supreme Court's decision.

I mentioned before that Miss Gould made some false assertions. One was that the government was trying to save money by forcing students out of special school settings into other school settings. The government spends more than $17 million a year on recurrent funding for those students. It spent approximately $10 million on start-up costs for the Futures for Young Adults program now managed by the Department of Human Services. The program was with the education department and the money is still allocated to the students in the transfer from one department to the other. It is important to recognise that Victoria spends more per head than any other state on students with disabilities and impairments — a fact that Miss Gould did not mention. It is important to place on the record the Department of Education's age-based policies. The primary school policy states:

> ... a child is not entitled to enrol at a state school unless the child turns 5 by 30 April and the enrolment relates to a course of primary education (or other course approved by the minister).
>
> ... a person is not entitled to continue at the primary school after 31 December of the year in which they turn 13 years of age (unless approved by the minister).

Honourable members should know that the special schools policy is an Australia-wide policy, so it is not just unique to Victoria. It states:

> ... a person over 18 years on 1 January is not entitled to be enrolled or attend a special school, but if enrolled prior to turning 18 may stay until 31 December of the year in which they turn 18.

In other words, the students may remain at the school during the year in which they turn 18 years, so they are not forced out. The policy for state schools offering secondary education in metropolitan areas states:

> ... a person over 18 years on 1 January is not entitled to be enrolled unless enrolled in the VCE and under 21 as at the same 1 January.

The policy for non-metropolitan areas states:

> ... a person of or over 18 years as at 1 January is not entitled to be enrolled unless enrolled in the VCE. The person is not entitled to remain enrolled after 31 December of the year in which they turn 21 unless there is no TAFE or alternative provider within a reasonable geographic distance from the school.

The policy for English language schools states:

> ... a person is to be under 18 years of age when commencing a course at such a school. These courses last 6 or 12 months, and a person may stay after reaching 18 for the sole purpose of completing a course commenced prior to turning 18.

Under this policy the minister may grant exemptions from the age requirements on an individual basis according to the merits of the case.

The funding policy of the Department of Education states:

> Students that fall outside the age regulation are not to be counted by the principal for enrolment purposes for funding from the Department of Education, and the principal is unable to use the school's global budget for the provision of services to such students.

The department has an open and transparent policy. Principals take all such matters into consideration when enrolling students. The departmental policy on expulsions from state schools states:

> A person of or over 15 years of age who is expelled from a state school is not entitled to be enrolled at a state school. This reflects the provisions of the current ministerial order on expulsions, which states that students under 15 must be given the opportunity to continue their education, whereas students over 15 are not given that opportunity.

Given the hours the house has sat in the last day or so, I will not comment further on the bill except to say I have pleasure in supporting it. I certainly oppose the reasoned amendment.

Hon. C. J. HOGG (Melbourne North) — To some degree I was associated with this policy in its genesis. Initially I had some doubt about removing the 18-plus group from the special education settings, but I was quickly convinced that it was, in all practical ways, the best thing for those young people and for their families.

I agree with Mr Brideson when he says Victoria spends more than other states in this area; it always has done. It spends significantly more. It is important that education ministers now and in the future maintain their effort and do not allow this area to be subjected to severe budget cuts. Also, it is important to be vigilant, to keep an eye on federal ministers who are frequently keen to distribute Victoria's share of the funding for special education to other states on the grounds that Victoria already has a good system compared with some other states.

However, I make only a few points about the bill because Miss Gould has capably set out the objections of the opposition to what the bill seeks to do. I refer to the actual education content, I suppose one could call it, of the programs that are being developed and need to be developed for young adults. I have mentioned that Victoria spends more than other states in this field, but this is a very expensive area of education. There is no way in which it can be ever done on the cheap. It is both source and staff intensive. It involves a great deal of one-to-one and small group work. Clearly, adequate resources need to be put aside.

The programs also need to be researched, worked up and developed with great care. Indeed, many of the programs for those young adults need to be tailor made because of the requirement that they move from their special settings into other programs that prepare them for mainstream living in the world of work.

There are certainly many opportunities for young people in special schools, and they can be in a variety of things. Only 10 hours ago I read of one new program that was reported in the *Age*. I imagine a number of programs and projects for next year are being announced. As Miss Gould said in a variety of ways during her contribution, not all people are ready at 18 years to move into the same sorts of programs. There need to be many kinds of programs, case management and recognition of the differences. Time needs to be allowed if young people for some reason or other cannot quite make the move when the special school and their families believe that should happen. More than in most other areas of education, it is important to pay attention to individuals when we talk about young people with intellectual disabilities and special needs. As the Futures for Young Adults program is being developed, it is a perfect time for innovative and far-reaching programs, but also for programs that are developed through taking the necessary time and not rushing into experiences that are not good for the students.

Mr Brideson made the point that this program has been, generally speaking, successful. Today we have heard about some of the less happy experiences cited by Miss Gould, and I have heard about other unhappy experiences for the young people concerned. That is to be expected. We must remember that not every experience will be equally successful; for each student there must be a program that will work, one which is properly mapped out and which takes into account the very special needs of that young person.

Miss Gould has spelt out the opposition's objections to the bill. I support the reasoned amendment, but at this stage in the 18-plus program, as we used to call it, the government has an opportunity to introduce many interesting and innovative programs from which other states may learn.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I oppose the bill, which is one of the worst pieces of legislation ever seen in this place.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I have hardly heard two words from Mr Nardella.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — Government members will be condemned for supporting this legislation because the people to be affected by it and who the government has discriminated against, according to Mr Justice Beach of the Supreme Court, are the disabled young.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Read the bill.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — I hear the inane interjection by Mr Forwood. The bill has been introduced into this place for only one reason — to discriminate against young disabled people.

Honourable members interjecting.

Debate interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Workcover: pre-existing injuries

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I refer the minister responsible for Workcover to the government's proposed Workcover changes. Is it not the case that injured workers who apply for future employment will be obligated to tell their potential employers of their pre-existing work-related injuries and that if they fail to do so they will not be entitled to compensation if they suffer injuries that aggravate their conditions? What guarantees will the minister give that injured workers will not be discriminated against by employers on the basis of any information they provide about previous injuries?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — By way of preamble I point out that the prospective employee is not obligated to provide any information to the prospective employer.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Is not?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — The prospective employee is not obligated to provide that information. However, he or she should be aware of the ramifications of that in relation to the job for which he or she is applying. Should the prospective employee choose not to provide that medical evidence, he or she will not be able to rely on that medical condition in an action which might cause an aggravation of the condition.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — How can you guarantee they will not be discriminated against?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I hear what the honourable member says, but I want to put it in a slightly different context. The honourable member is implying that the employer will automatically take a position that is to the disadvantage of the employee.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — They won't hire them, basically.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I think that is a bit unfair, because in many instances the opposite case may well apply, where the employer takes into account a condition that already exists.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — So they should put it on their CVs? They are positive features?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I know you want to be difficult on this, Mr Theophanous, but the choice — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — No, I am just asking a simple question.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — No you are not; you want to be difficult. I am simply saying to you that if a prospective employee is not prepared to declare an existing medical condition, then — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Why should they?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Mr President, I simply make the point, and I will ignore the honourable member because he is being deliberately obtuse — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Nobody asked you about a pre-existing condition before you came into Parliament.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It would be unfair on both parties if an existing precondition were not declared but then subsequently used as the basis for a further claim. I would have thought that, even given the bias of the honourable member who has asked the question, there would be some circumstances in which it would be to the advantage of the prospective employee to declare a pre-existing medical condition, in which case the employer could take that into consideration.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Give us one example.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — For instance, if a prospective employee has a congenital back condition, it would be stupid of him to apply for a position that involved heavy lifting. If the prospective employer knew about that, he would not consider the person for that particular position but may well find him an alternative position. We are simply saying that if as a prospective employee you choose not to declare a pre-existing condition you will no longer be able to rely on that as a basis for a further claim.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The next question will be asked by Mr Boardman, who is celebrating his 27th birthday.

Honourable members interjecting.

Youth: employment initiatives

Hon. B. C. BOARDMAN (Chelsea) — I could not think of any other place I would rather be, and thanks to the Leader of the Opposition, I get to celebrate my birthday twice! Will the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology advise the house of steps taken to expand the youth employment initiative?

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) — I thank the honourable member for his question and wish him the best for his birthday.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — How old is he?

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — He is 27, which makes him one of the many people on our side of politics to be endorsed under the age of 30. The ALP has yet to enter the history books as endorsing anyone under the age of 30.

Hon. M. M. Gould — What about 26 for a federal seat?

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — In here.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — All we get are the old lads.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Was that 'lags' you said?

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — Lags — yes, I am sorry! I am pleased to advise the house that the government has appointed under contract 15 group training companies to deliver the expanded Youth Employment Initiative across Victoria during the next year. It has appointed six metropolitan and nine regional companies, which will offer traineeships in 31 different categories to young people aged between 16 and 20.

Honourable members will be aware of the early success of the youth employment initiative around the state. This year it has provided almost 300 office administration and retail trainee places with more than 40 separate employers across Melbourne. I am confident that we will get even greater benefits from the expanded program.

The Victorian government established the initiative in partnership with business, realising that it would provide real employment opportunities, training, on-the-job experience and appropriate pay, particularly for long-term unemployed young people.

I had the pleasure of talking to a number of successful graduates from the first traineeship intake. Their experiences are highly motivational for anyone who has been unemployed — perhaps youngsters who have never had a job. They will give those deserving people the experience and confidence they deserve, and the proper mind-set they need, rather than feeling like they have been abandoned.

The places available under the initiative provide pay packets and have the real potential to generate long-term employment rather than simply finishing at a dead end after a few weeks. We have relied on a number of companies to help us with the initiative. I particularly give credit to: Coles-Myer, Just Jeans, Fosters Brewing, Ansett Australia, the National Australia Bank, the Commonwealth Bank and the ANZ, as well as the providers.

All those companies are important employers. Through training programs they have given real opportunities to young people. The group training companies that we have appointed for the expanded program have been selected for their ability to train young people, their expertise in specific areas, and their capacity to create a combination which provides a blanket coverage of training options for the whole state.

I look forward to the initiative being as successful as the earlier program has been.

Hospitals: waiting lists

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — I refer the Minister for Health to the fact that on 1 September this year a total of 40 535 Victorians were either booked for or waiting for hospital beds, which represents an increase of 7041 since October 1992. Will the minister now admit that he has failed to reduce waiting lists in our hospitals?

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — I thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for her question. I had planned a dorothy dixer, but her question allows me to categorically refute the lies spread by the shadow Minister for Health about the projected waiting list. The only way the Labor Party has been able to get its figures to add up has been to add those on the booked waiting list to those on the

waiting list. The government measures waiting lists on exactly — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — Are you interested in the answer or not? The government measures waiting lists on exactly the same basis as the previous Labor government measured them.

The previous Labor government never added those figures into the book list, which means people have bookings for access to the public hospital system for surgery. If we therefore compare apples with apples, which most reasonable people would assume is what should be done when making a comparison, one would think that category 1 patients — those with a life-threatening condition waiting longer than 30 days for treatment — would have access to the public hospital system. What did the government inherit? There were more than 900 people in category 1 waiting longer than 30 days. What has been the performance over the past two years? Not one category 1 patient, according to audited figures, had to wait more than 30 days for treatment.

An honourable member interjected.

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — The government has not changed, and I defy you to articulate where it has changed. There is absolutely no change in the measurement of wait-listed public hospitals today from the situation in 1992 when the government came to power. The government has ensured that people with life-threatening conditions will have access to the public hospital system at the time it is needed, which is in stark contrast to what the Labor government did.

The waiting list has stabilised. It is true that about 30 000 people are on the waiting list — that is the situation the government inherited — but it has ensured that those who need urgent access to the health system get it. The only way the Labor Party can get this story up is to distort the figures, to add in figures that should never be added in because, to compare apples with apples, the government still performs better than the Labor government performed. The reason the government can bring in this plan is that the public hospital system is operating efficiently and hospitals are provided with incentives to ensure that those who need to gain access to them urgently do so.

If the Labor Party wants to run a campaign about waiting lists and the performance of public hospitals, at least it should develop some policies as the first test. The policy the Labor Party delivered before the last election was to maintain the case-mix system — that was its health policy!

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — He has not answered the question at all. This government has more people on the waiting list than we had.

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — Was it your policy to maintain case mix? Of course it was. That was your only policy. This government has not only maintained case mix but has continued to refine it to make sure that people in category 1 meet the requirements in terms of accessing hospitals. It is as a result of that policy that the government has eliminated the waiting list in category 1 patients that existed when it came to power. What is the situation today, and what has it been all of this year? Nought — not one patient waiting more than 30 days for category 1 case-mix system treatment. We can always do better. We always need to find ways to ensure that more people gain hospital access, but the record of this government far exceeds anything that the Labor Party ever put up.

Liquor Licensing Commission: review

Hon. ANDREW BRIDESON (Waverley) — Will the Minister for Small Business advise the house of her plans to improve efficiencies in the Liquor Licensing Commission?

Hon. LOUISE ASHER (Minister for Small Business) — I thank Mr Brideson for asking this question on a very important area, particularly for small business. The Liquor Licensing Commission has responsibility for more than 13 000 licence applications every year and holds one of the most important positions of any statutory authority in the business community. Victoria's liquor industry has been growing steadily since the coalition came to office in 1992, which reflects the small business environment after 10 years of Labor government. However, as the industry grows so do the demands on the LLC to react in an efficient manner. Accordingly, as minister responsible for liquor licensing I arranged for a review of LLC procedures to identify ways to make it easier, cheaper and quicker to move through the licence application process.

The objective of the government's reforms is to ensure better service for small business from the Liquor Licensing Commission. We consulted with members of the industry, the police, the legal

profession, LLC staff and a whole range of the stakeholders to ensure that the outcome of this administrative review would have maximum impact. I am very pleased to inform the house that I have released this report and the government will adopt the bulk of its recommendations for the LLC to be more efficient, user-friendly and, quite frankly, more pro-small business. The report identifies almost 70 improvements that can be made to the existing LLC structure to make it a more user-friendly organisation to deal with. These administrative changes are sweeping and will have significant benefits, particularly for small businesses in the hospitality area. The key features of the reforms will — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. LOUISE ASHER — It may come as a surprise to members of this house but at the moment the Liquor Licensing Commission opens only from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. The LLC will now be open during standard business hours. There will be better use of information technology. Again, members of this chamber who represent regional electorates may be interested to know that the whole information technology system was not even hooked up to the Wangaratta office. Obviously the country offices will come on line and more information will be available more speedily.

Simplified application forms based on the Tax Pack system will offer guidance. One of the major complaints against the LLC has been that it has not given guidance but has simply presented a heap of forms to fill out; that will also be reformed. There will be closer scrutiny of customer expectations and satisfaction, a review of the efficiency of the commission's decisions, a more streamlined administrative structure and immediate notification of decisions.

One particularly bad example of small business concerned a case mentioned in the report where the Liquor Licensing Commission made a decision on Friday and the small business was not notified of the success of its liquor licence application until the following Wednesday. The proprietors had been ready to start on the Monday but did not receive notification of the granting of the licence until Wednesday. Clearly, government is not happy about that and will put a more streamlined, faster notification system in place. A new formal complaints system will also be set up so small businesses can relay their concerns and be in a state of ongoing dialogue with the LLC for constant improvement. The underlying theme of the review is to ensure that the commission's responsibility to the community is balanced with its ability to best service the industry it oversees.

I am also happy to advise the house that some months ago the government advertised that under national competition policy it would conduct an administrative review in tandem with the policy review of the Liquor Control Act and that legislative amendments may be made to the Liquor Control Act in the process. The report contains a series of administrative recommendations that will vastly improve the operation of the Liquor Licensing Commission.

I conclude by taking the opportunity to thank a range of people who put the report together. I thank the members of the former Public Bodies Review Committee and, indeed, Mr Hartigan and Mr Brideson , who provided the impetus for these reforms. I thank the Liquor Licensing Commission, the commissioners and the CEO for taking on the task of self-analysis so willingly and identifying areas that needed improvement. I thank the steering committee that has overseen the very extensive reform project.

In particular I thank Margaret Kearney from the Australian Hotels Association who was on the steering committee as an industry representative of the Liquor Industry Consultative Council and also Mr Brideson for his many months of work overseeing this matter as a member of the steering committee. This is a very important reform for small business that Mr Brideson helped to steer through. The LLC recently moved to Nauru House and its vastly improved and efficient processes will ultimately benefit the hospitality industry and, most importantly, small business in the hospitality industry.

Crown Casino: licence fees

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I refer the Minister for Gaming to the government's continual favourable treatment of the owners of Crown Casino which in the past included such things as the extraordinary $174 million that was forgone for the extra gaming tables that was identified by the Auditor-General. Will the minister categorically rule out yet another reduction in the tax levied on casino high-rollers before Christmas or during 1998?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Gaming) — I thank Mr Theophanous for his question but I am more interested in his preamble to the question. I cannot let it go without challenge. Mr Theophanous wants the house to believe that the price paid by Crown for the additional tables was somehow tax forgiven.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — That is right.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — That is not right. That is the whole point. I am perfectly relaxed about responding to the premise Mr Theophanous uses in respect of the price of the additional gaming tables. It is true that the Auditor-General was critical of the price and he made some comments about what could have been achieved.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Look what happened to him!

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I ask honourable members to look at the circumstances. I am on record as having addressed this issue in the past and I am quite relaxed about saying that in this case the Auditor-General got it wrong. It will come as no surprise to Mr Theophanous that that was what I told the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General assumed that the price per table which applied to the first 200 tables should be the price applied to the additional 150 tables. What the Auditor-General misunderstood — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Not a bad assumption!

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Which just underscores that you do not understand the circumstances, either, Mr Theophanous! Crown Casino applied for an additional 150 tables.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Are you going to reduce the tax on the high-rollers or not?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — That is exactly what you led by way of preamble to your question.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — I am asking you to rule out the circumstances I explained.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — You mentioned in your preamble $174 million. There is no logic in simply dividing the licence fee in respect of the first 200 tables and then applying that to the additional 150 tables.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Everybody apart from the Auditor-General and, apparently, Mr Theophanous — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It was understood that the additional 150 tables were there to accommodate — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — On a point of order, Mr President, my question provided an example of how the government gave favourable treatment to the owner of Crown Casino. It was a specific question asking the minister to categorically rule out a reduction in the tax levied on the casino high-rollers before Christmas or during 1998. That is the specific question the minister is seeking to avoid. I ask you to ask him to answer the question.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The Leader of the Opposition asked a question based on a certain premise. The minister is currently questioning that premise. It is legitimate. It is a matter of where the answer ends up. We have not heard all the answer yet.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Mr Theophanous told the chamber that Crown Casino Ltd had received favourable treatment from the Kennett government. He used as an example the price determined in respect of the additional 150 gaming tables. I am simply demonstrating to the chamber that there was no favourable treatment in respect of the 150 tables and it is nonsense to simply divide the original licence fee for the 200 tables — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I was trying to make that point when you kept interrupting! I will make that point and I will continue to do so while Mr Theophanous puts the preamble that the price allocated to the first 200 tables is an appropriate base upon which to price the additional 150 tables. The additional 150 tables were only there to accommodate peak demand. No-one, apparently other than Mr Theophanous and the Auditor-General, believed they would be under the same demand as the original 200.

If Mr Theophanous is still not convinced he should take a little time and look at the licence fees for tables in other jurisdictions across the nation. He will

then find — surprise, surprise! — that no favourable treatment was given to Crown, in which case the rest of his question is absolute nonsense!

Workcover: Mr John Halfpenny

Hon. P. A. KATSAMBANIS (Monash) — I direct my question to the Minister for Finance, who is responsible for Workcover. Last week the member for Narracan in another place raised serious allegations about Mr John Halfpenny's use of Workcover benefits during 1995 and 1996. Will the minister investigate further allegations that Mr Halfpenny was in fact employed by the reputable company, Skilled Engineering, during some of the period he was alleged to have been receiving Workcover benefits? Will the minister ensure that those matters are pursued as part of the investigation he has already initiated into those allegations?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — Last week in the other place the honourable member for Narracan raised serious allegations about Mr Halfpenny. As I would expect all members of this chamber to understand, as soon as those issues were raised I referred them to the Victorian Workcover Authority with the request that the claims be investigated fully. I confirm the advice of the authority is that the investigation is under way and that it will take the usual course. I understand the authority has already written to the honourable member for Narracan requesting specific details of the allegation.

At the time I made the request of the authority I was not aware of the more recent allegations that have been outlined in the honourable member's question. I give a commitment to the house that those allegations will also be referred to the authority. I will ask the authority to include the specific reference brought to the chamber by the honourable member in the context of the investigation. I also give the commitment that upon the completion of that investigation the authority will, as normal, determine if and what action might be deemed appropriate.

Port of Melbourne: reform

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I refer the Minister for Roads and Ports to indications that the port of Melbourne will be the first port to be used by waterfront mercenaries next year despite the fact that the Premier has denied his involvement in the scheme. Has the minister had any involvement in volunteering the port of Melbourne as the first port to trial the mercenaries; and will he confirm whether the port of Melbourne will be used in this trial?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Minister for Roads and Ports) — I thank the honourable member for his keen interest in the ongoing economic position of Victoria. Importantly, we all understand the Labor Party's relationship with the union movement; it would be concerned if anyone intended to break up the cosy relationship that currently exists on the waterfront.

Hon. Pat Power interjected.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — Listen! Who else gets 27.5 per cent leave loading on their long service leave? Who else gets 27.5 per cent leave loading on their four weeks annual leave? Who else can accrue their rostered days off to get five weeks annual leave? Who else can be paid treble time for a one-hour meal break? Who else gets paid double time and a half for a double-header shift? Who else can work only 32 hours a week and take home $75 000-plus?

No other worker receives such benefits. It is an indictment of this country that we have not moved in respect of our labour market reform process on the waterfront. I will support any move that places Melbourne and Victoria in the position of having the best economic advantage they can receive. Victorian farmers and manufacturers rely heavily on the international market. It is important to ensure product is placed into the overseas market while maintaining a competitive edge. Australia is not doing that. New Zealand and other countries are beating us. Clearly, we need to make the change that ensures Victoria stays relevant.

Health: primary care

Hon. N. B. LUCAS (Eumemmerring) — Will the Minister for Health advise the house of progress in achieving greater integration of primary care in Victoria?

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — I have already advised the house that I am keen to achieve horizontal integration of primary care. Over the years the former government had given rhetorical support to primary care; it has developed and funded those services under myriad programs that have led to much distortion in the service system. Any honourable member who has had contact with the field will be only too well aware of

the many people who have had to redefine their needs to fit within the boundaries of a particular program.

As a result of this initiative the Department of Human Services has been developing a discussion paper on how that integration may be achieved. One difficulty is that one of the early drafts was made available to the Municipal Association of Victoria; it has now been circulated throughout Victoria and has taken on the status of the final draft of the proposal. That is not the case and more work is being done; more discussions are being undertaken to ensure we receive a practical discussion paper that is capable of being implemented. It is anticipated that work will continue and will be completed in about March next year. After all, the government is in a position to make available the draft discussion paper. Following that release we will have significant consultation and comment which will lead to the development of a final position.

I reassure groups that may be apprehensive about the strategy that it is geared to try to provide a framework that will allow much greater service substitution and more comprehensive focus on primary care. The government is interested in the input of various providers and interest groups because from discussions with them it appears there is general agreement about the objectives we are trying to achieve.

Two concerns have emerged: the time frame within which the new policy framework may be developed; and ensuring it is developed capably so that it can be practically implemented. I have asked the department to work on those concerns to ensure we achieve the second objective. I, therefore, have provided a longer time frame so we can develop the appropriate policy paper. I welcome the question. It enables me to provide the assurance I have been giving to individual groups and allows that assurance to be publicised more widely.

Box Hill Hospital

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I refer the Minister for Health to the proposal for a private hospital to be co-located next to the Box Hill Hospital as reported in the local press. The additional facility would provide more hospital facilities for the residents of Mitcham, Blackburn and Box Hill. When will the government approve the development; and, if it does not, why not?

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — This proposal has been developed over a long time. It has been suggested health services in the area would be enhanced by the location of a private hospital close to the Box Hill Hospital. I am not aware of the time frame. I have not been part of the discussion but the government does not oppose the concept. Since the coalition came to government five years ago the Box Hill Hospital has been significantly upgraded and expanded.

Many in the local community would express the view that a decade ago the Box Hill Hospital did not have a high reputation. That has changed over recent years and it is now a first-class hospital. It is used by Monash University for part of its teaching component and has increased its effort in medical research as well as expanding its range of services. Some months ago I opened a new oncology facility for public patients.

The government is committed to an ongoing expansion of public service delivery at the Box Hill Hospital. Psychiatric services and alcohol and drug treatment services have been expanded by that hospital. If those services can be further complemented by the development of a private hospital, if there is a role for the state in approving that development and providing it meets the planning and other requirements, it will do so.

I must stress that it will be an initiative by the private sector and it will carry the risk. It will be dependent on its capacity to attract private patients. It is not a new concept; it has been practised for decades, including under the previous Labor government.

Rural Victoria: road safety

Hon. B. W. BISHOP (North Western) — I congratulate the Minister for Roads and Ports on a number of initiatives he introduced this year that have benefited rural Victoria. Will the minister inform the house of further initiatives that will be introduced over the December–January period to improve road safety and transport efficiency in rural Victoria?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Minister for Roads and Ports) — I place on record my appreciation for Mr Bishop's input into the initiatives. I also thank rural coalition members of Parliament who have been involved in the process in recent months, and in particular, Mr Baxter, with regard to stock on roads.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I ask Mr Theophanous and the minister to desist.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — The state government has introduced regulations to improve the safety of moving stock on our country roads.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The Minister for Finance and Mr Theophanous are not helping the Minister for Roads and Ports, who is trying to deal with an entirely different matter.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — From 18 December this year farmers will be able to install signs to warn drivers of stock on the road ahead. It will require drivers to stop and give way to the stock or face fines of some $500. Previously there was no formal requirement that drivers had to give way to stock on the road. The regulations maximise safety and reduce inconvenience for those involved. Farmers must display the signs to give drivers plenty of warning so that they can slow down. Drivers will be expected to stop and allow the stock to move on.

The second initiative for rural Victoria and the farming community deals with changes made regarding the general permit that governs the movement of oversized agricultural machinery on public roads. Agricultural machinery exceeding normal dimension limits will now be able to travel on our road system during the Christmas–New Year period. A rule existed that prevented oversized agricultural machinery moving on our roads between 23 December and 3 January which, in some cases, is the height of the harvest season. Night-time travel has been a big issue, and the government has introduced speed restrictions and eased some of the requirements on machinery being moved at night on roads. The government has also ensured that road safety will not be affected by the changes because the equipment will be required to have warning signs, rotating yellow lights and flags.

The third and most significant issue is primary producer registration. From 1 January 1998 new registration charges for heavy primary producer vehicles will be introduced. The fees recognise the lower distances travelled on the road network by primary producer vehicles, the majority of which are two-axle trucks, prime movers and three-axle trucks operating as single units. They will pay 50 per cent of the full charge.

The government has also introduced a part-year or seasonal registration for primary producers to allow them to register their heavy vehicles for only that part of the year they are used. The government is also introducing a new primary producer number plate so that any vehicle that receives a concession cannot trade in the commercial area.

All the reforms have been introduced over a long period of negotiation. As I have already indicated to members in the house and to rural Victorians, I place on record the working relationship the coalition has with the Victorian Farmers Federation. By working with that organisation the government has come to the conclusions it has on these three major issues. It clearly demonstrates the state government's commitment to all forms of rural Victoria.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The PRESIDENT — Order! I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of delegates from the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The head of the delegation is Mr Tran Quoc Thuan, vice-chairman of that national assembly. We welcome them to Victoria and to our Parliament.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — By leave, I move:

> That so much of the standing orders as require answers to questions on notice to be delivered verbally in the house be suspended for the sitting of the Council this day and that the answers enumerated be incorporated in *Hansard*.

The question nos are as follows:

> 2479, 2521–22, 2527–28, 2534, 2539, 2545–46, 2590, 2606, 2632, 2634, 2642.

In addition, last week there were three answers tabled that I apparently omitted to read out. The question nos were 2500, 2548 and 2554.

EDUCATION (STATE SCHOOLS) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — The Education (State Schools) Bill is a disgraceful piece of legislation. It does one thing and one thing only — disadvantages young people in our society. It will institutionalise the government's discriminatory policy.

The bill has been drawn in its current form to discriminate against young disabled people. It is the only way the government can find to address the decision by Mr Justice Beach in which he said that the government was discriminating against the disabled young adults at the Berendale special school. It is a disgrace in this day and age to be putting in place legislation that discriminates against anyone in the school system, let alone some of the most vulnerable in society. Regardless of what Mr Brideson said in his contribution the bill is an appalling measure.

Mr Brideson was right when he said that the eight young adults at Berendale special school will not be affected by the legislation — they will take the government's proposed action on appeal to the Supreme Court. However, the other 1262 young people who have already been thrown out of special schools — forced to leave secure positions in the special school system — will be affected by the legislation. Worse still the measure will institutionalise forevermore discrimination against other young disabled people who go through the system. The bill is aimed at precisely those people.

People who will be allowed to study for the VCE up to the age of 21 will in the main be able bodied, although they may have had illnesses or be in special circumstances that cause them to require extra time to complete their VCE studies. However, young disabled people who attend special schools and who are not as bright as others or have been ill during their lifetimes and missed school will be thrown out of schools when they turn 18. Until the regulations referred to in the amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition are tabled and accepted the opposition cannot support the bill.

Mr Brideson said that the government would implement the Supreme Court's decision on all occasions. He then qualified his position and said that other people coming through the system would be affected by the proposed policy. The bill has been introduced by a vindictive government. It demonstrates the attitude of the government towards disadvantaged people.

The bill is part of a continuing and outrageous attack on disadvantaged people that started when the government fought the Aboriginal kids and their parents at the Northland Secondary College. The same thing is happening here. At Northland the teachers, the students and the students' parents fought the government's decision to close the school. They went to the Supreme Court and proved that the government's decision was discriminatory. It even got to the stage where the forces of the state — the police — charged the students and parents at the school armed with batons to further intimidate them. It was a disgraceful episode.

What did the government do after that? It continued down the same path by legislating to prevent the Equal Opportunity Commission being the vehicle for dealing with the dispute. Any appeal to the Court of Appeal will therefore be paid for by the parents. The government is forcing the parents of disadvantaged people to go to the Supreme Court, and such action may cost them their homes and livelihoods.

The overriding factor that is not comprehended by government members is the love of those parents for their young offspring who are facing a potentially terrible situation. Berendale special school was providing a transitional program that was meeting the needs of young people over 18. In his decision Mr Justice Beach pointed out that what the government was proposing was discriminatory.

Mr Justice Beach is a conservative and well-regarded judge. He is not a radical leftie. He has undertaken a number of duties for governments, including in the 1970s preparing the Beach report into police corruption in Victoria. His reputation has increased since then. One need look only at his decision to discover the government's attitude to young disabled people. He said that the Futures for Young Adults program is not a satisfactory substitute for the previous 18-plus transition program. At page 3, Mr Justice Beach's judgment states:

> In so far as subsection 2(a) is concerned it is said that the complainants have been denied the benefit of education and training in a government school system beyond the age of 18. In so far as subsection 2(b) is concerned it is said that by implementing its new policy the respondent has effectively expelled those

> complainants from Berendale who have attained the age of 18 years and will expel the remainder upon their attaining the age of 18. Finally, in so far as subsection 2(c) is concerned, it is said that by implementing its new policy the respondent has subjected the complainants to the detriment of no longer receiving education and training at Berendale beyond the age of 18.

That is how the government and honourable members on the other side of the house have discriminated and will continue to discriminate against disabled students from Berendale school and from across Victoria.

I urge honourable members to read the sections of Mr Justice Beach's judgment at pages 9, 12, 13, 14 and 15. I have a copy I can make available. It is an eye-opener. The government is working on the same basis it used in relation to Northland Secondary College. It intimidates the parents and the young people it should serve on two bases. One is the 1989 report. The report recommended that a transition program be developed over a five-year period, yet the government did not take that into account.

Late last year the government gave one months notice to parents and their children that they were to leave their special schools. It is not much good Mr Brideson basing his address on the 1989 report when the government has gone against one of its major recommendations.

The other people affected by the legislation and the government's decisions are the parents and the carers of the young people involved. They have been saying to the opposition, to Mr Justice Beach and to the wider community that as carers they have not had time to adjust. They have not had time to work through the issues of dislocation with their kids. They have not had time to effectively deal with the situation that has been forced on them.

Instances have occurred of the Department of Human Services throwing them out, according to a letter that was circulated at around the time the department got together a workshop on Thursday, 9 December last year. It is a disgraceful department with regard to informing parents and their children of what is going on. There was also the outrageous situation of the department's not undertaking a survey of parents and young people with regard to the transition, as was recommended in the 1989 report.

A letter dated 14 November 1997 from Lynne Meggs, a project officer with the disability services section of the Department of Human Services to the Combined Councils of Specialist Schools states:

> We have given serious consideration to the idea of a consumer satisfaction survey which would best represent the views of consumers. However, the tight time frame for the completion of this review is such that it is not feasible to undertake a survey. We do agree however, that in terms of the long-term evaluation of the program, and particularly for this group of students, a consumer survey is necessary as part of any longitudinal study.

The department was not prepared to conduct a survey when it was directly affected. It was not prepared to find out what the problems were at that time. The department was saying, 'We will check it out some time through a longitudinal study', yet when it came down to making sure the people were well looked after the government could only say, 'We are looking after them.'

The government does not know. It has no idea. It has done no studies. It does not care about the emotional wellbeing of the parents, carers and students. Parents I have talked with have been distraught. They were upset at the treatment that they and their children were given by the uncaring government.

What is the other reason the government has initiated this program? It is the disgraceful rationale of saving $17 million. The 18-plus program was costing the government $34 million and the cost reduced to $17 million on a recurrent basis when it was transferred to the Department of Human Services. The government has detrimentally affected the people I have referred to on the basis of saving a measly $17 million. It is an outrage and a disgrace that a government with an ongoing current account surplus of $1.9 billion is prepared to treat disabled and disadvantaged young people in such a cruel and heartless way.

The opposition strenuously opposes the bill. It is a junk piece of legislation. It is discriminatory and honourable members on the other side of the house should be ashamed of it. I can understand the feelings of honourable members who believe they are doing the right thing, but the legislation is rotten. I urge honourable members to support the reasoned amendment.

House divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 31

Asher, Ms	Hall, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs (*Teller*)
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr (*Teller*)	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs
Furletti, Mr	

Noes, 8

Eren, Mr (*Teller*)	Nardella, Mr
Gould, Miss	Nguyen, Mr (*Teller*)
Hogg, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Walpole, Mr

Pairs

Birrell, Mr	Power, Mr
Knowles, Mr	Pullen, Mr

Amendment negatived.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 31

Asher, Ms	Hall, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr (*Teller*)
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Boardman, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Brideson, Mr	Ross, Dr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Mr
Craige, Mr	Smith, Ms
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Strong, Mr
de Fegely, Mr	Varty, Mrs
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs
Furletti, Mr (*Teller*)	

Noes, 8

Eren, Mr	Nardella, Mr
Gould, Miss	Nguyen, Mr
Hogg, Mrs (*Teller*)	Theophanous, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Walpole, Mr (*Teller*)

Pairs

Birrell, Mr	Pullen, Mr
Wells, Dr	Power, Mr

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

EPWORTH HOSPITAL (AMENDMENT) BILL

The PRESIDENT — Order! I have had the opportunity of examining this bill, and it is my opinion that it is a private bill.

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — I move:

That this bill be dealt with as a public bill.

Motion agreed to.

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 December; motion of Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health).

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — The bill allows the Epworth Hospital to develop a new corporate structure to be known as the Epworth Foundation. The purpose of the foundation is, among other things, to allow for the conduct of a hospital or hospitals, and a subsidiary corporation will be created to manage the existing Epworth Hospital.

The Epworth Hospital was originally established in the 1920s by the Methodist Church. In 1980 it was incorporated under the Epworth Hospital Act to allow for funding. During the intervening period changes have taken place within the hospital that require further amendments to the governance of the hospital. The formation of the new foundation will allow for the diversification of the hospital's operations, which is the purpose of the bill.

The opposition is advised by the Epworth Hospital that the new structure will allow for flexibility in the delivery of hospital services and meet the demands and challenges that need to be met within the next millennium. The foundation will be involved in joint ventures; however, it will remain a non-profit organisation.

In March this year the Epworth Hospital was approached by Columbia Healthcare Australia, otherwise known as HCA Columbia, which is a subsidiary of Columbia Hospital Corporation of America — a large corporation controlling about half of the for-profit hospital beds in the United States of America. The organisation announced that it will spend more than $1 billion in Australia buying up Australian hospitals. This corporation has been investigated by the FBI and charges have been brought against it, which is a worry, as the opposition does not want those sorts of companies buying up and running hospitals in Victoria.

Unfortunately Columbia has its eye on not only the Epworth Hospital but also the Austin and repatriation hospitals. At a meeting on 6 March this year the doctors at the Epworth Hospital unanimously rejected any proposal for HCA Columbia to have anything to do with the Epworth Hospital, and to date they have been successful in knocking back that corporation. In fact, HCA Columbia appears to have moved away from potentially buying the Epworth Hospital.

The opposition is concerned also that foreign ownership seems to be creeping into Victoria, as appears to be the policy of this government. Foreign-owned companies are more interested in making a profit than in spending money for chronically ill and aged patients. Those patients cost much more to treat, and the companies are more interested in profits and delivering a service that puts money into the hip pocket than in the care and wellbeing of patients.

The opposition does not oppose the bill, but it is concerned that the Kennett government will go down the track of selling off hospitals. It is telling foreign corporations, 'Come and buy; these hospitals are for sale'. We are being led down the track of what occurs in the USA — over there, unless you have a nice thick wallet you will not be looked after in the health system, which is not currently the situation in Victoria. All Victorians are entitled to a universal health care system that enables everyone to get access to health care regardless of the size of their wallets.

We are concerned about this company that has been sniffing around wanting to purchase the Epworth Hospital. The doctors have knocked back the proposal and the opposition will constantly monitor the company, but in the specific context of the bill, we do not oppose it.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — By leave, I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

I thank Miss Gould for her contribution. Many of her fears reflect ideological views rather than reality. Many private health care providers in Europe and North America have a long and proud tradition of — —

Hon. M. M. Gould — This is one specific company!

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — Absolutely, but it has withdrawn from Australia. Given the increasing globalisation of the economy, we need to think of health care as an industry sector. In fact, it is the largest industry in the world and is expanding because as the wealth of the community and standards of living increase people require that an increasing proportion of the wealth be devoted to health care.

That is particularly significant in terms of demographic change and increased longevity, and those pressures together with the continual advances in medical science provide increasing challenge. The new ways of meeting that need will often involve the private sector in developing innovative programs, and the fact that a return on capital has to be achieved is no different from what will be the case with public providers. People have never thought of public providers as entities that have to maintain their assets. They must generate a return on their investment in order to generate funds for reinvestment in that service provision.

This initiative on the part of the Uniting Church in recommending changes to the structure of the Epworth Hospital creates opportunities for the hospital to consider new alliances and maybe even a new corporate structure, which is quite exciting. The

Epworth Hospital has developed into a first-class tertiary referral hospital, and that level of skill and expertise can have a much wider application. Just as we in this state have benefited through the private sector delivery of public health care over the past 100 years, primarily through the Sisters of Charity and Sisters of Mercy, I welcome developments by Epworth that may enable that expertise to be used in other projects.

The government is delighted to facilitate the approach by Epworth and to accede to its request to amend the act covering the institution. Although there are no definite plans at this stage it holds out the prospect that greater expertise and skill may have a much wider application in the delivery of health care in this state.

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

SNOWY HYDRO CORPORATISATION BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 December; motion of Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance).

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The opposition supports the bill and I will put some brief comments on the record. In a real sense the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme is an Australian icon. It is a symbol of the development of Australia and has an importance that transcends economics. It was a bold and visionary achievement and represented for the commonwealth what Victoria achieved through the former State Electricity Commission of Victoria. At the time it was a massive project by world standards.

The Snowy scheme was synonymous with the development of a multicultural Australia because many of the people who worked on the scheme were of ethnic background — migrants who came to build the project and help complete the scheme. Although the engineering was unique and the scheme had a broad symbolism it is important to recognise that 40 years on a range of environmental problems have emerged. Although the scheme was a major achievement for Australia it has had an environmental impact during the 40 years it has been in operation. The environmental issues are especially important for the River Murray, the Murrumbidgee River and the Snowy River. I am sure the Minister for Finance, who has a wide knowledge of Victoria, understands the issues.

The most important substantive elements of the legislation are contained in the annexure, which sets out the corporatisation principles agreed to on 1 May by the three governments involved. They provide the basis for the individual pieces of legislation that will build the structure. The Snowy hydro scheme will now be owned by the commonwealth, with a 13 per cent share, by Victoria, with a 29 per cent share, and by New South Wales, with a 58 per cent share. Voting rights will be equal for government equity holders, notwithstanding the differential in the shareholdings of each stakeholder.

The assets of the corporatised entity, Snowy Hydro Company, will be transferred to Transgrid at an agreed fair market price with the water licence but not the water itself being an asset. There is a fine distinction between owning the water and owning the licence, and owning the licence is part of the arrangement. Snowy Hydro will have a 75-year licence renewable for a further 50 years. It is presumed the details of the terms and conditions of the licence will be determined as a result of the water inquiry.

Until recently the generation of electricity from the Snowy scheme was integrated with Victoria through the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority, based on engineering criteria. Following corporatisation and privatisation the integration of the electricity market now occurs through the market for electricity. Although we once had an integrated system and long-term planning, increasingly decisions are being made by market pressures.

Theoretically the market will enable the more efficient generators to offer the most competitive prices, so they are likely to sell more electricity than less efficient producers. Unfortunately the market has not worked entirely in that way. Although the argument is superficially appealing we have seen some significant problems with the market in that a number of base-load stations have been able to fit into the production of other stations to the extent that the other stations have become non-viable.

In fact, before privatisation the Treasurer repeatedly claimed that there was considerable excess capacity in the Victorian generation industry. Victorian electricity use peaks during summer months because of airconditioning use on hot days. On 14 January the spot price for electricity was $3568 compared with an average of $24 per megawatt hour. As a consequence of a series of hot days the level of Victorian reserves fell below what was considered to be safe — 1000 megawatt hours. The average price of power rose to $200 per megawatt hour over the first three weeks of that month. That is one of the reasons why the government has sought to find a mechanism that will effectively mean an increase in prices to accommodate the problems.

As I said earlier, coal-fired generators increased their utilisation markedly but last year stations such as Newport finished up operating at 6.5 per cent capacity. As a consequence the board of directors shut down Newport because it did not accord with commercial principles. It was not viable at an operating level of 6.5 per cent. That is a reason we have had problems with a shortfall in electricity production in Victoria. The newly corporatised Snowy Hydro will face problems but decision making will be further constrained than it has been in the past by the terms of the licence.

The opposition supports the legislation because it makes sense to establish that body. The three governments have agreed to its establishment. Notwithstanding Victoria's share is only 29 per cent compared with 58 per cent for New South Wales, Victoria gets equal voting rights with New South Wales and the commonwealth. I hope as a result of the legislation the serious issues surrounding conservation and water erosion which have come to light will be addressed by the new body.

Honourable members will be aware that significant environmental issues have been identified in the Snowy River area. I hope in another 40 years we will be able to say that we have not only a good hydro scheme operating in the Snowy Mountains but that the environmental issues have been addressed to maximise the efficiency of water management in that area while also preserving the environmental values we all share. On that basis, the opposition supports the proposed legislation.

Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern) — The Snowy Hydro Corporatisation Bill is important because it has the potential, if mishandled in the future, to fundamentally change the mode of operation and the benefit delivered to the nation from one of the most important engineering projects we have ever seen — that is, the Snowy Mountains scheme.

I am not for one moment suggesting that is the intent of the legislation; not at all. I fully support the idea of corporatisation because the history of corporatisation and privatisation as undertaken in Australia, particularly in the past five or six years in Victoria, demonstrates the tremendous benefits in efficiency and cost saving that can be delivered by that change of management structure.

However, I am concerned that some people will see this corporatisation, and particularly the water inquiry that is to be undertaken as a precursor to corporatisation, as an opportunity to launch an attack on environmental grounds on particularly irrigation in the Murray Valley in Victoria and the Murrumbidgee Valley in New South Wales, without acknowledging the fact that irrigation in Australia has been a most important aspect in generating wealth and ensuring that Australians enjoy a high standard of living.

Without irrigation, much of the productive area in the Murrumbidgee, Murray Valley and Goulburn irrigation areas would be nothing more than dusty sheep runs, underpopulated and producing a product that at present does not generate much money on world markets. City dwellers would not be enjoying the abundant supplies of fresh food, particularly fruit and vegetables, that irrigation delivers.

Australians can be proud of what irrigation has brought to this country. We can be grateful to our men and women for their tremendous vision 100 years or so ago. They saw the prospect of harnessing the rivers of Australia and delivering water by gravity to many thousands of hectares of fertile land, land which suffered from a lack of rainfall and the productivity of which was not being realised due to a shortage of water.

Although we would all acknowledge that some management practices in the past were unwise, they have been corrected in the light of our learning and experience; while irrigation has changed the environment in some respect, by and large it has delivered extraordinary benefits to Victoria and, indeed, to Australia.

We need to acknowledge that in Australia, a country of widely varying rainfall patterns, rivers in natural conditions regularly range from horrendous floods

to almost drying up. I recall the recent floods associated with the River Murray and that graphic illustration of the late Sir Ronald East in 1915 standing astride the Murray because it had been reduced to a trickle. We would have seen that occurrence many more times had the dams not been built on the River Murray and had the Snowy Mountains scheme not been constructed after the war.

We can say the same of the Snowy: a wild river in its natural state which often flows as a torrent, but in dry times is reduced to a trickle. We should not judge rivers, particularly not in dry years. One must measure these things over a period, but I acknowledge the Snowy River has been underdone in environmental flows since the construction of the Snowy Mountains scheme.

It is only proper that the allocations for that river be reviewed and increased. It is worth noting that the committee, chaired by the honourable member for Swan Hill in the other place, which is looking into entitlements under the Murray-Darling Basin cap, has already allocated volumes of water for environmental flows in the Snowy. Whether that turns out to be the final determination as the consultation process proceeds remains to be seen. However, it is an acknowledgment that the Snowy River is deserving of additional consideration from an environmental point of view.

I express concern that the terms of reference drawn up for the water inquiry may be construed inappropriately by some. I refer particularly to the advertisement appearing in the *Weekly Times* of 3 December. Its headline, 'Snowy Water Inquiry', is under the names of the Victorian and New South Wales Treasurers. The advertisement sets out the proposed terms of reference. It is worth noting that two inquiries are to be held: an inquiry into the terms of reference; then, having decided that, the actual inquiry will be held. Proposed term of reference 2(2) states:

> ... the scheme is an ongoing commercial electricity business entity.

That would seem to convey the impression that the generation of electricity is the primary purpose of the Snowy Mountains scheme. I do not acknowledge for one moment that electricity generation is the primary purpose: it is but one of its purposes. It should be noted that on many occasions the use of the water stored there for irrigation will deliver a greater return to the Australian people than were it run through the electricity generation turbines.

I am somewhat concerned that the bill does not refer to water or irrigation at all. I have some concerns about how it will be applied and interpreted over the years. I take comfort from the attached annexure, which sets out the corporatisation principles. Paragraph 7.2 says:

> Unless otherwise agreed, those water release obligations will be consistent with the existing arrangements governing the scheme. In any case they will:
>
> (1) protect Victoria's existing right to a share of inflows into the scheme —

that is very important —

> (2) protect South Australia's existing rights —

we would all acknowledge that South Australia has a great interest in the matter —

> (3) prescribe minimum release volumes in times of drought ...

That is also important. I refer to my earlier remark that sometimes the use of irrigation rather than electricity generation will have the more beneficial return. The paragraph continues:

> (4) provide for variations in releases in emergency situations —

that is commonsense —

> (5) include provisions for consultation between Snowy Hydro and the relevant water authorities.

I place a great deal of importance on the need for a productive working relationship between the corporatised entity and the relevant water authorities — which, in Victoria's case, is mainly Goulburn–Murray Water. Paragraph 7.2 also says they will:

> (7) provide for the outcomes of the water inquiry.

I am happy for that to be provided for, on the proviso that the outcome of the water inquiry, which is to be completed within six months, is satisfactory to Victoria. It is premature to assume at this stage that it will be. That wide-ranging inquiry will draw many submissions from areas that may have less sympathy for irrigation and electricity generation aspects and a greater concern for so-called environmental aspects than is perhaps warranted.

I want Victoria to be always on its guard to ensure that its interests are protected following

corporatisation. By 'its interests' I mean the interests of the people of Victoria at large — not just those of the irrigators, whom I represent in Parliament.

The legislation will deliver immense benefits to every Victorian. I would not want to see those benefits undermined by the fashionable view that somehow or other the past management of the scheme has been wrong and that some radical changes are needed.

I acknowledge the need for finetuning and for the Snowy River to be accorded additional environmental flows, but apart from that I believe the tried and tested regime of the past 50 years has been pretty close to the mark and should be deviated from only after the most careful consideration and assessment of the effects any changes will wreak on those whose businesses rely on the regime.

I emphasise that Victoria will need to keep a close eye on the water inquiry and not just assume that because the scheme is located in New South Wales and mainly run by that state that somehow or other it is of no great concern to this state. The scheme is extraordinarily important to Victoria: our standard of living depends on it. I urge the Treasurer and his officials not to let it get away from us. I have no doubt he will keep an eye on it.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — It gives me great pleasure to support the Snowy Hydro Corporatisation Bill, particularly as it affects the Snowy River in the East Gippsland part of my electorate. As the minister says in the second-reading speech, and as Mr Theophanous and Mr Baxter have acknowledged, the issues associated with the flow of the Snowy River are tied in with the bill.

The development of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme through the 1950s and 1960s created a major industry for the Snowy Mountains region. At the same time it had a profound impact on the hydrology of the Snowy River catchment area. Members who are aware of the scheme will know that the scheme utilises the headwaters of the Snowy, Murray and Murrumbidgee rivers, capturing water for electricity generation and subsequently diverting some of it to the Murray and the Murrumbidgee valleys for irrigation.

The effect of the damming of the Snowy River below Jindabyne and the diversion of the Mowamba River, a natural tributary of the Snowy, to the Jindabyne Dam has meant that the volume of water flowing down the Snowy River now represents only about 1 per cent of the original figure. As honourable members know, that has had a disastrous effect on the ecology of the Snowy River. As the minister says in the second-reading speech, the corporatisation of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme will provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to address some of the issues associated with the flow of water down the Snowy.

I agree with Mr Baxter that the issues surrounding the inquiry and the volume of water that may be released down the Snowy River need to be considered in conjunction with the needs of irrigators in the Murray and Murrumbidgee systems. One of my constituents has suggested that desirable flows down the Snowy could be achieved by the adoption of better water conservation measures rather than changing irrigation methods. As I am not an expert, I do not know whether that is possible. However, we need to explore every possible avenue to increase the flow of water down the Snowy River.

The damming of the Snowy at Lake Jindabyne has had a significant impact. It has reduced the river's natural flow by about 99 per cent, which has had an effect on the quality of the water. As a result some areas are at risk of toxic blue-green algae outbreaks. It has also greatly diminished the natural fish population and has led to an invasion of willows, which has also occurred in some of the Gippsland rivers which have had their courses altered.

The lack of a strong natural flow down the Snowy has also led to increased instances of soil erosion and to the extension of the salt wedge almost 15 kilometres upstream. The damming of Jindabyne in the mid-1960s has increased the intrusion of salt water into the mouth of the Snowy River around Marlo. All that has had a significant effect on the health of the Snowy River, which has had a flow-on effect for users of the water down the river.

Although the bill facilitates the corporatisation of the Snowy Mountains scheme, it is also an environmental measure. The bill will give members of the house and those involved in the water inquiry that will be established following its passage a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to address significant environmental issues. Despite the fact that it is a corporatisation bill, I was pleased to see the emphasis on those issues in the second-reading speech. One would almost think the second-reading speech had been made by an environment minister rather than a finance minister or a Treasurer. The

government is strongly committed to achieving satisfactory outcomes from the water inquiry that will be undertaken by the New South Wales and Victorian governments to determine water usage in the Snowy Mountains scheme.

Over the past six months the Minister for Conservation and Land Management in the other place, Marie Tehan, has inspected the Snowy River and spoken to local people. During a recent East Gippsland tour the Premier also took the time to inspect the area around the mouth of the Snowy. Only a fortnight ago the Treasurer spent a memorable day meeting people in southern New South Wales and flying along the course of the river. He eventually landed in East Gippsland, where he talked to some Orbost residents about the health of the Snowy River. I am delighted that three senior ministers have taken the opportunity in the past three months to inspect and talk with local people about the environmental issues associated with the Snowy River.

Mr Baxter mentioned the commitment by the New South Wales, Victorian and commonwealth governments to undertake a water inquiry to investigate how best to utilise water emanating from the Snowy Mountains scheme, and we welcome that. The only disappointing thing about it is that it has taken so long to get where we are today; this bill has been on the notice paper for a while. The New South Wales Parliament had some difficulty passing complementary legislation, and the federal government also had to consider some legislation in respect of this matter. It would have been nice to have that legislation considered by Parliament six months ago when it was first mooted so the review could have been under way. However, as Mr Baxter said, the draft terms of reference for the water inquiry are now out for public comment. It is expected that public submissions to the draft terms of reference will close by mid-January and that shortly after that the water inquiry will take place.

My constituents in East Gippsland are well prepared to make worthwhile submissions to the inquiry. Some of the work that has already been undertaken by the Snowy Genoa Catchment Management Committee will provide valuable information to that water inquiry. In 1995 the Snowy Genoa Catchment Management Committee commissioned an expert panel to consider and assess the environmental flow of the Snowy River below the Jindabyne dam. The panel produced a comprehensive document that goes to some of the issues the water inquiry will consider. I compliment the management committee for the effort it made and the dollars it spent in producing the report.

One of the recommendations in the report was that the ecology of the river would benefit if 28 per cent of the original flow returned to the river. At present only 1 per cent of the original water flow goes down the Snowy River, so that is a significant amount of extra water. However, as I said before, that 28 per cent flow can perhaps be achieved without detriment to the existing irrigators in the Murray and Murrumbidgee systems. It is certainly not the intent of the people of East Gippsland to rob other users of that water, but perhaps by forsaking some of the electricity production or making better use of the water that flows for irrigation purposes the desired flows in the Snowy River can be achieved. That is certainly the point made by people far more expert than I in that area. I am pleased that the review process is under way. It is expected to take six months and result in worthwhile outcomes that will produce positive benefits for the people in East Gippsland and north of the Snowy River.

I compliment some people in my electorate who have worked assiduously on this issue for many years. It is always dangerous to single out some because there are many others who could be as deserving, but I particularly mention Mr Max White, who for many years has been secretary and executive officer of the Snowy River Improvement Trust. Max White held that position during my nine years in Parliament and has been a great source of information and assistance to me in consideration of water management issues, both associated with the Snowy River and in general.

I also mention his wife, Glenice, who is equally committed to restoration of environmental flows down the Snowy River. She, too, has pursued this issue keenly over the years. The third person I mention is Mr Gil Richardson, who is chairman of the Snowy River Improvement Trust and has put a great deal of voluntary time into improving the health and wellbeing of the Snowy River. He accompanied the Treasurer on his recent visit to the area which was, as I said, quite memorable. Unfortunately the day was a little rough and we had a turbulent ride in the plane from Jindabyne down to Orbost, eventually landing at Bairnsdale; Mr Richardson certainly suffered from that turbulent ride. However, he has worked assiduously over the years to assist on Snowy River issues.

Finally, I mention the Honourable Peter Nixon, whom many of us in this house would know. He is a

lifetime Orbost resident, a former federal minister and chief commissioner of East Gippsland Shire and somebody who has a strong commitment to the East Gippsland and Snowy River areas. I singled out those four people but there are probably another 30 people I could put in the same basket with whom I worked closely on these issues.

The issue of the health of the Snowy River has been going for as long as I have been a member of this house. The people of East Gippsland welcome the legislation because it will generate the water inquiry, which we hope will achieve improved flow down the Snowy River. It is certainly wanted and, as Mr Theophanous said, will maintain one of the major historical icons in Victoria. We need to consider the issue closely through the water inquiry process. The people of East Gippsland will have a strong input into the inquiry, and we all hope the outcome will be an improved flow down the Snowy River and that we can work towards achieving that without causing detriment to other water users.

Hon. C. A. STRONG (Higinbotham) — It gives me great pleasure to support this bill because it updates a grand old lady — it brings the management and traditional structures of this Australian engineering icon into the 21st century. As a young engineer I followed the early days of the Snowy Mountains scheme with a great deal of interest. As students we often visited the site to look at works in progress, and as a young engineer I also had the opportunity on several occasions to visit the works in their various stages. There is no doubt that the Snowy Mountain scheme was in every way seminal to the engineering profession of Australia because the techniques that were imported to Australia and developed on the project, the scale of operations in plant and equipment, were new to Australia. Many of the large firms that worked on the project went on to become the leading Australian companies in engineering for the next two or three decades. It set the scene for the spectacular growth in engineering that took place in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Without the skill that was developed on the project that growth would have been hampered and the scheme would have been nowhere near as effective as it became.

With the change in the electricity structures that have taken place, particularly in Victoria and to a certain extent in New South Wales, there is no doubt that the management and operational structure as it currently exists in the Snowy Mountains scheme is an anachronism.

The corporatisation and, we suspect, subsequent privatisation in whole or part of the new Snowy Hydro Company that will be set up under the bill is a very necessary part of the finalisation of the electricity industry restructure in this state. The Snowy scheme has a vital role in providing peak load to our system. Not only does it provide peak load in a normal sense it also has a pump storage capacity that further enhances peak-load capability. Peak load, as we know, is one of the crucial factors in the power structure of Victoria.

Victoria is blessed with having huge amounts of brown coal, which provides a very effective base-load capability. However, there is also a need for a peak-load capability to go with that. To get the best mix of peak load the correct pricing signals must be sent as to the value of peak electricity. With its current structure, it is very difficult for the Snowy scheme to effectively send those price signals. However, with its privatised structure and as a major provider it will be able to send the appropriate pricing signals. We will then be able to see the further development of peak-load capacity that our system desperately needs.

I shall also touch on some of the water issues that have been dealt with by previous speakers. They are enormously important and an appropriate resolution to those will be sought. The use of peak-load electricity and the ability of the new structure to send correct pricing signals will be enormously important to the Victorian electricity industry and the south-eastern states as well. I urge the house to support the bill and in so doing I have enormous pleasure in reinforcing the enormous contribution that the Snowy scheme has made to engineering throughout this state and nation.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — By leave, I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

I congratulate my colleagues on their contributions to the debate. I particularly mention that of the Leader of the Opposition. I thank the opposition for its support for what we all acknowledge is a very important legislative initiative.

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 December; motion of Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology).

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — The opposition does not oppose the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, which protects those who publish the *Hansard* report. Clause 3 updates the provisions dealing with the publication of parliamentary proceedings and papers. Clause 4 protects people who transmit and broadcast parliamentary proceedings. The bill is about updating measures for the new technological period ahead. It deals with *Hansard* on the Internet and those who publish parliamentary debates. The opposition does not oppose the bill.

Hon. C. A. STRONG (Higinbotham) — As a member of the Library Committee I particularly support the bill. As Mr Nardella said, the bill deals with *Hansard* on the Internet. That particular function is managed by the parliamentary library. In its deliberations over several years the committee was concerned that the protection afforded to the printed *Hansard* may not extend to the electronic *Hansard* on the Internet.

The Library Committee was instrumental in ensuring that the bill was introduced so that those responsible for the publication of *Hansard* on the Internet in electronic form were protected in the same way as those who have published the printed *Hansard* for many years. On behalf of all members of the Library Committee I have much pleasure in supporting the bill.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! I am of the opinion that the second and third readings of the bill require to be passed by an absolute majority. To ascertain whether the required majority has been obtained I direct that the bells be rung.

Bells rung.

Members having assembled in chamber:

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! To ascertain whether the required majority has been obtained I ask those members in favour of the bill to stand in their places.

Required number of members having risen:

Motion agreed to by absolute majority.

Read second time; by leave, proceeded to third reading.

Third reading

Motion agreed to by absolute majority.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

BUSINESS FRANCHISE FEES (SAFETY NET) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 4 December; motion of Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance).

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The opposition supports the Business Franchise Fees (Safety Net) Bill. The proposed legislation repeals and in some cases amends business franchise fees following the High Court decision of 5 August, which outlined the state franchise arrangements.

Honourable members will be aware that the High Court decision put significant taxation schemes in doubt for the states, and Victoria was affected. Effectively, petrol, tobacco and liquor franchise fees will be replaced by an equivalent commonwealth wholesale sales tax. Transitionary measures are being implemented to replace the franchise fees the High Court ruled against with a new commonwealth wholesale sales tax.

Most transitionary matters resulting from the High Court decision have been resolved to the satisfaction of the industry sector. The long-term implications for the states are profound. About 50 per cent of all Victorian revenue will now come from the commonwealth and more growth taxes are lost to Victoria.

The bill allows for a commonwealth wholesale sales tax — which is not a growth tax — to replace the other three taxes. The bill also increases taxation in a number of areas; it will result in a 1.5 per cent increase in tax on liquor, which is as a direct result of the High Court decision and the consequent transitional arrangements. I understand the Australian Hotels Association and other industry groups accept the necessity for the change and the tax. The government has argued that the 1.5 per cent increase in liquor taxes will not be passed on as a result of competition in the industry, but on any argument sooner or later it will be passed on so there will be a 1.5 per cent increase in taxation in the liquor industry as a result.

There is no extension of the tax exemption on cellar door wine sales and cellar sales at festivals or other trade events. The opposition will continue to support some aspects of the taxation on liquor. In particular, it places on record its continuing support for tax exemptions for low-alcohol beer. This initiative reveals the need in this country to have a significant debate on tax reform, and that debate has, I believe, yet to be had. I do not support the Premier, who has proposed that the solution is to have a goods and services tax or a value-added tax to replace a range of state taxes. That proposition has serious difficulties. The opposition does not believe that is the way to go; nevertheless there is still a need for significant taxation reform. The opposition looks forward to being involved in the debate on that tax reform.

The legislation has been introduced as a result of a High Court decision, and it establishes the commonwealth sales tax as a replacement to the other franchise taxes. On that basis the opposition supports the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

For **Hon. R. M. HALLAM** (Minister for Finance), Hon. R. I. Knowles (Minister for Health) — By leave, I move:

> That this bill be now read a third time.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his comments on the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

LAND TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 4 December; motion of Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance).

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The opposition does not oppose the legislation but wishes to move a reasoned amendment. I therefore move:

> That all the words after 'That' be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the amendments promised by the Treasurer in his second-reading speech to guarantee the exemption on a principal place of residence and other matters related to small business have been assessed and amendments prepared'.

Before detailing the reasons why the opposition moves the reasoned amendment, I should say that the purpose of the bill is to flatten the current land tax threshold. The structure of land tax rates and scales has been altered to provide relief for properties with values in excess of $540 000. Contrary to the government's claims, the bill does not remove the land tax payable on the principal residence. A separate bill exempting principal residences will be moved in the 1998 autumn sittings. One aspect of the reform, increasing land tax, is being introduced now, but the provision that will reduce land tax will not be introduced until the 1998 autumn sitting, which is inappropriate considering the government made a song and dance about the bill when it announced it publicly. It is estimated that by reducing the tax-free threshold from $200 000 to $85 000 an additional 150 000 businesses and second properties will be drawn into the land tax net. On that basis the opposition has some difficulty with the legislation. The original budget estimate for land tax revenue in 1997–98 was $427 million. Changes to this bill will, if implemented, reduce the revenue estimate to $394 million, a reduction of $33 million. That will not occur until legislation is introduced in the autumn 1998 session when the principal place of residence will become exempt. Under the unchanged 1998 policy it was estimated that some 26 600 taxpayers would have faced land tax for the first time.

However, some will now not face land tax because of the family home exemption. But that amendment will not be introduced at this time.

The estimated number of taxpayers removed from the tax net due to the principal place of residence exemption is estimated to be 41 000. In 1998, on an unchanged policy basis, there would have been an estimated 96 000 landowners paying land tax for the first time. I moved the reasoned amendment because that has not occurred. Given that the government announced it would exempt the principal place of residence, it should have introduced such a measure at the same time as this bill.

The opposition is concerned about the impact of the changes in the Mitcham electorate. It sought from the City of Whitehorse some figures on the impact of the changes in that city. Given that a by-election is taking place there soon, it is important for the people of Mitcham to know exactly what that impact will be. Information provided by the City of Whitehorse shows that a small number of properties in the city with site values of more than $200 000 would benefit from the reductions being proposed by the government. There are 68 such residences in Blackburn, 7 in Blackburn North, 33 in Mitcham, 19 in Nunawading and 48 in Vermont. There is hardly a large number of properties in the Mitcham area that will benefit in any way, shape or form from this legislation.

A number of businesses in the electorate will face the taxes for the first time. To try to determine how many were likely to pay land tax for the first time the opposition sought information from the City of Whitehorse about the number of properties with site values between $85 000 and $199 999. There were 211 such small businesses in Blackburn, 13 in Blackburn North, 112 in Mitcham, 133 in Nunawading and 30 in Vermont, a total of 499. It is important that small businesses in the Mitcham electorate — and others throughout Victoria — understand that they will be slugged for land tax for the first time.

I do not know what the figures are across Victoria, but *Business Forum* of 21 November provides a scale that clearly shows the effect on small businesses. It shows that for small business land tax will be increased whereas tax for medium and larger businesses will reduce. The opposition criticised the Minister for Small Business about the measures. She has been unable to represent her constituency to ensure that small businesses in Victoria, especially the 500 in the Mitcham area, do not suffer increases in land tax.

Businesses with site values between $85 000 and $200 000 will now for the first time have to pay a tax of $85 and 0.1 cents for each dollar of the value exceeding $85 000. The government has not bothered to introduce the measure at the same time it introduced legislation on the principal place of residence. I know that on other occasions the minister has tried to use that as an argument for the amelioration of the effects of the tax on small business. It assumes those small businesses have another principal place of residence that would be exempted or would give them a reduction in land tax. But that has not been introduced by the government. On 14 November the *Age* summed up the changes, stating:

> While medium-sized businesses — with site values between $540 000 and $1.6 million — will receive large tax cuts, some small businesses will be forced to pay the tax for the first time.

The *Age* made clear that small businesses will be paying land tax for the first time while larger businesses will receive tax cuts. Again, the Treasurer went to the press and said:

> No homeowner will pay land tax on his or her principal residence.

He also said:

> Obviously this is good news for Mitcham. Anybody in Mitcham who is paying land tax on their principal residence will no longer pay land tax.

What a joke! Firstly, he has not introduced the legislation to bring that about and, secondly, a small number of people in the Mitcham electorate pay land tax. However, a much larger number of small businesses will suffer for the first time. There are only 33 properties valued at more than $200 000 in the Mitcham area that would come into the Treasurer's category, even if he were honest enough to introduce that legislation with this bill.

There is a fundamental dishonesty in the way the government has dealt with this measure. Firstly, it has tried with the big hit to pretend there is some sort of reduction for the principal place of residence, but has not introduced the legislation. Secondly, it will have significant effects on small businesses that will have to pay the tax for the first time. As a consequence, the opposition has moved the

reasoned amendment. If the reasoned amendment is lost, because the bill is a taxing measure, the opposition will not oppose it.

Hon. C. A. STRONG (Higinbotham) — I support the bill and oppose the reasoned amendment. I have much pleasure in supporting the bill because one of the key features foreshadowed in it is the removal of land tax that is currently payable on a person's principal place of residence. For many years that has been a bone of contention among my constituents. They have agitated very hard to get this reform.

The bill is a taxation measure, and as with any taxation arrangements there are adjustments. As the principal place of residence will be removed from the land tax scale some very important adjustments are being made in the scale. They are important because there was a problem with the enormous discontinuity in the scale.

When the site value of a property exceeded $540 000 the rate suddenly increased approximately 15-fold, from 0.2 per cent to 3 per cent, thereby imposing an unfair cost burden on people whose site values crossed that threshold. A key element of the bill is the flattening out of the scale to make it more even as the site values of properties increase.

The proposed scale will result in Victoria having a land tax regime for almost all reasonably sized businesses — the types of businesses that we want to attract to Victoria because they will generate economic activity — that will be the lowest of any state in the nation. That is clearly another significant benefit the government is giving to business in this state. The cost to the budget of the proposed change in the land tax scale is estimated to be a reduction of $33 million a year in land tax revenue.

I turn to deal with how Victoria will now rank on land tax charges compared with other states, because they are very important. On a site value of $200 000 Victorian land tax will be in the order of $200, compared with $840 in New South Wales, nil in Queensland and $500 in both Western Australia and South Australia. Further up the scale the advantage to Victorian businesses is even greater.

In Victoria the tax on a $1 million site will be something like $6200 compared with $15 600 in New South Wales, $10 000 in Queensland, $10 000 in Western Australia and $12 000 in South Australia. The New South Wales figure is more than double and the South Australian figure is almost double the amount payable in Victoria. The adjustments to the scale will be enormously beneficial to Victorian businesses because, as I said, they will give Victoria the least expensive land tax regime in the nation.

The thrust of the reasoned amendment is simply that the bill should not be considered because the guarantee given by the Treasurer in his second-reading speech to introduce the other leg of the reform — namely, the removal of land tax on the principal place of residence — will be introduced in the next sessional period. I have no problem at all with the guarantee given by the Treasurer, and I am sure all honourable members on this side of the house feel the same way. I have no doubt that the community accepts that the guarantee given by the Treasurer will be honoured. There is simply no point in accepting the reasoned amendment because it is fundamentally unnecessary. Without doubt the Treasurer will honour his commitment.

I have great pleasure in supporting the bill. It will be enormously popular in my province. As I said, people in my area have fought for many years for the removal of land tax from the principal place of residence. My province is home to a number of industries and the removal of land tax will be popular in the Moorabbin and Mordialloc industrial areas. Land tax paid by the industries in those areas will be significantly reduced, which will be of enormous benefit to the businesses that operate there. I urge the house to support the bill and reject the reasoned amendment.

Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern) — I am pleased to join Mr Strong in supporting the proposed legislation, which honours a commitment the coalition gave prior to the 1996 election that land tax on the principal place of residence would be removed. This is the first step in bringing that commitment into being.

I reject the reasoned amendment because it is simply not worthy of consideration, bearing in mind the commitment given by the Premier as part of the election policy, the commitments given in the second-reading speech and the comments made during the Mitcham by-election campaign. It beggars belief to suggest, as does the reasoned amendment, that somehow or other this undertaking will not be executed. Of course it will be executed. The house can pass this bill in the conviction that in the autumn sessional period a more complex piece of legislation containing the detail of that undertaking will come before the house.

Honourable members heard from the Leader of the Opposition that he was not opposing the bill. I think he finished up by saying the reason was that it is a taxation measure and, by implication, that the opposition does not oppose taxation measures.

That was interesting. He has advanced that principle on other bills at various times and I was intrigued by his rationale on this occasion, because his whole speech was in opposition to the legislation. Not surprisingly we had the usual use of statistics used in the way a drunk uses a light pole — more as a source of support than a means of illumination.

The Leader of the Opposition used dodgy statistics as to what the effect might be at Mitcham. He regaled us with statistics he obtained from the City of Whitehorse as to how many residences in the Mitcham area have a site value of $200 000 or more, and not surprisingly there are not a great deal. Then he gave us a calculation of how many small businesses there will attract tax for the first time under the new exemption level of $85 000. Not surprisingly he came up with a reasonably substantial figure.

The Leader of the Opposition then drew the inference that many small businesses will be paying tax for the first time. If he had looked at the statistics and drawn correct conclusions he would be aware that if the principal place of residence had remained taxable, even if the exemption level had remained at $200 000, many small businesses would have been progressively drawn into the net over the years because their owners would have owned homes which, when aggregated with the value of their small business sites, would put them over the $200 000 limit.

The removal of the principal place of residence as part of the equation will mean dozens, if not hundreds and thousands, of small businesses will not pay tax. Previously people involved in those businesses would have had to pay over time as land values rose. If the Leader of the Opposition had been honest he might have demonstrated that when properly assessed that is what the statistics he quoted show.

The legislation will be of immense benefit to small businesses. The removal of the principal family residence from the formula will relieve many families of the obligation to pay land tax at all. In any event the use of site value to gauge whether a business is small or not is a rather inaccurate measure. Businesses with significant turnovers and profitability on very small sites that would not transgress the exemption level would not pay tax, yet other businesses which because of their nature — for example, machinery agents and the like that need extensive blocks of land —may not be particularly profitable or have high turnovers would fall within the tax net. The use of site value by the Leader of the Opposition as a measure of whether businesses fall into the category of small did not portray an accurate picture.

I am pleased that the exemption level has been set at $85 000. It means that the tax will not to any great degree, if at all, have an impact on businesses in small country towns in regional Victoria, where it is acknowledged that due to rural downturns, drift of population and the like many businesses are struggling. My assessment from looking around my own electorate is that most businesses in the small towns will not be drawn into this net. In the regional centres such as Shepparton and Wodonga some will be affected, but by and large they are the larger businesses that are owned by big companies and not locally owned businesses. We are trying to assist small business through this measure, and they will be assisted because they will not be included in the tax net.

I am also pleased with the continued exemption of farm land from the payment of land tax. I am not suggesting there was any indication at any time that the government intended to impose tax on farm land — it did not. However, it is worth noting that farm land has been exempt from land tax for many years, and continues to be so. This is another measure by which the government can assist the farm population of the state.

The legislation provides a significant breakthrough in the removal of the principal family home from the tax net. The way the tax was applied made it inequitable. In many cases it took no account at all of a person's disposable income. It was based simply on land value, which did not always relate to a person's capacity to pay. The process will probably relieve more small businesses from having to pay land tax than those with which it will catch up.

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

For Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance), Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) — By leave, I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

I thank Mr Theophanous, Mr Strong and Mr Baxter for their comments. I certainly agree with my coalition colleagues that this is a very welcome initiative. It has been long promised and brings to the scales of the land tax system a degree of fairness that had been absent. It also enshrines the important principles of keeping exempt from land tax farm properties and principal private residences.

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

CONFISCATION BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 4 December; motion of Hon. LOUISE ASHER (Minister for Small Business).

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — The Confiscation Bill repeals the Crimes (Confiscation of Profits) Act. The opposition wishes to move a reasoned amendment. I move:

That all the words after 'That' be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof 'this house refuses to read this bill a second time until the government ensures that there are appropriate safeguards in the legislation which will —

(a) preclude innocent persons having their property forfeited by the state; and

(b) address the issue of the proceeds from substantial corporate crime'.

I have great concern about the legislation. It is based on premises and principles that go against the principles that have served the justice system in Australia for a very long time. The opposition consulted a number of people on the legislation. We found that the government had not consulted the legal profession. On 1 September Mr David Grace from the Law Institute of Victoria wrote to the minister pointing out that fact.

The bill has been introduced following a report by Mr Faris, QC, but copies of that report have not been made available to members of the community or to the legal profession — or to anybody other than members of the government. Consultation has been selective, but neither the general community nor the legal profession have had an opportunity to debate, discuss or suggest changes to the bill. Once again the government has introduced important legislation without giving people the chance to express their views and suggest amendments to ensure it does not affect them unfairly.

In part the bill reverses the onus of proof: all the assets of an accused can be frozen so that they are not available to help fund his or her defence. In some circumstances people will not be able to use their assets to fight restraining orders. Under the bill restraining orders can be made in people's absence up to 48 hours before any charges are laid. They can be laid by police acting as informants, which the opposition is concerned about.

The Assets Confiscation Office will have the ability to undertake the confiscations referred to in the bill. The owners of those assets will have to rely on legal aid to defend themselves in criminal proceedings. Legal aid in Victoria is in a parlous state. The government has ripped the heart and guts out of the legal aid system, and the federal government has done the same thing.

The opposition believes the legal aid system does not have sufficient funds to deal with its existing clients, let alone additional ones. It is concerned that legal aid funds will be used to defend very wealthy people, so the state will end up funding the cases of the very wealthy who could otherwise afford to pay their own costs. If a restraining order is placed on the whole of a person's property, he or she will not be able to use those assets to fight the order, even though some of have been lawfully obtained.

The bill is draconian. The members of the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee recently discussed the example of a person who makes a telephone call in support of a drug trafficking operation having a restraining order placed over a block of flats he owns, thereby having it classified as tainted property. Until now, the use of assets has been restrained by the courts or by agreement and have been available for use in defence cases. The bill will add additional strain to the legal aid system and to

the courts because of the extra administration involved. The minister has not engaged in any meaningful consultation to try to alleviate those problems.

The minister's failure to release the report made by Peter Faris, QC, is typical of a government that does not consult. The bill overturns well-established legal principles, one of which is the presumption of innocence. Another is that an accused person who is found not guilty gains the full benefit of that decision. If the bill is passed a person found not guilty can still have his or her property permanently confiscated under a different legal process that requires a lower standard of proof — not beyond reasonable doubt, which applies to criminal cases, but on the balance of probabilities.

Clause 106 says a person must produce documents relating to assets, and under clause 106(1)(b) he or she will not be excused from producing a document on the ground that to do so would be a breach of advice by a legal practitioner to a client not to disclose the existence or contents of that document. That will affect legal professional privilege and is again a dangerous path to be going down.

Clause 99(1) removes the right to silence, which means an accused will be forced to answer questions. The Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee has undertaken a project on the right to silence, but the legislation will remove that right before the committee has had the opportunity to report to the Parliament. The opposition is concerned about this aspect of the legislation.

It is imperative that the government consult the community about the legislation it introduces. In this instance the government and the minister are behaving inappropriately. Fundamental principles of criminal justice are being overturned, which is too high a price to pay in anyone's language. Learned members of the legal profession spend a lot of time debating and discussing the principles that underpin our legal system, which has served us well. The government should seek and take note of their advice.

Opposition members are concerned that in some cases we are moving closer to the United States legal system and that in others — for example, this legislation — we are moving closer to the European legal system of an accused being presumed guilty until proven innocent. If that is what the government wants to do, we should have that debate.

It is no good whittling away people's rights and allowing the legal system to be abused. In its way the bill is an indication of the perniciousness of the drug trade. Nevertheless, we are concerned about the regressive and punitive measures in the bill. The government says it is attacking the drug trade by confiscating the assets of those involved in it, but you get to the stage of asking, 'Where do you stop?'. It might be the drug trade today and murderers tomorrow. It may be some other class of criminals in the near future who make it difficult to stop their activities and uphold the law.

In the United Kingdom a number of rights have been removed from the general population. The court system has not been allowed to function in the normal way it had developed over hundreds of years since the Magna Carta. Gross injustices have been rife because of the standard of evidence and the procedures and because of the ability of the state to corrupt the process. This downslide has worked to the detriment of a number of convicted people, including such famous cases as the Birmingham Six, who were eventually found not guilty.

When a government allows the legal system to be manipulated to deal with specific threats, whether they be through the drug trade, terrorism or other sections of society, people's liberties can be unjustly infringed upon. One of the fundamentals of the legal system is that a person is innocent until proven guilty. This is not to say that the opposition in any way condones major drug traffickers — who are, in the main, the people targeted in this bill — being let off; rather it supports the legal system determining the innocence or guilt of people according to fundamental proven principles. The bill requires further enormous investigation because of the strain on the police. We need to investigate changes to the level of resources allocated to and the administration of the criminal justice system.

The bill contains a number of forfeiture arrangements. The first is automatic forfeiture where a person has been convicted of a prescribed offence. The bill extends the range of prescribed offences for which automatic forfeiture of assets is the penalty. The other form is civil forfeiture. In this case without a conviction being required the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Assets Confiscation Office created by the bill may undertake a civil action in circumstances where an individual has been charged with drug trafficking. That would involve bringing an action in court and the defendant having to rebut the presumption that he or she acquired the assets

illegally. The onus is on the defendant to establish how he or she legally obtained the assets in question.

When this point was discussed in the Labor Party room a number of people said, 'How would we prove what we bought 5, 10, 15 or 20 years ago, and the fact that we purchased those items legally?'. The bill can also be used in a pernicious way by the authorities to get at people they believe are criminals. It is imperative that Parliament safeguard the freedom of people without giving too much power to the police under these circumstances.

There is also the three strikes element. The bill creates a new class of person known as the continual criminal enterprise offender. This will occur if a person is convicted of three criminal offences involving, on each occasion, amounts in excess of $50 000. A maximum for the third offence will be double the normal amount.

This is another example of the American model starting to creep into our system of justice. It is not acceptable. Under the bill the discretion remains with judges, which is welcome, but the next step, which is of great concern to us, is where under the 'three strikes and you're out' system a person who steals a pizza can end up in gaol for 25 years. The private prisons will make enormous profits out of the judicial system because we will be throwing people into gaol in an inappropriate way.

I moved the reasoned amendment on the basis that there is a concern about innocent persons having their property forfeited by the state, but also the bill does not deal with the issue of gaining proceeds from substantial corporate crime. If we are going down the track of forfeiting property and assets from people because of serious drug offences we must look also at the corporate criminal element, which does an enormous amount of damage in society. For instance, the Farrows of the world have destroyed many lives, yet they get away scot-free. All their assets are given away to their sons and daughters. These are the people whom the bill should be targeting. It should also target people who have stolen $66 million worth of funds illegally; they steal the assets of older people and those who have saved all their lives, placing them in a terrible financial situation. Honourable members know who I am talking about, but those people are not targeted.

Because of the Mitcham by-election the opposition will ultimately support the bill. We will not give the government any reason to change the course of history on Saturday because of the bill. The reasoned amendment takes into account the opposition's concerns about cracking down on the levels of crime and catching the real offenders in society.

Hon. P. A. KATSAMBANIS (Monash) — I speak in favour of the bill and against the reasoned amendment. I do not want to take up too much of the indulgence of the house, but I preface my comments by saying that I do not share the cynical view of the legal system that Mr Nardella put. Mr Nardella's cynical view verged on contempt of the legal system. Having had considerable experience within the legal system, I expect it to uphold certain rights, privileges and protections afforded to the community. All the stakeholders in the system — the judiciary, legal officers, lawyers and the police, who are at the coalface in enforcing the criminal justice system — act diligently and faithfully in the execution of their duties and in upholding the rights afforded to them by the legal system. I reject Mr Nardella's contemptuous view of the system. The reasoned amendment appears to be based in some way on the negative view I have just rejected.

I will address some points Mr Nardella made and the issues he raised in the reasoned amendment. Mr Nardella makes two points in his reasoned amendment. The first is that he would like to see innocent persons precluded from having their property forfeited by the state. In no way does the bill interfere with the rights of innocent persons. It sets up three heads of confiscation — forfeiture, automatic forfeiture and civil forfeiture. The first two, forfeiture and automatic forfeiture, will not occur unless there is a criminal conviction.

In the case of civil forfeiture, although there may not be a criminal conviction proven beyond reasonable doubt, there needs to be a finding of guilt on the balance of probabilities and a trying of the facts of the case, which is the civil test for proving guilt. In no way will innocent people have any reason to fear. In fact there will have to be a finding of guilt either on the balance of probabilities or beyond reasonable doubt before any of the provisions are actionable.

It is novel that we are using provisions such as civil forfeiture and the test of the balance of probabilities rather than the higher test of a matter being beyond reasonable doubt, but we have seen that when courts — judges in particular — apply the rules of forfeiture and civil evidence in such cases, they use the high test. Again, it is part of the checks and balances of protections built into the legal system to ensure that innocent people are not jeopardised.

Having studied the provisions of the bill I do not believe anyone who is innocent will suffer forfeiture or confiscation.

There may be people who cannot have their evidence proved beyond a reasonable doubt. In the famous O. J. Simpson case in the United States there was a finding of not guilty beyond reasonable doubt, but in a separate hearing a finding of guilt was made on the balance of probabilities. In a similar way people who are found guilty will be subject to confiscation in very limited circumstances as outlined in schedule 3 — circumstances relating to serious drug trafficking, serious drug cultivation or conspiracy to commit such crimes. I do not believe innocent people will suffer as a result of the legislation.

What brought home to me that this is good legislation was that having discussed the measures with the community — because I was uneasy about using these tests — I found that generally the Victorian public welcomed the provisions. People are fed up with seeing the Mr Bigs of drug trafficking getting away without effective penalties and sanctions and enjoying the profits of their illegality. The community wholeheartedly supports the provisions.

The second point Mr Nardella makes in his reasoned amendment is that he would like to see the legislation address the issue of the proceeds from substantial corporate crime. Mr Nardella should read the bill. He would find it does exactly what he requests the house to do. Schedule 2, the automatic forfeiture offences schedule, specifically includes people who have obtained property by deception or financial advantage by deception. My understanding of those crimes is that they are the types of substantial corporate crimes Mr Nardella referred to such as fraud — obtaining property or financial advantage by deception. The matter is clearly covered in the legislation. The provisions will ensure that criminals who benefit from substantial corporate crime, as Mr Nardella said, will face the full consequences of their actions. They will be punished not only through criminal sanctions but by having the benefits of their illegality confiscated. This is good legislation.

In further addressing the point Mr Nardella made, I point out that there are significant claw-back provisions that will enable the authorities to cut through the web of deceit and the handing down and hiding of property through trusts or other family members and will allow for effective enforcement. It is clear the bill addresses the two grounds Mr Nardella puts. The reasoned amendment is unreasonable and illogical, and follows a long pattern of illogical and unreasonable amendments with which the opposition has burdened the house on an almost daily basis.

I shall touch on some other issues. Mr Nardella referred to the reverse of the onus of proof. There are similar provisions in the Income Tax Assessment Act, and similar confiscation legislation was introduced in the past few years in both the New South Wales Parliament under a Labor government and in the commonwealth Parliament, also under a Labor government.

Having talked to people in the community about the provisions as part of the public debate and community consultation, I have found people are generally supportive of the provisions and would say to someone, 'Hang on, where did you get that from?'. Most of us could prove where we acquired a television set, a motor vehicle or a boat — I do not have a boat, but those who have should be able to prove where they acquired them. The people who work on the edges of society and in illegal activities will find it very hard. I shed few tears about reversing the onus of proof for those people.

Mr Nardella referred to legal aid. The cost incurred through legal aid for prosecuting people under the system will be reimbursed from the profits of confiscation of their assets. There will be a net balancing of the budget for legal aid. No additional expenditure from the legal aid budget will be allocated to those sorts of crimes.

On more than one occasion Mr Nardella has suggested that people with significant financial resources use those resources to engage costly and smart lawyers to get them off charges on legal technicalities. He said that corrupts our justice system. Mr Nardella cannot have his cake and eat it too. The government is trying to ensure through this bill that the people subject to this regime obtain adequate legal support and do not go on fishing expeditions using up their assets that would otherwise be confiscated, and that they do not have liens on legal fees so that states cannot reap the profits of their criminal activities.

Mr Nardella also touched on the question of professional privilege and mentioned clause 106. Legal professional privilege is just that: it is an absolute right conferred on the legal profession by the community. If the community deems it is in the

public interest, justice may be served by removing that privilege. I have talked to many people who are comfortable in saying, 'If a lawyer is withholding significant criminal evidence it is right to request that he or she provide that information to the authorities'.

The proposed legislation is extremely complex. It contains 176 pages of substantive provisions. I commend the draftspersons for having produced a 55-page explanatory memorandum that deals effectively with extremely difficult legal concepts. Anyone reading the bill can at a glance, by using the explanatory memorandum and the provisions, understand exactly what it is about. I commend the draftspersons on doing such a wonderful job, especially in explaining the difficult and complex provisions so adequately. I commend the bill to the house and request honourable members to treat the reasoned amendment with the contempt it deserves.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

The PRESIDENT — Order! I welcome to the house the Honourable Max Willis, President of the Legislative Council of the New South Wales Parliament. A close working relationship exists between the Victorian and New South Wales Parliaments. Mr Willis always cooperates with the officers and members of this Parliament. I welcome him here today.

Honourable Members — Hear, hear!

CONFISCATION BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Hon. B. T. PULLEN (Melbourne) — I shall make several straightforward points about the Confiscation Bill. The way the measure has been produced by the government does not measure up to the importance of the legislation. It is another example of the government treating interested parties with contempt — a word used by Mr Katsambanis. In this case it is appropriate to consider the way the public has been treated with contempt.

In the minister's second-reading speech the government relies upon the work of Peter Faris, QC, and to some extent the work of the Premier's Drug Advisory Council to justify the provisions in the bill. But the work of Peter Faris has not been available to the public. It has not been published in a way that it can be reviewed. The lessons drawn from the Premier's Drug Advisory Council have not been complete if you consider the question of relevance.

This legislation has some merit but its effect is diminished if it is not supported and owned by the community. Gaining that ownership and support is not assisted by introducing a bill of this complexity at short notice without any discussion or opportunity for people who are interested in such matters to examine how a fair balance is achieved between attacking crime at its economic base — and there are substantial arguments for attacking the economic bases of crime — and at the same time, protecting the liberties of other Victorians. Getting that balance right is crucial to get the support of the community for the measures contained in the bill.

I have been approached by many citizens who express concern from what they hear about ways the legislation may affect them in ways they do not yet understand. Had all the arguments been put and an opportunity provided, a number of people would be prepared to accept most of the measures in the bill as being effective and able to assist the victims of crime and to alleviate harm from crime. But they have not had that opportunity.

As to relying on the Premier's Drug Advisory Council and the economic implications of the work of that council, the bill deals with only one aspect of the political economy of drugs and our understanding of methods used to defeat the evils of drugs. It considers the proceeds of crime rather than examining the motivations of crime in the drug market, the actual marketing of drugs being one of the most significant inducements for people to become involved in the drug industry.

At the moment, we are not brave enough to address that in legislation, and particularly the question posed by the Premier's Drug Advisory Council to decriminalise the use of marijuana. We should take up seriously the harm-reduction practices in managing drug use that obtain in Holland.

We must face up to our lack of bravery and come to understand the logic. We could be causing harm because we are putting heroin on the streets at a cheaper price than that paid for marijuana. Unlike the Dutch, we are not prepared to be pragmatic about dealing with a less harmful substance. By default the marketing of the more harmful

substance, heroin, is facilitated. The claim that this approach to the problem arises from the report of the Premier's Drug Advisory Council is only half right and does not address the causes of the problem.

I now refer to clause 143, which deals with the payment of legal expenses. I ask the minister to respond to my concerns on that clause. The second-reading speech cites the well-known Operation Tableau case in Queensland when 12 defendants were able to spend $1.2 million in legal fees to defend themselves when there was a strong suspicion that their money was of the kind the legislation was trying to confiscate. The purpose of the provision is to restrain the use of those resources, thereby preventing the person charged from using that money on a bet-for-nothing basis to defend himself or herself at trial.

That is achieved by the way the legislation is drafted. The second-reading speech refers to the preservation of the person's basic rights. It states:

> Under the changes, defendants will no longer be allowed to access restrained property for legal expenses. However, if a person has insufficient unrestrained assets or income to pay for legal expenses, the court may order that they receive legal assistance. This ensures that they will be properly represented and will not be deprived of a fair trial.

The question not answered in the minister's speech is: what burden will it place on legal aid? The kinds of trials we are discussing are likely to be long and expensive, and if too many people draw upon legal aid many others will be deprived of access to it for their defence.

I ask the minister to assure the house that at the very least any money drawn under this provision from the funds of legal aid will be absolutely replaced, either by direct appropriation by government or by the proceeds of the successful operation of the legislation to confiscate other funds. It would be a totally unintended but extremely damaging result if the bill resulted in reduced legal aid service. I ask the minister to assure the house that that is not the intention and to provide an absolute guarantee that the government will ensure that that will not occur.

House divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 31

Asher, Ms	Hallam, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs (*Teller*)
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
de Fegely, Mr	Varty, Mrs
Forwood, Mr (*Teller*)	Wells, Dr
Furletti, Mr	Wilding, Mrs
Hall, Mr	

Noes, 8

Eren, Mr	Power, Mr (*Teller*)
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr
Nardella, Mr (*Teller*)	Theophanous, Mr
Nguyen, Mr	Walpole, Mr

Pairs

Mr Baxter	Mrs McLean
Mr P.R. Davis	Miss Gould

Amendment negatived.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am of the opinion that the passage of the second and third readings require to be passed by an absolute majority of the whole numbers of the house. I ask honourable members supporting the passage of the second reading to again stand in their places.

Required number of members having risen:

Motion agreed to by absolute majority.

Read second time.

Third reading

Hon. LOUISE ASHER (Minister for Small Business) — By leave, I move:

> That this bill be now read a third time.

I thank Mr Nardella and Mr Pullen for their comments on the bill, and I particularly thank Mr Katsambanis for responding on a whole range of issues, particularly those raised by Mr Nardella.

In response to the question about legal aid raised by Mr Pullen, I have sought advice and I am advised that in the case of a person who has assets and who could have funded his or her own defence but for

the existence of a restraining order, different mechanisms are available for funding relating to Victoria Legal Aid.

I am further advised that Victoria Legal Aid is provided with a charge over any restrained land. If a person is convicted and property is forfeited, or a penalty is paid to the state, the state must pay Victoria Legal Aid to the value of property forfeited or penalty paid, less any conversion costs and any payments to victims of the offence. If a person is acquitted, Victoria Legal Aid has its usual rights and powers to recover money it has expended and the restrained property can then be used to recover its costs. I trust these comments will alleviate Mr Pullen's concerns.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I ask honourable members supporting the passage of the third reading of the bill to stand in their places.

Required number of members having risen:

Motion agreed to by absolute majority.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

Family services: Broad Insight group

Hon. C. J. HOGG (Melbourne North) — The matter I raise for the attention of the Minister for Health, who is the representative in this house of the Minister for Youth and Community Services, is the Broad Insight group, a key organisation within the City of Hume which assists families who have a child with a disability.

As the minister would be aware, Hume City Council, the primary catchment for the service, is a growth municipality with a substantial percentage of its people in the young age group. All agencies and families in contact with Broad Insight would agree, I believe, that this early intervention agency does a terrific job. It has, however, suffered federal government funding cuts and has had no state government funding increase for three years. Even with a one-off $30 000 granted from the Hume City Council, Broad Insight continues to have growing waiting lists. Indeed, 30 families are on the waiting list while 95 families are currently visiting the service.

Broad Insight provides pre-kindergarten programs, physiotherapy, speech therapy and home-based programs for very young children who require individual attention. It is of necessity a labour-intensive operation and badly needs more staff than the 7.6 full-time staff it currently has. It will not be able to cope with the demand for its services unless the state government's annual grant is increased by at least the equivalent of the consumer price index.

The strains on a family with a disabled child are immense. Broad Insight gives invaluable and timely assistance and, as I am sure Mr Nardella would agree because we both represent the area, it makes a real difference to people's lives. However, if the group is to begin to cope with the increased demand it will need assistance. I ask the minister to draw his colleague's attention to the matter and to advocate for his assistance.

Western Port Highway: Lyndhurst

Hon. R. H. BOWDEN (South Eastern) — I seek the assistance of the Minister for Roads and Ports in relation to a section of the Western Port Highway that is commonly known as the Lyndhurst section north of Thompsons Road. In recent years the section of that highway south of Thompsons Road has been dramatically upgraded and improved and is a very pleasing infrastructure facility. Thousands of my constituents travel that road daily. However, the section north of Thompsons Road gives cause for concern. During the past six weeks there has been a major tanker explosion and numerous deaths have been reported in many separate accidents.

I would appreciate any information the minister can provide in relation to when that section of the highway may be upgraded or what the specific plans for it may be.

Metropolitan Ambulance Service: tenders

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The Minister for Health will recall that some time ago I raised some matters with him in relation to Bill Rich Special Services. In due course the minister provided

me with a response on the tender process and a range of other matters.

I do not know whether the minister is aware of this, but another set of tender processes has taken place through the MAS for a new round of ambulances. Bill Rich Special Services decided to put behind it the issues I had raised with the minister which were subsequently examined and sorted through and had, in conjunction with a company called Skilled Equipment Manufacturing, arranged to put in a tender for a new round of ambulances that had been put out to tender by the MAS. I have a letter from Skilled Equipment Manufacturing addressed to Mr Rutherford of Bill Rich Special Services. It outlines what took place and why the tender was late. The minister might be aware that in fact the tender was 6 minutes late in arriving.

The circumstances outlined in the letter are that the sealed tender documentation left Ballarat at 1.30 p.m., which allowed 2½ hours to drive to the Doncaster headquarters of the Metropolitan Ambulance Service. Two cars were despatched to provide a back-up should any unforeseen events occur. That is how seriously the company approached the issue. Unfortunately, the drivers came across an accident on the Western Highway at Ballarat Road, Melbourne, which forced them to divert from the planned route along the Eastern Freeway. The drivers crossed the West Gate Bridge, drove along the South Eastern Freeway and up Burke Road to Doncaster Road. They had considerable difficulty because they experienced heavier than expected traffic and as a result arrived 6 minutes late.

The company noted in its letter that it telephoned MAS prior to the 4.00 p.m. deadline and advised that the car would be arriving a few minutes late delivering the tender documents. According to the letter from the company, which I am happy to make available to the minister, MAS received the sealed tender but then advised that the tender could not be accepted. Skilled Equipment Manufacturing put an enormous amount of effort into preparing the tender. It has provided documentation, including an incident report from the accident on the freeway from a MICA-8 ambulance that attended the incident.

Any fair-minded person would agree that because the drivers rang beforehand and made every effort to arrive on time but were 6 minutes late, the company's tender should be considered. Will the minister reconsider allowing the bid to be considered by MAS?

National anti-smoking campaign

Hon. D. McL. DAVIS (East Yarra) — I direct to the attention of the Minister for Health the importance of tobacco as a public health issue. Indeed, tobacco usage is almost certainly the most significant public health issue facing Victoria and Australia today. Tobacco is known to be the single largest cause of preventable death and disease both in Victoria and Australia. It is likely to cause more than 19 000 deaths or disease in Victorians and Australians each year. It is a significant issue.

The general health effects of smoking are well known. In this matter I rely on information from a number of recent American studies and on some of the background materials of the national tobacco campaign. However, what is not as well known is that much of the damage caused by tobacco begins early in life and steadily worsens. Even relatively light smoking has a series of significant, sometimes irreversible, effects. They include arterial and lung damage. New research clearly shows that smoking begins serious damage from the earliest stages of usage. A recent article in the journal *Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology* makes clear from studies that it is possible to tell if a person of 15, 20 or 30 years of age is a smoker. The study examines the aortas of young road accident victims within hours of death for evidence of arteriosclerosis that is associated with heart disease.

The study looked at the aortas of people who had undergone serious trauma; it examined them soon after changes were found in the lining of the arteries.

The negative effects of smoking on the lungs have been known for many years: since the 1950s in relation to the lungs specifically, but recent evidence in this area makes it clear that the effects of injury and the early harm cigarettes do to smokers' lungs are strong. Recent US Department of Health and Human Services studies on chronic obstructive lung disease and similar work on smoking cessation reveal that smoking paralyses and can completely destroy the cilia which line the upper airways, increasing the likelihood of infection.

Smoking destroys alveoli, the air sacs that absorb oxygen. The irritation produces phlegm and narrows airways. Breathing becomes harder. Long term there is a large and clearly defined risk of chronic bronchitis, repeated chest infections and

worsened asthma, and in a clear number of cases lung cancer. Lung cancer is caused by the tar in tobacco, and again, the US survey indicates that men are 10 times more likely to die from lung cancer.

The government, the community as a whole and health care practitioners in particular have a responsibility to deal with this issue in an ongoing manner. I ask the Minister for Health: what steps will the government continue to take to deal with this significant public health issue?

Member for Narracan

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I refer the Minister for Finance, in his capacity as minister responsible for Workcover, to the fact that in 1989 the now member for Narracan in the other place, Mr Florian Andrighetto, was receiving Workcover benefits for a stress-related injury allegedly caused by his work as a police officer. While on Workcover Mr Andrighetto resisted returning to work even after encouragement by his superior officers because he refused to ever work — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! The honourable member knows the rules about imputations against a member of this house or the other house; it must be done by substantive motion. Unless the member can persuade me, I am not prepared to hear him further on the matter.

Victorian Country Racing Council

Hon. R. A. BEST (North Western) — I raise for the attention of the Minister for Tourism a funding application by the Victorian Country Racing Council concerning the fourth annual conference of country racing to be held in Bendigo between 26 March and 29 March 1998. An estimated 400 people will attend the meeting, of whom 200 will come from interstate. There has been an extensive promotion campaign throughout the 360 country racing clubs in Australia. The conference provides an opportunity for Bendigo not only to promote its tourist attractions but also its excellent racing facilities. Is the minister in a position to assist with some funding for this very worthwhile project?

Standing orders

Hon. N. B. LUCAS (Eumemmerring) — I address a matter to you, Mr President, to do with the rules, traditions and etiquette of the house. Yesterday debate on the Audit (Amendment) Bill began early in the morning and continued for almost 21 hours. Issues dealing with the Auditor-General took up most of that time. The Leader of the Opposition led that debate. As the record shows, it is no secret the Leader of the Opposition apparently deliberately failed to vote on the issue he led, on which he had spoken for more than 3 hours and which he as the Leader of the Opposition had spread out over 21-odd hours, much to the dismay of many honourable members.

I ask you, Mr President, whether any standing order has been broken or whether any of the traditions or rules of etiquette would indicate that a member such as the Leader of the Opposition, who spent so much time leading a debate and stringing it out in such a way, should have the responsibility to cast a vote?

The PRESIDENT — Order! I think the honourable member has asked the question and is now trying to give me the answer.

Wimmera: chemotherapy support group

Hon. R. S. de FEGELY (Ballarat) — The matter I raise with the Minister for Health is on behalf of the Wimmera chemotherapy support group, which is seeking to have chemotherapy services provided at the Wimmera Base Hospital in Horsham. This hardworking group has for some time been concerned about getting chemotherapy services provided at the hospital. The group put together a petition bearing 18 085 signatures but, I regret, it was not in a suitable form to present to the house. Will the minister inform the house what measures are being taken to provide extended oncology services to cancer sufferers in the Wimmera region so I can report back to the support group?

MCG: sporting events

Hon. I. J. COVER (Geelong) — The matter I raise with the Minister for Tourism concerns the fact that sport in Victoria, and specifically in Melbourne, is linked to tourism. During the year many overseas visitors came to see the Bledisloe Cup played at the MCG. The cup will be played again at the MCG next year. The World Cup soccer was recently played at the MCG and attracted big crowds from overseas and interstate.

For many years cricket has been played at the MCG, attracting international teams. Last night while we were debating matters in this place an international one-day cricket match was played between South Africa and Australia. The match attracted

more than 50 000 people. Next week New Zealand will play Australia in another preliminary match in the World Series Cup. South Africa will return for the Boxing Day test, which is a major event on the Melbourne and Victorian sporting calendar.

For some time the Victorian Cricket Association has recognised the potential opportunities arising from visitors from overseas, interstate and regional Victoria. It seeks to build on that tradition. Will the minister explain how Tourism Victoria can develop the tourist opportunities offered by cricket?

Rail: Boronia crossing

Hon. G. B. ASHMAN (Koonung) — The Minister for Roads and Ports will be aware of the major reconstruction of the Boronia railway crossing, a project sought by the local community for at least 30 years. The project, which will cost about $25 million, is proceeding quickly and generating interest from the local community. The speed of the project's development is such that local traders are now concerned that the next stage of the crossing's reconstruction may interfere with traffic flows in the lead-up to the Christmas retail period. Traders have posed the feasibility of rescheduling a couple of the stages so that construction continues on the crossing of the Boronia and Dorset roads section prior to Christmas and that the other section continues through January.

The other issue they have raised with me is the feasibility of installing viewing platforms on the construction site. There is significant interest in the local community in viewing the works, which are quite complex. I ask the minister to indicate to the retailers whether it is feasible to look at the schedule of works on that site.

Responses

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — Mrs Hogg raised a matter for the Minister for Youth and Community Services in another place. She drew attention to the difficulties the Broad Insight Group is having in meeting the demand for support for disabled children. Her request for consideration by my colleague of financial assistance for that group will be passed on.

Mr Theophanous raised a matter with me about a late tender submitted by Skilled Equipment Manufacturing Pty Ltd. Honourable members who have followed the debate will be aware that this has been a subject of previous representations by Mr Theophanous. As a result of those representations an investigation has been begun to ensure that in the future the company will be given the opportunity to tender.

Skilled Equipment is a Ballarat firm and the issue raised by the Leader of the Opposition has been drawn to my attention by my colleagues Paul Jenkins and Barry Traynor, the honourable members for Ballarat West and Ballarat East in the other place. It is a difficult issue and was the subject of a lot of discussion by the department with the MAS, looking at whether the MAS could find a way of accepting a late tender. The difficulty is that the government has adopted a quite explicit code of practice about the protocols and procedures that precludes late tenders from being examined.

I am working from memory of the issue but I will certainly provide Mr Theophanous with the details. He will understand that if it were possible for the tender to be considered I would have an electoral as well as a ministerial interest in that happening because Skilled Equipment is an important firm in Ballarat and provides much-needed employment there. I understand his concern and I am sympathetic to it. However, I am sure he will understand that governments have to ensure that the protocols and procedures that are put in place are observed because not observing them brings the tendering process into disrepute.

Hon. W. R. Baxter — Which he would rightly criticise.

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — Yes. It is very important for governments to maintain the integrity of the tendering process — and it can be very frustrating for those who miss out.

Mr David Davis raised with me a concern that is reflected in the broader community about the impact of tobacco consumption on health. He commented on the initiatives that have been taken to reduce levels of smoking. Victoria has a very good record in this area, particularly through the Anti-Cancer Council, the Quit campaign and Vichealth, to the extent that smoking levels have been reduced to the lowest level ever.

However, there are some worrying clouds on the horizon. Too many young people are still taking up smoking, and the smoking rates among women are a matter of concern. In only a few short years there will be more deaths among women from lung cancer than from breast cancer. The change that has taken

place over recent years certainly reflects the increased level of smoking. Victoria has been involved with the commonwealth government on the issue, and the commonwealth has funded quite aggressive television campaigns. Victoria supports the campaigns and will continue to develop new ways of trying to keep the focus on reducing the level of smoking.

Mr de Fegely raised with me the important issue of the Horsham local community's push to retain quality services in the town to serve the Wimmera area. The local group has circulated a petition and has gathered more than 18 000 signatures, which represents a significant commitment. The petition was addressed to me as Minister for Health by the group, which hoped it would be tabled in Parliament. Unfortunately it cannot be tabled because of the way it is worded.

Mr de Fegely's raising of his concern enables me to get on the public record that the petition has been received and is being considered. Turning to what can be done, it is a matter for the clinicians, particularly the oncologist service which is currently based in Ballarat and which conducts a weekly service at Horsham. However, it requires those who need chemotherapy to go to Ballarat for treatment, and honourable members will be only too aware of the dislocation and discomfort that can cause for patients.

If oncology services can be obtained the government is committed to trying to extend such services. The Ballarat oncology group is currently trying to attract an additional oncologist to Ballarat. If that occurs the group has indicated it will provide a more comprehensive service in Horsham. The department has been working with both the physicians at Horsham and the oncologists at Ballarat to see whether it is possible to develop an interim arrangement. That has not proved to be clinically possible at this stage.

However, the government is keen to work with the cancer support group at the Wimmera Base Hospital and do everything in its power to try to help the community achieve its desire — the provision of oncology services in Horsham.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Minister for Roads and Ports) — Mr Bowden raised the important issue of the Western Port Highway at Lyndhurst. As honourable members will be aware, the government has spent a significant amount of money on the duplication of the Western Port Highway south of that area. As one leaves the Mulgrave Freeway one encounters a narrow rural-type road with a busy railway crossing. Trains now frequently travel along the electrified line to Cranbourne, which increases the traffic through the crossing.

The planning phase for that section of the road has been completed. As most honourable members know, the works will involve a grade separation at the railway crossing. When a large amount of work such as that is required, costs can escalate. I assure the honourable member that, following his representations and those from Mr Smith and Mr Rowe, the member for Cranbourne in another place, the project now has a high priority. I look forward to funding being made available in the foreseeable future to enable the completion of the link to that important part of the Mornington Peninsula, which is one of Victoria's most colourful and frequently visited areas. Of course, during the forthcoming summer months increasing numbers of people will be using those routes, so it is important that we give the matter a high priority.

Mr Ashman referred to one of the coalition government's success stories in providing funding for a project that the Labor Party never committed itself to — in fact, it made promises but did not deliver. I refer to the Boronia rail crossing. I assure the traders of Boronia that the project is progressing well. Most people understand that the job is complex. Many roads intersect at the crossing and there are many strip shops in the vicinity. The work is difficult to manage, but I assure the people of Boronia and the traders in particular that the traffic plans will be adjusted to facilitate Christmas trading so that they will not be dramatically disadvantaged.

Honourable members who are familiar with the area know that we cannot halt the project. However, we can minimise the impact it will have on local traders. I am encouraged by the level of community interest. I expect Mr Ashman and other local MPs will be the first on the viewing platform to see the progress being made. I look forward to seeing them there when it is finished. It is yet another magnificent project being delivered by the government.

Hon. LOUISE ASHER (Minister for Tourism) — Mr Best raised with me an application from the Victorian Country Racing Council to market and promote Country Racing Australia 1998, which is a national annual conference. The March 1998 conference will be held in Bendigo. As honourable members will be aware, the government is keen to attract a range of events, conferences and

conventions to country Victoria. Tourism Victoria has a small budget to assist in the marketing and promotion of those events. About 50 per cent of the visitors will come from interstate, so Tourism Victoria will be delighted to fund this important convention. I am happy to announce tonight that on departmental advice I have approved a $10 000 grant to Mr Best.

Mr Cover raised the tourism potential of cricket. He used a particularly interesting lobbying technique on me, which, even though honourable members are tired I feel duty bound to disclose, lest they judge me to have been led astray. He asked me to a Victorian Cricket Association lunch to prepare me for some heavy lobbying from the VCA. He sat me in between Clive Lloyd and Michael Holding and opposite Allan Border. I had an enjoyable lunch and an enjoyable series of conversations. I am now convinced about the tourism potential of cricket.

Mr Cover and the Victorian Cricket Association were not seeking from me a grant of any description, but rather they raised the fact that although in Victoria we have extracted good economic and tourism benefits from the spring racing carnival, the AFL grand final and so on, some assistance was needed in the promotion and packaging of the MCG, obviously using Melbourne as a tourist destination for cricket fans.

The VCA put to me that with both the New Zealanders and the South Africans in town, the excess capacity at the MCG would give us real opportunity for accommodating additional overseas tourists in Victoria. To that end Tourism Victoria has developed several product development projects. The Victorian Cricket Association will feature in the Serving Summer Live series. We have put together a range of hospitality packages on the major cricket days for both the Boxing Day test and the one-day internationals. Theme days have been arranged for the Boxing Day tests. Day 1 is a home side breakfast at Crown Casino with river transport to the MCG; and day 2 is the away-side activities, with lunches and a chance to meet the players.

I look forward to the West Indies side touring here again and I thank Mr Cover for his interest in regional tourism. The Victorian Cricket Association is working closely with regional cricket associations to secure more group travel from the Boxing Day test to regional Victoria. This is the first time we have ever promoted cricket to international tourists, and we have been successful. I thank Mr Cover for drawing this matter to my attention in a most spectacular way.

Although we have been smart in terms of using the MCG for tourism through the Bledisloe Cup and the soccer, I am a traditionalist. My favourite use of the MCG is and will always be as Essendon's home ground.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Lucas addressed a question to me. He asked whether there was any rule or standing order requiring a member who has had the carriage of the legislation for his party throughout a long debate to vote on the final passage of the bill. I think he is referring to the Leader of the Opposition in this place not voting on the third reading of the Audit (Amendment) Bill. Although that is a curious outcome, I know of no such rule.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 6.58 p.m.

Thursday, 11 December 1997

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. A. Chamberlain) took the chair at 10.02 a.m. and read the prayer.

PETITION

Workcover: changes

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) presented a petition from certain citizens of Victoria requesting in respect of Workcover that the government —

(a) reject any proposals to further limit access to common law for injuries or illnesses;

(b) maintain the right of workers to choose their own medical or health practitioner;

(c) improve access to, and levels of benefits, by restructuring payments to one level after 26 weeks;

(d) improve access to independent rehabilitation services and return-to-work opportunities;

(e) increase average premiums in line with the Australian average rather than reduce rights and entitlements; and

(f) improve health and safety standards and enforcement in the workplace.

(2865 signatures)

Laid on table.

PAPER

Laid on table by Clerk:

Road Safety Act 1986 — Notice of Standards required for Registration of Motor Vehicles and Trailers, pursuant to sections 10 and 96 of the Act (*Gazette* No. S149, 28 November 1997).

ACCIDENT COMPENSATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 9 December; motion of Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance).

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The opposition believes the real test of a successful workers compensation system is whether it is fair to both injured workers and employers. It is a good system only if it is balanced and looks after injured workers as well as being fair to them. In addition, the scheme must minimise administration costs and provide rehabilitation to assist workers to return to meaningful jobs while preventing accidents from happening in the workplace by providing appropriate health and safety strategies.

The Kennett government Workcover system is clearly not working. It is not enough to achieve lower premiums for some employers — and 30 per cent of employers, mostly small businesses, have not received the benefit of reduced premiums — if most genuinely injured workers are experiencing dramatically increased suffering and trauma.

Labor is committed to obtaining a self-funded Victorian Workcover Authority with no unfunded liabilities. Labor believes a successful scheme is one that gets the balance right by providing fair benefits while avoiding inefficient administration and excessive medical and legal costs. It should be accessible to injured workers and employers, particularly in the rehabilitation and safety field, and be open to scrutiny.

The Kennett government system has failed these important tests. The bill is an admission of this failure because it does two things: firstly, it increases premiums to employers by $100 million, and secondly, it slashes benefits for workers. On both counts, in terms of employers and workers, the proposed legislation is an admission of failure. The plan to remove all common-law rights for injured workers represents the most savage attack on workers in the history of this state. It is another example of failure. The legislation in effect gives de facto protection to the culpable, the guilty, the negligent and the criminal. It is the final and most brutal phase of a reform commenced in 1992 that will deny injured workers access to fair and just compensation for their injuries.

The legislation is born of hypocrisy. Time and again government members have said in this chamber that they support common law and individual rights to seek common law. The legislation is a betrayal of liberal philosophy which provides for the protection of the individual and the individual's privilege to pursue his or her rights under the rule of law. Liberal philosophy is about those great principles enunciated by John Stuart Mill and other great liberal thinkers.

The bill represents failure and hypocrisy, and the opposition will oppose it vigorously. During the committee stage the opposition will move more than 100 amendments in an endeavour to persuade the government to see the light and recognise that the legislation will not have the effect it thinks it will but rather will be detrimental to employers and employees.

The ultimate hypocrisy is that the Premier is retaining his right to sue at common law for defamation whenever he believes his feelings have been hurt by someone making a statement he does not like. The Premier can take members of the media to court if they make certain comments about him. Although the Premier retains his common-law rights to sue, employees who are injured at work have no right to do so. Employees who lose an arm or a leg, or who become paraplegics or quadriplegics, will no longer have the right to sue — a right that has been embedded in our legal system for hundreds of years.

The minister responsible for Workcover keeps saying, 'Yes, but they will have other rights'. I will refer to those other rights during the course of the debate. The right to sue at common law is a right that should be preserved on the basis of liberal philosophy, social policy and social equity.

The proposed legislation has created a divided society. Victoria has had a number of strikes, and they are set to continue, because the government refuses to listen. It is another example of, as we saw with the audit legislation, one man's will being imposed on the community. It is an example of acting not in the interests of the many but in the interests of a few. There would have been no strikes if the government simply understood that Workcover is meant to be about protecting those who work so that the state can keep on the move — Victorians who build our houses, put out fires, care for hospital patients and manufacture our products.

To understand this sad saga one has to understand what has happened so far. Over the past five years the government made extensive changes to the old Workcare system. The former Labor government managed to reduce by half the unfunded liability of that system.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Down to about $2 billion!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It was reduced by 50 per cent and was due to come down further. The Kennett government decided to change the system and did so in the most ruthless way. Under Workcover workers have suffered while administrative and other costs have increased. The Workcover system introduced one of the toughest compensation regimes in Australia. Of the reforms include cancellation of weekly benefits for the vast majority of injured workers after a maximum period of two years. Most benefits end within a matter of months. Access to common law under the current scheme is severely restricted to those cases defined as severely injured and above 30 per cent whole of body. The loss of a foot represents 28 per cent on the AMA whole-of-body scale guides. This test of serious injury is a very severe test.

Following the introduction of Workcover journey injuries were removed so that workers compensation no longer applied to people travelling to and from work. The workplace now has to be shown to be a significant contributing factor before a claim is accepted. The 1993 legislation reduced the number of workers who could receive compensation and made a number of workers ineligible for common-law claims. The changes were introduced with brutal force and have had a devastating effect on the community, including lengthy delays in the courts. In the new conciliation system workers wait without payment to have cases settled. Rehabilitation services were forced to shut down and other rehabilitation services were sold. Approximately 5000 workers were removed from rehabilitation in the early stages of the reforms. Some 16 000 workers were dumped from the system as the changes were introduced. That figure included 3000 government employees, and little or no effort was made to find any employment for them, let alone suitable employment. It resulted in an estimated annual cost to the Department of Social Security of more than $65 million — a cost borne by all taxpayers. It was one of the ways in which the system's costs were reduced.

It is important to again put on the record the fact that although the government talks about how it has reduced the unfunded liabilities in Workcover the main way unfunded liabilities were reduced had nothing to do with administrative or efficiency savings. The reduction in unfunded liabilities was a book entry brought about by legislative changes that took away the common-law rights of workers to compensation. It was estimated at the time that about $1.2 billion was wiped from unfunded liabilities simply as a result of the legislative changes introduced by the government. For the benefit of honourable members who do not understand the simple equation, I will explain how it works.

If an actuarial firm such as Trowbridge Consulting were sent to examine the liabilities of Workcover, or the old Workcare scheme, the actuaries would examine the projected payments required under the system given the number of people on the system at the time. In doing so they would look at the entitlements of workers under the legislation. If entitlements are legislatively reduced the actuarial figures used to calculate the liabilities of the Workcover system are also immediately reduced, and that is what happened with Workcare — in effect, its unfunded liability was legislated out of existence. But at what cost? The entitlements and rights of workers suffered as a result of that action.

I remind honourable members that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Victorian Bar Council and almost all sections of the legal fraternity condemned the government for its sacking of nine Workcover tribunal judges at a cost of about $30 million. When the minister was confronted about his action, he replied, 'So what?'.

The Kennett government's changes to the workers compensation scheme have resulted in increased premiums for employers. The premiums of more than 30 per cent of employers, mainly in the small business and manufacturing sectors, including those that had made no Workcover claims, have increased each year since Workcover was introduced. The proportion of the total premiums pool paid by businesses that have payrolls of less than $1 million has increased from 50 per cent five years ago to 60 per cent today.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I know Mr Hartigan will be interested in that; he will surely tell Geelong employers about those figures. The new premiums structure has been a savage attack on small business — where most jobs are created — with many small businesses paying up to the equivalent of 8 per cent of their payrolls in premiums, even though many have never claimed on the system, while many large employers pay the equivalent of less than 1 per cent.

Employer on-costs have also increased. For example, the government introduced a requirement for employers to pay the first two weeks wages and the first $1200 of rehabilitation costs, in addition to having to meet top-up payments under various awards. It is estimated that had Workcover been required to cover those costs employer premiums would have increased by 25 per cent. Hidden employer costs have never been taken into account by the minister in making interstate comparisons of workers compensation schemes.

The bill is evidence that the Victorian Workcover system is in crisis. The system is not working despite all the pain and human misery it has inflicted on workers. Although the number of reported claims has decreased as a result of tougher guidelines, the number of serious injury claims has increased. According to the annual report of the Victorian Workcover Authority, in the past three years the number of Victorians classified as seriously injured — those with a more than 30 per cent whole-of-body impairment — has increased from 1700 to about 4000.

Despite the huge amount of money spent on advertising little is being done in the workplace to prevent accidents. Workplace strategies to reduce injuries are not working, as is evident from the number of serious injury claims. The number of qualified safety inspectors has been reduced and the number of prosecutions of negligent employers last year fell to 76 — less than half the 170 recorded in 1992, when the Labor Party was in government. Despite all the claims that the government is getting tough on employers who fail to introduce approved occupational health and safety work practices the real litmus test is the number of prosecutions of employers.

Rehabilitation strategies for getting people back to work are also failing miserably as measured by the increase in long-term claims. In the past three years the number of Victorians injured for longer than 12 months has increased from 8600 to nearly 11 000. The increases in serious injuries and long-term claimants are further evidence of the failure of the government and the Victorian WorkCover Authority.

The scheme's administrative costs have also blown out despite what the minister has said and despite his desperate attempt to get Arthur Andersen to justify the authority's finances. He has refused to call in the Auditor-General — although that would be difficult now given that the government has just nobbled the Auditor-General!

Hon. R. M. Hallam — He will not be persuaded by your bleating and ill-considered comments. All you have proved so far is that you cannot read an annual report.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — All the figures I have given the house have come from the annual report.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — No, the errors you made are from your mind.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The figures are from the annual report.

Hon. Bill Forwood — The interpretation is solely yours.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is my interpretation, is it? How could I misinterpret the increase in claims from 8600 to 11 000, Mr Forwood? I look forward to Mr Forwood's contribution. I look forward to his telling us why that is a measure of success, why $183 million — when it is added to the $98 million in medical and legal costs the total is $281 million — is an acceptable level of administrative costs. The minister should think about that — it is $281 million a year. I did not make up the figures, they are from the minister's annual report. Would the minister like me to quote from the report? That is what it costs to run the scheme.

Hon. Bill Forwood — You said 'administrative costs'.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mr Forwood should think about the fact that premiums collections from employers total about $900 million annually and it costs about $300 million to run the scheme — that is about $1 in every $3! I wonder what employers would think if they knew that, in paying their premiums, for every $2 they give towards compensation for injured workers they have to give another $1 towards the running costs of the Workcover Authority, which includes the salaries of the fat cats. I wonder what an employer who pays a yearly premium of $3000 would think if he knew he was paying an extra $1000 to pay for the Workcover Authority's mismanagement of the scheme. Those figures are undeniable. They come from the annual report — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Undeniable, but misconstrued — —

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You will get your turn, Minister. Will you tell us why it is all right for one dollar in every three to be spent on scheme administration? What is your answer?

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — It is not spent on administration. You know that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I will go through it again. A total of $183 million is spent — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — On?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — On the authority itself — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — On administration?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is spent on the administration of the authority, and then there are the medical and legal costs, which are part of the administration of the scheme.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — For your information, Mr Hartigan, when you put those together they come to nearly $300 million.

Hon. Bill Forwood interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That $300 million, Mr Forwood, is $300 million that does not go to injured workers. That is the point.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The debate will be difficult for all members. I have a list of 19 speakers, all of whom will speak for a fair period. It will help the house if the member who is speaking is heard in relative silence. If there are interjections they should come only one at a time, rather than two, three, four or five all at once. With a bit of tolerance, we will get through the day.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Thank you, Mr President. The government has already wreaked devastation on injured workers, but nothing better illustrates the incompetence and inhumanity of the Kennett government than its recently announced changes, which will further reduce compensation for injured workers while simultaneously increasing employer premiums by more than 10 per cent — or $100 million. To say you have to increase premiums by $100 million while cutting workers benefits is the ultimate admission of failure — in anybody's language.

The system is not working. The government's recently announced changes to the scheme are

nothing more than an attempt to cover up its mismanagement and its failure to ensure safe workplaces, which led to the cost blow-outs in the first place. I will give some examples of cost increases that have resulted from the government's mismanagement.

Not long ago the government attempted to reduce the number of common-law claims by introducing legislation that was designed to remove secondary psychological factors from the calculations for claims under the 30 per cent serious injury category. We told the government what would happen, and of course the inevitable happened — it did.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — We told you that once you make the distinction between secondary and primary psychological causes you have to find people who will tell you, from an expert's point of view, the differences between the two. Invariably the people who make those distinctions are psychiatrists. Is it any surprise that since that legislative change was made the use of psychiatrists has more than doubled? One psychiatrist makes a distinction, another psychiatrist challenges the distinction made by the first — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — All at about 200 bucks an hour.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Although Mr Hartigan did not understand that at the time, he supported the change — but now he tells us that he understood the level of psychiatric and psychological testing would increase! That change has benefited psychiatrists, not injured workers.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — It has benefited some workers.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I do not think the change has benefited any workers, Mr Hartigan, but it has certainly benefited psychiatrists, because the number of psychiatric assessments has doubled.

I will give the house another example of the government's mismanagement. The 26-week step-down period is to be replaced with a 13-week step-down period. Under the current system a full assessment is made of a worker after 26 weeks, and at that time he or she is often unable to go back to work. The government's insistence on a full medical assessment at 26 weeks, despite what the treating doctor may say, to see whether a worker remains seriously injured or is capable of going back to work is adding about $2000 to the cost of each case.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Let me know what doctor you are using, so I can avoid him.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is not just one assessment.

Government members interjecting.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It costs $2000. That is the average cost of deciding whether a worker should be regarded as seriously injured or not, and it takes 26 weeks to do the necessary assessment. That shows how much Mr Forwood knows about the system.

The problem is that neither Mr Forwood nor the minister knows much about the system at all. The minister has never bothered to go and talk to injured workers or to ask people how the system works. They love the minister down at the Victorian Workcover Authority; they think he is terrific because they think he is half intelligent. That is a dangerous thing in the bureaucracy, as I found out. The government has a minister that it thinks is half intelligent so it sticks him out there, feeds him with all this nonsense to build up his ego and says, 'You're a very intelligent minister. You understand the system and finances and X, Y and Z. We are telling you that we have to change the system in this way, so you go out there and do it'. The government uses that reasonable tone and sends him out.

The minister never talks to injured workers, never goes to see the effects of the devastation he is causing, never actually asks questions of anybody other than those in the Victorian Workcover Authority. He turns up to the cabinet with Andrew Lindberg and shows the slides to the rest of the ministry because the slide show at the Victorian Workcover Authority convinced him, and the other ministers all fall into line. Meanwhile Andrew Lindberg and Eileen McMahon are sitting back there at the Victorian Workcover Authority having a big laugh about the minister and his stupidity.

I give some examples of the mismanagement of the system. Poor dispute resolution is endemic in the system and has resulted in the Victorian Workcover Authority and insurers spending millions of dollars in unnecessary litigation. Legal costs in common-law payouts have increased from 14 per cent to 30 per cent in the past five years. That is the minister's

record. Five years ago the legal costs of common law were 14 per cent of total payouts and last year they were 30 per cent of payouts.

What is the solution that the government put up for having failed to keep legal costs down in common law? Instead of attacking the problem, which is the size of the legal costs, it attacks workers.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Do you mean we should get involved in the decisions on settlements awarded in the courts?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Our record was that 14 per cent of the total payout went in legal costs; your record is 30 per cent. If you managed to bring down the legal costs to the level we had them down to, which was 14 per cent — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — How? How can we do it?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — If you want me to run the show for you, I will. If you are telling the house that you're incapable of reducing the legal costs — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I am asking you how do it.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am happy to come down and run the Victorian Workcover Authority for you any time, Minister, and I can tell you that within a short time you would be saving a lot of money.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Tell me how to reduce the cost of common law.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — We are talking about the legal costs. That is the point I am making. We deal with all of these.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — How would you reduce the costs of common law?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I make the general point that the problem is that the government does not have a system for the proper resolution of common-law disputes before they reach the stage of incurring massive legal costs. I know of example after example where reasonable offers were made and the Victorian Workcover Authority has said, 'No, we will not accept any reasonable offer'. For a long time there was the ridiculous system that no further offer could be made once the first had been refused. Instead of having a further opportunity to resolve the problem people had then to go to court, so the legal costs blew out.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — The law firms would love you!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Minister, why don't you change to workable preconferencing arrangements so matters are settled before the need arises to go to court? I am sure the legal fraternity — the judges and lawyers on both sides — will explain how to reduce the legal costs, but you won't talk to them. You will keep talking to Eileen McMahon and Andrew Lindberg because they are giving you all the right advice.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — That's good. I am glad you have confirmed it.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — More of them later. We have seen increases in administrative costs and the costs of senior executives. The minister himself does not contest the blow-out in medical and legal costs to $98 million. The opposition says: if cost is the problem, address it. That was the same point Mr Pescott made when he resigned and caused a by-election to be held in Mitcham.

If the minister cannot address the costs he should resign because it means he is not doing his job properly. He is saying, 'I can't fix the costs so I will attack the workers', and that is an admission of failure. The minister's response to these endemic problems within the system has been to offer the insurance companies $3000 for every injured worker who gets off benefits. Instead of spending money on occupational health and safety or improving claims management in rehabilitation the government spends money rewarding insurance companies, which simply adds to the administrative costs of Workcover.

In June 1997 the Victorian Workcover Advisory Committee was asked to report on a wide range of issues, and it completed its report in August 1997. I understand the Victorian Workcover Advisory Committee is broadly based and consists of four employers, four trade union officers, two insurers, two doctors, two lawyers, a chairman and the chief executive of the Victorian Workcover Authority — a very broad-based group indeed. The group came up with a range of recommendations, many of which the minister totally ignored. The committee also asked for actuarial advice in reaching its recommendations and estimated from

the actuarial advice received that the costs of the scheme had risen from 1.5 per cent to 1.84 per cent.

The committee came up with a set of changes that addressed the costs issue. I emphasise that it was a broad-based committee that included 4 employers, 4 employees, 2 insurers, 2 doctors, 2 lawyers and representatives of the Victorian Workcover Authority. It made the following recommendations: removal of the serious-injury category for weekly benefits; retention of the 26-week step-down — but that was not accepted by the government; possibility of a single-benefit rate; renaming the weekly benefit classification; better definitions of 'total incapacity' and 'suitable employment', together with supporting mechanisms for determining who stays in the system after 104 weeks incapacity; and retention of the notional earnings provision. Clearly, the committee was not one-sided. It also recommended an improvement of the earnings base for benefit calculation; separate non-economic loss compensation for pain and suffering; development of a separate Australian guide for the assessment of permanent impairment — a HWCA recommendation; an additional non-economic loss payment for specified profound injuries; no thresholds non-economic loss compensation; and finally, and importantly, the broad-based committee recommended the retention of common-law damages for seriously injured workers.

The committee based its recommendations not simply on the opinions of individuals concerned or on the fact that it was a committee with all the players on it, but because it was trying to find a solution to the questions asked of it by the government. The committee came up with a solution based on actuarial advice. Its assessment was that that was the way to reduce cost and increase efficiency in the system. However, the minister and the government decided that they would simply take an ideological view and accept the recommendations of the VWA instead. Therein lies the problem.

I shall outline to the house the effects of the proposed changes. The government's failure to implement effective accident prevention and rehabilitation strategies to contain administrative and claim management costs has resulted in the latest callous proposal to further erode injured workers rights and to increase premiums for employers. The changes will have the following effects. Firstly, they will remove workers' common-law rights to sue negligent employers who have caused serious injuries and thereby reduce workers' maximum lump sum payments by up to $700 000. It rewards negligent and culpable employers, who will not suffer the same premium increases even though they have caused injuries. In an article published in the *Herald Sun* the minister sought to say that that was not correct, but this is an example of the deception of the government. He sought to say that the VWA pays the common-law claims and not the employers and, therefore, it is not the negligent and culpable employers who are penalised. However, he forgot to add a crucial piece of information: as a result of a claim, negligent employers' premiums increase, which is an example of the deceitful way the government operates!

The second major effect of the changes is that by introducing a new 10 per cent whole-of-body threshold the government will cut by as much as 50 per cent the number of workers eligible to receive lump sums. That means a worker who loses 20 per cent of the use of his or her arm will get nothing because that does not translate to a 10 per cent whole-of-body impairment.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Apart from their medical costs and the replacement earnings while they are absent from work!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They get no lump sum payments and they are currently entitled to them.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You talk to me about misleading statements. You do it every time!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Currently, they get lump sum payments, but under your proposal, Minister, they will not! That is the bottom line. Currently they are entitled to weekly benefits, but under your proposal, Minister, they will get even lower weekly benefits!

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You're wrong!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Indeed, the proposals include slashing weekly benefits for seriously injured workers from 90 per cent to 75 per cent of pre-injury earnings, and they will lose overtime and other allowances in addition to that. The step-down point will be at 13 weeks rather than the current 26 weeks. That will place many seriously injured workers in poverty. The reality is that seriously-injured workers will have to be content with 75 per cent of pre-injury earnings, which is one of the lowest levels in Australia.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — It is not! You insist on following that line, but you know that to be inaccurate!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is the truth. In fact, I shall go through a comparison with other states and show that Victoria does not compare very well at all on the basis of weekly payments — and it will not compare well in respect of common law because it will not have it!

The introduction of a new American Medical Association scale for lump sums under the legislation will mean a person has to have an 80 per cent whole-of-body impairment to be eligible for the maximum payment. Just in case the minister does not understand what that means I shall give him a couple of examples from the AMA scale. For a worker to lose a leg is a pretty serious injury by anyone's calculations, but according to the AMA scale it is a 40 per cent whole-of-body impairment and it would not attract a maximum payment under the government's proposal.

If a person lost both legs one might think he or she would qualify, but unfortunately according to the scale the second leg is not as valuable as the first leg. I find that bizarre! Ms Smith may laugh, but she would not think it was a joke if it happened to somebody who was close to her. According to the scale a second leg is worth only another 26 per cent. I suggest that you go out, Minister, and ask a person who has only one leg whether the leg he or she still has is at least as valuable as the one lost. See what that person says. That is the absurdity: one could lose both legs and there would be no maximum payment! What a pathetic, mean-minded government. A person needs to present with an 80 per cent whole-of-body impairment to receive the maximum payment. That is what you are suggesting, Minister.

I do not know whether you have met any injured people, Minister, but if a person missing both legs came into this house in a wheelchair you would have to say you felt he or she should get the maximum payment under your scheme. The reality is he or she would not. A person in that position could probably try to top it up by claiming psychological damage, but the government has knocked out secondary psychological damage anyway. That shows the severity of this lump sum scale. The minister says the opposition wanted the government to introduce the fourth edition of the AMA guidelines rather than the second edition, but there are two issues here. One is the use of the American Medical Association scale and which one is the more up to date and the other is the level you put it at, Minister.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — But you are criticising the scale.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Why don't you set the maximum payment at 50 per cent? At least at the level of 50 per cent impairment a person who had lost both legs would receive $300 000. Why set the level at a mean-minded 80 per cent on the AMA scale? It is horrendous. The government then tries to make a virtue of the situation by saying the impairment level dropped from 100 per cent to 80 per cent. I do not know what a person with 100 per cent damage looks like on the AMA scale. Perhaps being brain dead and in a coma would constitute 99 per cent impairment. That is the system the government is seeking to introduce.

I will detail some more examples of people who will miss out altogether as a result of the changes. A person with 22 per cent impairment to a leg currently receives $27 000 but under this bill will receive nothing; 15 per cent impairment to an arm currently warrants $21 000 but it will soon be nothing; a back injury with a single-level spinal fusion now attracts up to $50 000 but under this scheme, nothing; a person who has lost both legs will not receive the former rate of $300 000; and a person who has lost one leg will receive $78 000 — the minister thinks that is all right — when the figure used to be $131 000.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — How did you work out the $131 000 for the current entitlement? You just quoted it; how did you work it out?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I want to be absolutely clear on this, Minister.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I want you to be absolutely clear, as well.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You have tried to be deceptive about this in the past. A person who loses a leg will receive a payment for pain and suffering. Do you accept that or not?

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Not in every case.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — A person who loses a leg will not experience any pain, according to the minister.

Hon. R. M. Hallam interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You go and speak to a person who has lost a leg. Will that person experience pain — yes or no, Minister?

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Where did you get the figure from? You don't know!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I challenge you, Minister, to find a single example in the Victorian Workcover Authority of a person who has lost a leg who has not been paid for pain and suffering.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You have been caught out again!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Find one example under Workcover of a person who has lost a leg who has not been paid for pain and suffering and come back into the house and provide evidence of it.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Bluff and bluster is no response.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It does not exist. When you add together the current entitlement under the table of maims and the entitlement for the loss of a leg under pain and suffering the calculation comes in at $131 000, yet your proposal is $78 000. So much for the nonsense — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — What are you talking about?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You might not know about any of this.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Page 65 — look at the ad. You do not have to dispute it with me.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! As Mr President said shortly before I took the Chair, constant injections are not helpful in the long debate ahead of the house today. It would be helpful if the comments of the speaker were directed to the Chair and not personally to members on the opposite side of the house. I ask government members to restrain their questions and interjections until the appropriate time.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The Victorian Workcover Authority produced those misleading advertisements. It sought to present to the Victorian public a situation that is untrue and misleading. The authority put out figures that ignore the fact that workers are currently entitled to up to $530 000 for pain and suffering. It has tried to make comparisons without including those figures. This prompted the opposition to write to the authority and to the Victorian Electoral Commission to argue that what the AWA was doing was unconscionable.

John Brumby, the Leader of the Opposition in the other place, wrote to the Victorian Workcover Authority about its advertising and said — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — More than once.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He did. In a letter dated 13 November John Brumby says:

> I am also of the view that the advertising conducted by the Victorian Workcover Authority ... at a time when no amendments to the legislation have been effected ... was entirely improper. Such advertising is capable of no other construction than as constituting political advertising. The use of the funds of the Victorian Workcover Authority for this political advertising is clearly improper and falls outside the charter of the Victorian Workcover Authority.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — It is hotly disputed.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — In addition the advertising in today's newspapers is clearly designed to have an impact on the pending by-election in Mitcham.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Again disputed.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Given the political nature of the advertising it is totally inappropriate for the Victorian Workcover Authority to pay for it from funds that ought to be used to support injured workers. The Victorian Workcover Authority put out totally misleading advertisements under the heading 'Workcover changes: the facts'. I am not sure whether it was one sentence or not, but the advertisements certainly change the facts. After the bill was introduced the real facts were made known. The facts that they presented in the first series of advertisements were not the real facts; they came later.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — That is a really telling point!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — There is much debate about how the advertisements were presented by the Victorian Workcover Authority. It

was a deliberate attempt to support the government and to misconstrue what was happening with the Workcover changes.

I shall give more examples of the way the Victorian Workcover Authority has sought to do the government's political bidding. I received a letter from an occupational health and safety inspector who was instructed to attend a November briefing at the Mulgrave office conducted by a Ms Elizabeth McDowell from the authority. The inspector said:

> Ms Elizabeth McDowell opened with a tirade on the principles of common law, how it made other people like lawyers wealthy and then she proceeded to give a history lesson on how through the ages common law had failed workers.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Are you prepared to table that letter?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — So you can go on a witch-hunt? We know about your witch-hunts, Minister. I will ask the person who sent the letter whether he is happy to be named. If so I will be happy to name him, but I will not do it and make him vulnerable to your witch-hunts. The letter goes on to say:

> She went on to say that in any event common law had only been around for people like us for 150 years.
>
> Further she stated that, even when workers had received large payouts they had wasted the money on drugs, alcohol and the like and some had even allowed themselves to be ripped off by con-merchants.
>
> Her argument was because of things like the above the new system would be much better for workers.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — This does you no credit.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I didn't give the briefing.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — But you're prepared to blacken the name of the officer.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! I remind honourable members that comments should be directed through the Chair and constant interjections are out of order.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — There are some standards in this place.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! If members wish to challenge statements made by anybody contributing to the debate they will have that opportunity at the appropriate time. Interjections are inappropriate.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The letter continues:

> The political rhetoric and in my view the attempted brainwashing continued for 10 minutes before she started to outline the changes to the act.

I have been at these sorts of briefings. I know what the people from the Victorian Workcover Authority say. I know the contempt with which they hold injured workers. We know what goes on there, but the difference in this case is that somebody who was there was prepared to write to the opposition.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — But you're prepared to blacken the name of the officer.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He was prepared to write to the opposition and express concern. The letter continues:

> Some 15 minutes into the session, because of the obvious political bias and intent, I left.

That is what happened at a political briefing held by the Victorian Workcover Authority.

> Many of my colleagues remarked to me how blatantly political the entire session had been.

That is the way the authority operates. It is not only this particular officer.

Hon. R. M. Hallam interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I have indicated to you, Minister, that this is a letter from somebody who was at the briefing.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — But you are not prepared to name him. You are prepared to blacken the name of somebody else.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Minister, the problem is a simple one: we know that you are the sort of person who will go on a witch-hunt. The person's job would be at stake if I named him. That is the problem we have.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You are prepared to do the reverse?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am not prepared to name the person unless I receive permission from him.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You're prepared to blacken the name of the other person involved. That is your dreadful double standard.

Hon. R. I. Knowles — On a point of order, Mr Deputy President, there is a tradition in this place, whether it is according to *May* I do not know, that if a member is quoting from a document that member is obliged to identify the document and the author of what is being quoted; otherwise it is simply an anonymous claim which has no status. Surely, Mr Deputy President, the Leader of the Opposition, who has been quoting extensively from the letter, should be obliged to identify the author of the document, or at least table it.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! There is no point of order for the following reason. It has been a tradition in this house and it is common practice for members to identify documents, but there is no standing order that gives members an absolute requirement that they must identify the person from whom they are quoting. In this instance Mr Theophanous has said that the opposition has received a letter from a person and he is not prepared to name that person. The veracity of the argument is tested by the house and it does not strengthen the argument when the author is not named. However, there is no absolute requirement for the member to name the author of the letter.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — There is a climate of fear at the Victorian Workcover Authority. The climate of fear is evident from the fact that I receive mail from people from the authority. I had a large package of things put under my door from people from the authority telling me about some of the things Eileen McMahon gets up to at the Victorian Workcover Authority and the way she does the bidding of the government. I am certainly happy to name the chief executive officer of the authority, Andrew Lindberg, in relation to this matter. The opposition asked for a briefing, as is its entitlement and as has always occurred, and the briefing was attended by the minister's advisers and by representatives of the Victorian Workcover Authority, including Andrew Lindberg. At that briefing we did the unthinkable as an opposition: we actually asked some questions.

Hon. Pat Power — Oh, Theo!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I know, Mr Power, it was unforgivable. However, we asked some questions about the basis on which decisions were made about common law. For example, one of the questions the opposition asked of the Victorian Workcover Authority was whether it could provide information about the actuarial advice it had received. Mr Lindberg made the unbelievable comment, 'I'm not here as the head of the Victorian Workcover Authority, I'm here as the minister's adviser'.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — That's right — I was there.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mr Nardella was there and heard Mr Lindberg say that. The opposition asked, 'How do we get to speak to the head of the Victorian Workcover Authority?'. Mr Lindberg answered, 'Well, you would have to ask him for a briefing'. I asked, 'Are you serious?'. It would have been a very good sketch for the television program *Yes, Minister*.

Hon. D. T. Walpole — Sounds more like Monty Python to me!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It would have been good sketch for either Monty Python or *Yes, Minister*. He said, 'If you want a briefing from the chief executive of the Victorian Workcover Authority you had better write to him, because I am here as the minister's adviser'. I do not know how much money Mr Lindberg is paid to advise the minister — maybe he has two jobs.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — He might be double dipping.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Who knows? He might be both a ministerial adviser and the chief executive of the Victorian Workcover Authority. I wrote to him in the following terms:

> I am writing to you today, following our meeting at which you indicated that you were briefing the opposition as an adviser to the minister and not as the chief executive officer of the Victorian Workcover Authority. You further indicated that the opposition could request a briefing from you as CEO of the VWA and you undertook to provide information on which the VWA have relied in making its public statements about the effects of the Workcover changes.

This is relevant because the minister had carried on previously about the Workcover advertising program and I had made it clear to the minister that the opposition considered the advertisements to be political. In effect we were saying to the Workcover Authority, 'You have put out the advertisements in your name, not in the minister's name, so we are asking you how you justify what is in those advertisements'.

I asked the Victorian Workcover Authority for information in the following terms:

> ... the modelling used by the Victorian Workcover Authority to support the removal of common law, including:
>
> what is the net monetary effect to the scheme of the removal of common law;
>
> what variables were included in arriving at this figure;
>
> what are the estimates for common-law claims over the next three years;
>
> a detailed analysis of the scheme's winners and losers including:
>
> the number and dollar amounts of winners and losers in each category of weekly benefits;
>
> the savings from moving to 13 weeks rather than 26 weeks;
>
> the projected increase in average weekly payments as a result of a higher maximum;
>
> the number of injured workers who fall below the 10 per cent minimum whole-of-body impairment, including the dollar amounts associated with this;
>
> details regarding those fines payable for second and subsequent offences by negligent employers; and
>
> the increase in the number of Victorian Workcover Authority inspectors ...
>
> a breakdown of the number of SES positions at the VWA ...

I consider those to be sensible questions to ask the Victorian Workcover Authority. The opposition asked that the answers be provided to it on a timely basis.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — He promised to give them on a timely basis.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — As Mr Nardella says, Mr Lindberg promised to do that. I decided the opposition ought to have the replies by the time debate on the bill commenced in the other house. We asked for them to be provided in time to enable the opposition to use the figures in the lower house. About an hour before the debate in the lower house started I decided to ring Andrew Lindberg myself and see what I could do about getting the information. I asked where the information was, and he told me it was on its way.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — This was an hour before the debate commenced in the Legislative Assembly?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, about an hour before. Finally he faxed the information to me. I got it after the debate in the Legislative Assembly had commenced. I gave it to the shadow Treasurer, Mr Bracks, so he could read and try to make sense of it during his contribution to the debate. That demonstrates the contempt in which the Victorian Workcover Authority holds Parliament and its members.

The information provided does not answer the questions put to the authority. It does not reveal what variables were used in making the calculations. It does not provide the modelling that the opposition asked for. According to the document provided:

> The net saving from the elimination of common law is estimated to be $67 million ...

Hon. D. A. Nardella — How did they get to that?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I do not know because the actuaries employed by the advisory committee came up with a figure of $50 million and actuaries employed by the Australian Plaintiff Lawyers Association came up with a figure of $26 million. Who knows what the real savings are? The letter says that $24 million of the $67 million constitutes transaction costs.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — What are transaction costs?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He does not explain, but I presume they are the costs of transactions for common-law claims. For instance, I do know whether the figure takes into account the administrative and other costs of having to process weekly payments on an ongoing basis ad infinitum. That was the extent of the response the opposition received from the Victorian Workcover Authority.

Eileen McMahon is another person from the Victorian Workcover Authority who supports the government and continues to make mistakes. Literature sent to me about her activities gives an example of her approving the publication of 35 000 copies of a booklet and subsequently the work having to be done again. I have raised the issue with the minister in the past.

She made statements on radio about the Workcover Authority having drafted a set of regulations concerning farmers and said farmers would be prosecuted and possibly fined $1000 if they did not fit anti-roll protective structures on their tractors. She had it all wrong. The mistakes continue and the Victorian Workcover Authority is not made accountable.

I have previously raised with the minister the scrapping of 200 000 copies of an issue of *Workcover Update*. He had to write to me again in defence of the mismanagement of the Victorian Workcover Authority. After producing 200 000 copies of the newsletter the authority decided not to send it to employers because somebody had rung up and said, 'We are a bit worried about this because you are telling employers they have certain obligations under the act in relation to notifying near misses. We do not want to get people too concerned about this and if we send out the newsletter employers might get a bit upset'.

After investigating the matter the minister gave me the line put out by the Victorian Workcover Authority. His response states:

> The authority considered, on reflection, that the newsletter was unnecessarily complex —

I did not find it all that complex; I found it quite simple and easy to understand —

> for all the small employers —

what an insult to small employers — it was a two-page document that set out in very simple terms what they needed to do pursuant to the new regulations under the act, so what was complex about it? —

> who would receive it in a mass distribution. It was thought that the simple newspaper advertisements were more effective and would be read by more employers than a lengthy newsletter.

The newsletter comprises two pages. It is an unbelievable situation. The Victorian Workcover Authority is a law unto itself. The issue of *Workcover Update* was not sent out. Attached to it was an incident notification form so that in the event of an employer having a near miss he or she could fill out the form and send it back to the authority, as employers are currently required to do under the act.

The authority printed 200 000 copies of that very complicated two-page newsletter, which under the very complicated heading 'Important new incident notification regulations' states:

> When a serious injury or death happens in a workplace, Workcover needs to investigate as soon as possible.
>
> What is learnt at an investigation can be used to prevent a similar incident at that workplace or in other workplaces. It is therefore just as important to know about 'near-misses' where persons were exposed to the risk of a serious injury or death.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — I would not be able to understand that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You would not understand that, Mr Nardella, because it is so complicated. It further states:

> From 14 April 1997, employers or persons in charge of equipment sites must immediately ring Workcover on 132 360 (toll free) if:
>
> > an incident results in death, serious injury requiring immediate medical treatment or medical treatment is required within 48 hours of exposure to a substance (such as chemicals or biological material), or ...

Hon. D. A. Nardella — I must have been in small business because I can understand that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It gives a second case. It states:

> there is a dangerous occurrence or 'near-miss' where persons are exposed to immediate risk to their health and safety.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — 'Occurrence' is a big word.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Then it states:

> Ring Workcover... if a notifiable incident happens at your workplace.

This is the complex newsletter that, together with a workplace incident notification form, was to be sent out to 200 000 employers.

The minister's letter in response is a perfect example of how the minister just swallows the Victorian Workcover Authority's line. It states that the newsletter was:

> ... unnecessarily complex for all the small employers.

What an insult. It also states:

> It was thought that simple newspaper advertisements were more effective.

I am sure a survey of small employers would find they have all seen the small advertisement referred to by the minister somewhere and would know they have to tell Workcover if incidents occur in their workplaces! The copy I have appeared at page A13 of the first edition of the *Age* of Monday, 14 April. I am sure all small employers will have seen the advertisement — and everyone would agree with the minister that it is much more effective than directly mailing the already prepared issue of *Workcover Update* to 200 000 employers!

That is the kind of mismanagement the authority continues to be involved in. And deception, because I am sure the minister would not have read the newsletter. He would not have bothered to look at the copy of *Workcover Update* because nobody with any sense would have signed a letter that said a small newspaper advertisement would be more effective than sending a lengthy newsletter. That is a lie because it is not a lengthy newsletter. Unless Mr Nardella or anyone else would think a two-page update was a lengthy newsletter it is another example of the authority putting something in front of the minister and getting him to sign it. That is what has been happening all the time at the Victorian Workcover Authority and it is an absolute disgrace.

The minister stated in the house the other day that he did not know whether his department or the Victorian Workcover Authority had been involved in the production of a disgraceful piece of literature put out by the Liberal Party entitled 'What the Workcover changes mean to you and your family'. It looks curiously like a lot of literature put out by the Victorian Workcover Authority, and it is authorised and signed by P. Poggioli. It does not say where P. Poggioli is from. I do not know him, Mr Power. Do you know him?

Hon. Pat Power — I have heard his name.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — He is the campaign director of the Liberal Party.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He's not! That's a bit of a revelation. Are these complicated pamphlets, Mr Nardella?

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Yes. They should not have been put out.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They should have been done as advertisements. They look too complicated to me.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — They should have been put out in April!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — These were put into the letterboxes of people living in the Mitcham electorate by persons unknown. I have it on reliable authority that the people who put them in the letterboxes had no identification on them. They did not have on those big round badges that say 'Liberal Party', and they did not have on those little badges that all Liberal members have to wear on pain of being of expelled if they do not.

Hon. Pat Power — Their IDs.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, the identification they wear on their lapels. I am not sure whether Ms Asher has hers on today.

Hon. Pat Power — She is out of uniform.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — She is out of uniform if she does not have it on!

Although the minister claims not to have a clue about whether it was involved, the case studies look to me like propaganda put out by the Workcover Authority. We are opposed to the politicisation of a government authority, and we will continue to highlight that. When the minister sends people out to do his political bidding, we will name them in the house. If he does not like that, he should stop sending them out.

The removal of common-law rights will reward negligent and culpable employers. The actuaries Trowbridge Consulting estimate the removal of those rights will save as much as $50 million, although that is contested by other actuaries. Even if one accepts that figure, it has to be compared with

the $281 million that the Workcover Authority spends on administration and on medical and legal costs. I would have thought that the first thing you would do if you wanted to save $50 million was to examine how well that $281 million was being spent.

We are being asked to approve a system that is designed to save $50 million by removing the common-law rights of injured workers. At the same time, we are being asked to approve a $100 million increase in employer premiums. The bill will improve Workcover's bottom line by $150 million. Unfortunately, injured workers will not get an extra $150 million — in fact, they will get less. It is yet another example of the way in which the government is making everyone except the Workcover Authority pay for its mismanagement.

The Workcover Authority and the government gave as the reason for the changes the blow-out in common-law payments. The figures they used to justify the changes — $17.6 million and $138 million — were concocted by excluding all 1993 Workcare common-law claims. As everyone understands, the number of Workcare-related payments are decreasing as the number of Workcover payments increase. One would expect that to occur.

By deceptive advertising and deceptive figures, the government has said there has been a 700 per cent increase in common-law claims when there has been nothing of the kind. When that is taken into account, the increase in common-law payouts is only one-tenth of the increase the VWA claims. Removing common-law rights will not save $138 million, as suggested in government advertising. Why do the advertisements say that because there are common-law claims worth $138 million the government has to get rid of common-law rights, when the savings will not even be $138 million? That is another example of the deceptive nature of the advertising. It is typical of the government's operation of Workcover.

Industrial accidents are a fact of life. We can look at improving industrial safety levels, but the sad reality is that industrial accidents can happen to anyone. Workcover is important not only to people who are injured at work but to everybody else. Victorians understand that every time someone drives he or she is in danger of having an accident, just as they understand that every time someone goes to work he or she is in danger of having an accident in the workplace. Even if they have never had an accident in the workplace or on the road, Victorians want to know they will be protected if they do. That is why the legislation is so important.

The legislation betrays all Victorians because it takes away a right to sue at common law and it reduces by 15 per cent the weekly benefits payable to workers who are seriously injured. Victorians are betrayed by an occupational health and safety system that prosecutes six times fewer negligent employers than are prosecuted in New South Wales. The maximum fine that can be imposed on negligent employers is $600 000 less in Victoria than it is in New South Wales.

I refer to some examples of the way in which companies are fined under the legislation. One company was fined only $15 000 after a worker was crushed to death in a forklift accident. What a disgrace! When a worker had to have four fingers amputated as a result of an accident that was totally and completely the fault of the employer, the employer was fined $10 000. In another case, an employer was fined $17 000 after a worker fell to his death when scaffolding collapsed.

But at least under the present system there is a capacity to seek redress in such circumstances under common law. The bill is a betrayal of the worst sort because in their heart of hearts even most government members are uneasy about the notion of removal of common law; but, unfortunately, they have been pulled into line. Opposition members know that 23 government members voted against the bill in the party room.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Who were they? Name them!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You know who they were.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — No, I wasn't at the event you just mentioned.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am sure you were not one of them, Mr Hartigan, because one thing I can certainly say about you is that you are not a person of principle. I have never seen you stand up for a principle in this place on any occasion.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Coming from you, Mr Theophanous, that is not an insult.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That just shows how thoroughly insensitive and thick-skinned you are.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — No, you are such a low level thug, why would I be worried about your comments?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The opposition will move a set of amendments in committee, but before they vote on it honourable members should understand what the bill means and how it will affect Victorians. I have already given the example of the worker who lost both legs. In those circumstances that worker will not be entitled to the maximum amount of $300 000 because he does not reach 80 per cent on the AMA scale. Instead, he will receive a lesser lump sum, and after 13 weeks he will be on the lowest weekly benefits in Australia.

I put before the house some examples. If a paper boy or girl, delivering papers along the suburban streets of Melbourne, is hit by a drunk driver that child would not be able to exercise his or her legal right to sue the drunk driver regardless of how drunk or reckless the driver was or how fast the vehicle was travelling. If the child suffered multiple leg fractures and lost 70 per cent of the function of his or her leg, he or she would receive a lump sum of $42 000.

Imagine if it happened to one of your children. How would you feel about the notion that your child would receive $42 000, but would never be able to play sport again and you could not take the drunk driver who caused the accident to court? It is beyond belief. Worse than that is the fact that the paper boy or girl would receive 95 per cent of the pre-injury earnings. I do not know how much that amount is these days, but after 13 weeks it would drop to 75 per cent. That is the kind of justice meted out as a result of the bill.

Consider the example of a farmer who develops testicular cancer as a result of a pesticide produced by a chemical company when the farmer was not properly told of the effects the pesticides can cause. Under the proposed legislation he would be barred from suing the chemical company and receiving benefits at common law. Indeed, the only way in which the chemical company can be sued — and this is an interesting example of how twisted the bill is — is if the farmer dies from his injuries. When he dies his dependants are able to sue the chemical company for damages. What a disgrace!

Also consider a small business person delivering goods for a major company. He is hit by a car running a red light and becomes a paraplegic. He cannot sue the driver who caused the accident, and it does not matter whether the driver was unlicensed, drunk or unregistered. In that instance, the person would receive $200 000 and after 13 weeks 75 per cent of the pre-injury earnings. Of course, if a passenger was in the car with the driver, that person could sue for damages.

Hon. K. M. Smith — They'd have to prove negligence!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I have just given the example of someone running a red light. You would not have to try too hard to prove negligence if the person ran a red light. The passenger would be able to sue under the Transport Accident Commission scheme for damages of more than $1 million.

Hon. K. M. Smith — When was the last time that happened? That is fantasy-land stuff. You are off with the pixies, Theo.

Hon. Jean McLean interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The point made by Mrs McLean is a perfectly valid one: if you are saying that it rarely happens, what is the big concern? Why are you changing it? If what you say is correct, you will not save a lot of money, so why do it? The opposition does not accept that argument and neither does the Victorian public.

Using the recent example of the New South Wales bushfires and the Victorian firefighters who fought the fires up there, if the bill has been passed we could have the absurd situation where, because some were being paid and some were volunteers, if an incident had occurred as a result of negligence, the volunteers would have been able to sue through common law for damages whereas the ones being paid would not have had that right.

Hon. K. M. Smith — The CFA get paid. They have their own policy!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You go and ask the CFA firefighters what they think of the legislation. They will tell you that it stinks! They will tell you it is absurd that the firefighters who receive payment for being firefighters do not have access to common law but the volunteer firefighters do have access to common law. It is ridiculous and unfair.

Honourable members interjecting.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! I ask Mr Smith to cease interjecting. Up to this point the

debate has been orderly and I ask members on both sides of the house to desist from interjecting.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I wonder if government members really know or understand what they are voting for with the proposed legislation. Do they know that all drivers and couriers who drive as part of their employment will be considered second-class citizens on the roads over which they travel every day? Do they know that not only will they not get access to common law under the Workcover legislation; they will continue to contribute to the Transport Accident Commission but will not have access to common law through either that system or the Victorian Workcover Authority? Do they know that farmers will be banned from suing negligent chemical companies?

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Of course we understand that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mr Hartigan, if you say you understand that farmers will no longer have a right to sue a chemical company that has provided a chemical that has caused damage to their health and you are voting for the legislation, you are the fool.

Do government members understand that small business people working on Victorian roads will be discriminated against simply because they happen to be driving while on duty, as opposed to driving home? Do government members understand that part-time students who are injured while working in factories will receive only a proportion of their part-time earnings and in addition will be barred from seeking reimbursement of their losses against a negligent employer through common law? Do they know that after 13 weeks injured Victorian workers will receive the lowest benefits in Australia because not only is the level set at 13 weeks, which is 75 per cent, but the 75 per cent of pre-injury earnings excludes all overtime and over-award payments?

In the past we have seen the government and its members support with a passion the retention of common-law rights, and I intend to go into that matter during the debate. Let me first mention some of the people in the community who have expressed concern about the proposed legislation. They include representatives of unions, employers, lawyers, community organisations, churches, newspapers and the general public. All sorts of people have said they do not agree with the proposed legislation. People who deal with injured workers on an ongoing basis and who see the pain, injury and suffering have also expressed concern.

It is important that the opinions of these groups be heard in the house today. For example, the self-insurers association, an association that one would not expect would necessarily oppose the legislation, has opposed it. The 23 members of the self-insurers association include BHP, ANZ, Coles Myer, CSR, Esso, Kodak, Amcor, Alcoa and others. They say that common law:

> ... enables workers access to lump sum compensation for their injuries, enables choice for workers to exit the scheme should they wish, and enables the scheme to reduce transaction costs for ongoing weekly compensation entitlements.

Hon. Pat Power — They do not support the government's actions.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They are not supportive of what the government is doing. They go on to say:

> It can be detrimental to a worker's ability to overcome a permanent impairment if constant reinforcement of the injury by way of weekly compensation payments and regular medical certification prolongs the process.

The self-insurers association has indicated it does not agree with what the government is saying. I am not sure whether the Ford company is one of the self-insurers. Perhaps Mr Hartigan knows whether it is. Ford probably is a self-insurer, given its size. Other large companies that are part of this association have indicated that they do not agree with the changes and do not agree with the removal of common-law rights for good economic reasons.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Which is also true.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — As Mr Hartigan says, that is also true. For once Mr Hartigan and I agree on something in relation to this — for good economic reasons. I should have thought Mr Hartigan would argue on economic grounds, as he usually argues on economic and efficiency grounds, in support of the self-insurers association.

Mr Danny Walsh of the Victoria Police Association is reported in the *Age* of 19 October 1997 as saying:

> It is inconceivable that any government would put in place legislation which would shield from legal action any person who has caused serious injury to another

> through negligence. Every member of the community is accountable for their own actions and to create a situation that almost grants immunity for negligent behaviour in the workplace is unthinkable. We are angered by this proposed amendment and many other proposed amendments in the legislation.

The Police Association has good reason to be concerned because its members face danger. He went on to say:

> If government seriously wants to address the problem of spiralling costs of the Workcover system, then let it look at the Workcover management first.

The Victoria Police Association is concerned because its members are faced with the prospect of being seriously injured every day, often as a result of poor work practices initiated by their employers. Police officers who are injured in the workplace should have a common-law right to sue. Under the legislation not only will police officers not have the right to sue their employers, they will not have the right to sue criminals who injure them in the course of their duties, even if the criminal acts are carried out on behalf of others who happen to have private means.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! People in the visitors gallery have been warned about inappropriate behaviour. Some people in the gallery are inappropriately dressed. I direct that the gallery be cleared.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — For what reason?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! For wearing headdresses and covering their faces.

Persons escorted from gallery.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — What an outrage. I make the point that the persons who have been asked to leave the gallery made no comment or other noise. They just entered the chamber and sat down quietly.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Visitors to the gallery are told about appropriate behaviour, and covering one's face is not appropriate. Visitors are warned about that beforehand, and if they decide not to heed that warning the Chair has no choice but to take action.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The Chair has just excluded all women of the Moslem faith from sitting in the visitors gallery.

Hon. R. I. Knowles — That is not the ruling.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The Chair has just said that no person who covers his or her face can sit in the public gallery. I refer to other groups who disagree with the proposed legislation. A member of the nursing profession recently said:

> The nursing profession finds any proposal that removes their common-law rights for damages totally unacceptable. The continued erosion of benefits since 1992 and the proposed amendments should not occur until there is a full and public inquiry into the efficiency of the authority and examine whether any further diminution of benefits is in fact necessary.

Not only have various groups indicated their concern about the measure, but also a number of well-known individuals have expressed their support for the retention of common-law rights.

Hon. Pat Power — Are you going to read out the names of some Trotskyists?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — No.

Hon. Pat Power — Are you going to read out the names of some left-wingers?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — No.

Hon. Pat Power — Are you going to read out the names of some members of the BLF?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — No, not members of the BLF — or even people who find it necessary to cover their faces. I refer to the Treasurer, Mr Stockdale. Before he was converted to the views of the Premier and Minister Hallam, Mr Stockdale said:

> The total destruction of common law rights ... is simply an attempt to subvert the Australian constitution. It is a fundamental disgrace, a fraud on the Australian people and a fraud on the Australian constitution.

He must have been referring to some left-wingers or Trotskyists who said that common-law rights ought to be removed! Mr Stockdale also said:

> The Liberal Party, so long as it has the capacity to do so, will not allow the destruction of important and traditional common-law rights.

Where is Mr Stockdale? Where was he during the debate in the lower house? He has made some good speeches on the subject! Recently he also said:

> Ultimate priority should be given, on the highest moral grounds, to those who were the innocent victims injured as a result of someone else's negligence.

So on the highest moral grounds, Mr Stockdale will fight against the destruction of common-law rights. Mr Hartigan may also say on behalf of the Liberal Party that so long as he has the capacity he will not allow the destruction of traditional common-law rights — although perhaps Mr Hartigan is not the sort of person who has the moral capacity to make a comment such as that. Unfortunately, Mr Stockdale is not, either.

The Minister for Education, Mr Gude, has also commented on the democratic rights of people in the workplace. He said recently:

> The Liberal Party believes it is a fundamental democratic right that individuals take their (workplace injury) cases to the civil courts. The Liberal government would reinstate that right.

Hon. Jean McLean — Perhaps the next Liberal government will.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Perhaps the next Liberal government will, but I doubt it. One of the first things the next Labor government will do is reinstate those rights. Mr Gude got one thing right: it is a fundamental principle that has been espoused by liberal thinkers.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Name one.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — John Stuart Mill and a number of other thinkers throughout the ages have espoused the view that individual rights and the rule of law are fundamental to liberal thinking. As we always suspected, the government does not have any principles, let alone liberal principles.

The Nelson McNair statewide opinion poll shows that 73 per cent of Victorians disapproved of the changes, with only 13 per cent saying they were in favour. The *Herald Sun* Quadrant poll reported that 73 per cent of voters in the Mitcham electorate disapproved of the changes.

All the major newspapers have published editorials about the proposed changes. The *Herald Sun* of 11 October states:

> It remains true that because of the many variable factors in each case only a court is equipped to make a judgment. We are continually reminded in criminal trials that each case must be judged on its merits. Why should the victim of an industrial accident be treated differently? Removing a worker's right to a day in court when it is claimed an employer's negligence has led to his disability is going too far.

The *Age* editorial of 9 October states:

> If the Workcover changes go through, people injured at work will be conciliating from a position of weakness at a time, historically and personally, when they are not in a good position to stand up for themselves. Their common-law rights should be defended, not abolished.

The *Age* editorial of 30 October reads:

> Victoria's finance minister, Mr Roger Hallam, said yesterday that this state has built the best workers compensation system in Australia. If that is the case, it is puzzling that the government remains intent on removing a fundamental part of that system, the common-law right of workers to sue negligent employers.

You cannot have it both ways, Minister. You cannot on the one hand say, 'We have built the best system' but on the other hand say, 'We have to introduce massive changes'. You are actually saying you have failed, Minister; that you have not got it right. You now come in here and virtually say, 'All the times we said we had it right, we were wrong, because we have had to make changes'.

The Victorian Bar Council president is reported as having said:

> The proposed abolition of common-law rights is a step that strikes at the heart of the citizens' rights and obligations. The common-law right of an employee is a right that in the past has been defended by the Liberal and National parties as a fundamental right.

The criticism comes from all sides. Today we have established that unless Eileen McMahon or Andrew Lindberg — or even Mr Hartigan — tell you, Minister, it's all right — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I don't know about Mr Hartigan; he may have some influence over the minister. You may think you have, Mr Hartigan, but I don't think you are in the same class as Andrew Lindberg in influencing the minister, neither is Mr Forwood, who was unable to influence him one iota over the Auditor-General legislation, so how could he influence the minister over the Workcover legislation? We can only live in hope!

As I have already said, the Self-Insurers Association of Victoria recommended that the government retain the right for injured workers to sue under common law. But all those groups have had no effect for only one reason: the influence of Andrew Lindberg and Eileen McMahon of the Victorian WorkCover Authority — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — And?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I don't know about you, Mr Hartigan; I think the slides provided by the Victorian Workcover Authority did the trick.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — What slides?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They had a slide show for the minister and the cabinet.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — What about for you?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — We tried to get information from them but were told at the briefing that we couldn't speak to Andrew Lindberg — who was present, incidentally — because he was there as the minister's adviser.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Why didn't I get a slide show?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They obviously treat you with contempt, too. Have you agreed to the changes without having seen the slide show?

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — I would like to see the photographs of the slide show.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — How would you like to see photographs of injured workers, Mr Hartigan — maybe a few from Geelong? Would you like to see their photographs? Many letters have been sent to newspapers by people who have expressed their concerns about this bill. I will not read them all. Rhonda Lynch, for example, wrote:

> Let our Premier get hurt through work or a transport accident and you will see that he gets the benefits that he needs. But what do we get — a kick in the butt and pushed away to be seen but not heard.

That is the pattern. People are saying, 'Enough is enough, we have had enough. We want to be treated as decent humans'.

I refer to the case of Sheila Tucker, who wrote about her concerns to the Premier and to the Minister for Finance — although I don't know whether the minister would have replied to her. She writes:

> I would like to make some comments on the Workcover legislation and its effects on seriously injured persons and their families.
>
> My husband is a world-class pianist and he had earned a very good living for some 30 years doing the only thing he had ever wanted to do — play the piano. Unfortunately, he had a very serious workplace accident at the Victorian College of the Arts.

She describes the nature of that accident and says it —

> quite literally smashed the base of his spine.
>
> As a result of this fall he underwent surgery for spinal canal stenosis ... The surgery (which took some 4 hours with two surgeons working) —

In other words, he was obviously injured. The letter continues:

> Because of the pain, and the fact that the intensity increases with movement, he is unable even to practise for more than 30 minutes a day.
>
> There is a saying in New York — 'If you miss practice one day, you know, if you miss two days, your colleagues know, and if you miss three days, everyone knows'.
>
> Nevertheless, following the surgery he has managed some 50-minute performances only by taking increased doses of morphine prior to each performance, building up over a number of weeks.

This case is but one example of somebody who has been injured at work. Sheila makes a further plea to the minister:

> I am sure you are not insensitive, therefore, I know you will be able to understand some of the stresses placed

> on us by this profound change in our lives and lifestyle. Consider for one moment what your reaction might be if suddenly your life and the thing you love doing most was taken away — permanently ... If, for one second, I could believe there was any chance of improvement in my husband's condition, I would gladly repay every cent that we have ever received through Workcover.

Finally she asks:

> Do you have any conception of what happens to people (mentally and physically) who are seriously injured?

That is a plea from somebody who has had to live with a seriously injured person for a number of years. In effect she is saying, 'Think again about the rights of seriously injured workers'.

I also received a letter from Mrs Jackie Savic, who says:

> I am writing you this letter on my own behalf with great concern over the proposed changes to the Workcover bill. I've already tried reaching out to the Premier, with no avail. Please this is my last chance for you to hear my concerns.

The letter is from a person who does not have an injury and whose husband is not injured.

> My husband is a construction worker and a day does not pass that I do not fear for his life. My fear is that the people he works for won't be able to be held responsible for negligence if something were to happen. I understand what Mr Kennett is saying in respect to stopping lawyers getting so much profit from the process. But why hit the workers the most?

It is a reasonable question. That letter is from somebody who is worried about her husband, who works in dangerous situations on construction sites. She is worried that if he is injured there is no certainty that their lifestyle will be maintained.

I refer to the case of a nurse working in a nursing home who, 15 minutes into her shift, hurt her back while turning a patient. The injury caused her to double over — she could not straighten up — and she stayed that way for an hour and a half until the owner of the nursing home returned. She could not leave because she was caring for 30 patients on her own — an example of unsatisfactory work practices. Her condition subsequently deteriorated: she could not go to the toilet or lie down in bed without assistance. She almost became like one of her patients.

She was assessed as permanently partially incapacitated. After three years the insurance company suddenly decided, for no apparent reason and without even assessing her, that she was sufficiently recovered to return to work — and it cut off her payments. There was no attempt at rehabilitation; her payments were just cut off. She did not have a job to go to. However, she fought back and was granted totally and permanently incapacitated status. That is another example of how the system treats injured workers.

Another person who wrote to me said:

> I worked for 34 years as a public servant. I was well trained ... particularly with respect to safety and supervision.
>
> I ... loved the work — it was my hobby as well.
>
> As luck ... would have it — 10 seconds of the 34 years were involved in personal injury.
>
> I always spoke the truth, sought to have the injury identified and relevantly treated. Honesty is not expected — why I cannot tell for there is no profit in losing one's health and happiness.

His is an emotional letter. He goes on to say this about being injured:

> The sky falls in slowly but surely ...
>
> Becoming an injured person is a learning process ...
>
> It is a set of languages to learn — medical, physical, legal, taxation, economic, superannuation, technological ...

Consider the case of Mr Lomax, who is married with a dependent child. He has been assessed as having a serious injury and has had two sets of spinal surgery. Due to the severity of his injury, Mr Lomax has received compensation payments for 10 years. However, because of the recalculation of his pre-injury earnings and the non-inclusion of shift penalties, overtime allowances and so on, his weekly entitlement, which is now $283, will drop by 15 per cent. How can someone support a family on $283 a week, let alone $283 less 15 per cent? The changes will force people like Mr Lomax into poverty.

I have lots of letters like those. If you read through them you would see how individuals have been treated — and you would also see evidence of the poverty the government has created. We believe

there is no need for the legislation. Not only that, it is unconscionable and unprecedented to slash injured workers' benefits in this way. Instead, the government should be attacking the waste and mismanagement of the Workcover Authority.

We do not believe the authority has ever been properly reviewed. It is extraordinary that the government is ramming through changes that will slash benefits even further when it has just spent $6 million on advertising to tell the Victorian community how well the scheme is working. Everybody has seen the advertisements; they are everywhere: Workcover's working. Some $6 million was spent to tell people that Workcover is working, but now the government says Workcover is not working and that is why all these changes are needed. There was the spectacle of the minister commissioning Arthur Andersen — more money — to report once again to convince the Victorian public that the VWA is working.

The state opposition wants a full and independent inquiry by the Auditor-General into the operation of the Workcover scheme before these benefits are slashed. On 31 October 1997 an article in the *Australian* referred to the Queensland and Victorian schemes. It found that the financial exposure of the Queensland scheme had been more than halved in the course of the previous 12 months but that Queensland had rejected the notion that the right for injured workers to sue under common law should be removed. Indeed, according to the actuaries, Queensland had a 60 per cent turnaround in unfunded liabilities because it did the hard job of changing the scheme's administration.

It is easy for the government to come in here, introduce legislation, change the situation and attack workers' rights. The hard part is to go back and improve the efficiency of the system and make it work. The only people applauding the Victorian Workcover Authority are those in the authority itself and members of the Kennett government. According to the annual report scheme administration costs have now blown out to $183 million.

I refer to other third parties who have come out in opposition to the legislation.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Why don't you talk on the bill for a change?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Members of the opposition look forward to an extensive debate in the committee stage, when we will go over each clause of the bill chapter and verse, which you may or may not like. We will be quite happy to engage you in discussion on the bill at that time.

The Australian Greek Welfare Society had this to say about the legislation — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Who?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — This is one for your information, Mr Hartigan. I am sure you don't know this, but the society lists none other than Mr Peter Katsambanis on its board of directors. The board produced its 25th annual report, an important event for an organisation that has provided much-needed community support to the Greek community for the past 25 years. Mr Katsambanis is a member of the board of directors: will he support what the Australian Greek Welfare Society said? I quote from the report:

> The Victorian Workcover Authority has continued to fund AGWS to provide services to injured workers. We thank the authority for its continued support as this enables AGWS to provide specialist casework services, group work and community education in this complex area.
>
> We are particularly concerned however about the state government's proposal to introduce legislation to further curb entitlements to injured workers. Of major concern are the proposed changes to stop injured workers in exercising their rights to sue employers for negligence under common law. This is a serious assault on the democratic rights of injured workers and we urge the Victorian government to reconsider these changes.

I wonder whether Mr Katsambanis, as a board member of AGWS, supports the comments made by AGWS. If he does not, will he continue to associate himself with AGWS and support it in receiving grants or funds from the VWA to assist injured workers of Greek background? It will be interesting in the course of the debate to hear what Mr Katsambanis has to say.

Unions have expressed their concerns about the changes — I referred to the Australian Nursing Federation. These are people dealing with workers who actually get injured. The National Union of Workers indicated in a press release:

> The most disappointing thing is that the government could implement the recommendation of the Workcover Advisory Committee, which would achieve

> the same outcomes without removing the rights of the working people.

Why not accept the recommendations of your own advisory committee? The Australian Services Union has many injured workers. It said:

> Unions are concerned that the Kennett government will introduce the West Australian model which removes the worker's right of appeal. For the majority of workers such a decision will extinguish their rights to fair and just compensation. This is clearly a miscarriage of justice as this decision will be final. What will happen to these workers?

A good question. The Victoria Police Association, which has also commented, said:

> The representatives of people who get injured have indicated their concerns and have said no to this legislation.

Because I have made the point again and again that the opposition believes the VWA is not running the scheme in the way it ought, it is worth noting a speech given by the chief executive of the Transport Accident Commission, James MacKenzie, at the president's lunch for the Law Institute of Victoria on 21 July 1997:

> It is worth remembering that in the past five years at least five, if not more than that, in the past three or four years at least five statutory insurance schemes have faced financial crisis. In most of those cases the crises were caused by a blow-out in claims costs that required unpalatable remedial action like increase in premium levels or significant legislative intervention to reduce benefits, or in most cases both. Not wanting to increase premiums or invite wholesale legislative changes to reduce the level of benefits that the TAC offers, we have taken what I think is the sensible course of action available: we have looked at how best to manage our claims costs.

That is what the Transport Accident Commission did when it was faced with exactly the same problems as those facing Workcover. The TAC was faced with higher premiums and lower benefits, but it took the third option. Instead of increasing premiums or lowering benefits it took the third option, which was to manage the claims costs. How did it do that? James MacKenzie continues:

> Back in 1986 premiums would have needed to jump to almost $500 per annum and were forecast to grow to almost $1700 per annum by today.

That is, given the same level of road accidents occurred. He continues:

> I do not think that would have gone down all that well with the Victorian public.

Indeed it would not:

> When the TAC was established on 1 January 1987 premiums were set at $250 per annum and have only risen 10 per cent to $275 in 10 years. If you factor inflation into that you have a real saving of $137 per annum.

Far from blowing out to $500 or more, the Transport Accident Commission was able to achieve a reduction over 10 years by attacking two major problems. It did not decide to increase premiums or to reduce benefits. When it questioned how it could reduce its costs it identified two ways it could go. Firstly it reduced the cost of the scheme and, secondly and equally importantly it reduced the accidents on our roads.

TAC spent money on accident prevention. Honourable members saw the hardhitting advertisements — not the sort of advertisements the VWA produces — that upset some people, but it got results! TAC got results because it knew what it needed to achieve. Honourable members will remember about 12 years ago that more than 1000 people were being killed on Victorian roads each year. I remember the campaign run by the now *Herald Sun*, which was based on the slogan 'Make war on 1034'. That was the number of people being killed on Victorian roads each year. That number has now been reduced to 300 or 400. That is how the TAC reduced costs. By reducing the number of accidents it reduced its administration costs.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Why didn't I think of that?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Good question! Why didn't you think of that? It was so obvious, but unfortunately it would take a bit of management, Mr Hartigan. It is a great pity that we do not have the same calibre of chief executive at the VWA that we had at TAC. If we had, maybe the VWA would have seen the same reduction in employer premiums. I have already said that 30 per cent of employers, mainly small business, pay more in premiums, but overall there has been a reduction in premiums. The minister has talked constantly about reductions in premium levels, but under the legislation premiums will be increased by

$100 million. Given that the scheme is now in the black, what is the justification for yet again increasing employer premiums, particularly when the minister has not identified that he is going to give $100 million to workers? Indeed, the changes are likely to result in a much lower level of payments to workers!

We have seen increases in the administrative costs of the scheme. The rehabilitation and accident prevention strategy has failed and this is reflected in a massive increase in the number of serious and long-term injuries. On 20 May the CFMEU safety officer, Mr Pat Preston, said that it objected to the recent abolition of the authority's building construction industry division, which had provided safety inspectors experienced in the construction industry. He said that under the current system a construction site could be checked for safety by an inspector with experience in manufacturing or other areas, but none in construction.

Four days after those comments were made, Justin O'Connor died after injuries sustained in a City Link accident and on 21 May an article in the *Age* states:

> A spokeswoman for the Workcover Authority said five safety inspectors had worked almost full time on the City Link project since work started 18 months ago. The spokeswoman said that the highly experienced officers had carried out 280 inspections on City Link and the project's management had been very responsive to any changes requested for safety.

Coincidentally, she forgot to mention that Justin O'Connor had just died! A slight oversight! On 13 June an article in the *Age* states:

> Five inspectors are now based full time on the City Link project to revamp safety following the death of a construction worker there last month. Although the move is a response to union demands, Mr Kingham says that all of Workcover's inspectors with building industry work experience are based on that one site.

There was such a shortage of Workcover inspectors with construction experience they had to drag them from another site and the only site on which they all happened to be based was the City Link project.

Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.04 p.m.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is important for honourable members to understand the hypocrisy of the government in seeking to remove access to common law. We have talked about Mr Stockdale's and Mr Gude's positions. What is the position of Mr Hallam? In 1993 the minister responsible for Workcover passionately attacked any suggestion that people injured on our roads should be divided into those who work and those who are hurt driving for domestic reasons. He said:

> How can it be fair for those who suffer injuries as a result of motor car accidents but not fair for those who suffer an injury at the workplace? ...
>
> Why is it fair under the rules of the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and not fair under workers compensation when exactly the same process applies?

That was the minister's attitude to common-law issues, to transport accident and common law, in 1993. He asked why is it fair in one system and not in another? Again, another example of hypocrisy; again, another example of a backflip by this government. Two classes of people will be established. The opposition sought a legal opinion on the matter from Michael O'Loghlen, QC, in which he addressed this issue. He said:

> Were it not for the proposed legislation every motor car driver, who suffered severe injuries and consequential loss by reason of the negligence of someone else, could rely upon his or her common-law rights and obtain redress. The proposed legislation impacts variously upon drivers, dividing them into those who when injured were acting as 'workers' and those who, fortuitously, were not.
>
> If the minister has correctly stated the bill's effect, a driver's common-law rights disappear if the driver was coincidentally a worker pursuing employment activities. In contrast, another driver's common-law rights remain unaffected if, by chance, the driver's pursuits were domestic.

I give the example: if the minister were driving home — not driving himself — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — He normally does.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — But if he was being driven home by his driver — —

Hon. Bill Forwood — Or if you were being driven home by your driver! Talk about yourself.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It applies equally to me as it does to the minister; it applies to everyone who has access to the government car pool.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — There is no such thing as a car pool any more.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Keep going with your inane comments! Hypothetically, if the minister is being driven home and he is in an accident he has access to a common-law claim. He will be able to sue under the Transport Accident Commission scheme if somebody goes through a red light and cleans up both him and the driver. However, the driver will not have such common-law rights because he would have been doing his job. The minister, on the other hand, would be on his way home and, as we know, journey injuries on the way home are not covered by Workcover. The moral of the story is: if you are ever involved in an accident when a government driver is driving make sure you say you were on your way home even if you were not, because if you say you were on your way home you will be able to get common-law rights under the Transport Accident Commission scheme. But if you tell the truth and say, 'I was working', you will not be able to get common-law rights under the Transport Accident Commission scheme. That is the absurdity of what the minister is proposing. Isn't it ridiculous?

Consider the temptation you are putting in front of people just on that basis alone. Why would anybody who drives for a living — for example, a travelling salesperson — who is involved in a car accident during the course of his or her work say that he or she was at work? The first thing that person would want to do is to say, 'I was on my way home'.

Hon. C. A. Furletti — Not everybody is as dishonest as you are.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Coming from somebody like you, with your background — we have heard about all the things you did at the Ethnic Affairs Commission — that is a compliment.

Hon. C. A. Furletti — I will look forward to hearing about it — on the steps, though, Mr Theophanous.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is the result of this government's proposed legislation. The advice the opposition received from the QC also talked about taxidrivers:

> Generally speaking, most taxidrivers injured in the course of their work will lose their common-law rights. The loss is total. On the one hand, they will be unable to obtain any common-law redress against their employers in circumstances where the employer was negligent, for example, in the case of a defective cab. On the other hand, the taxidrivers will be unable to fall back upon the Transport Accident Act provisions that allow common-law redress, for example, where the other driver's negligence caused the collision. The taxidrivers lose their common-law rights no matter how seriously they are injured and no matter how severe the consequences might be.

That is the opinion of a prominent QC. The absurdity is that the taxi passenger, who was not working at the time, could rely on his or her rights under the Transport Accident Commission, seek a common-law payment and receive more than $1 million in damages.

Hon. C. A. Furletti interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mr Furletti fails to understand that many workplace injuries are caused by faulty equipment that has needlessly caused serious injuries to employees, whether it be a defective motor vehicle, dangerous chemicals or machinery capable of causing injuries. Those people are now protected from any legal action brought by an employee who is seriously injured by the negligence of the manufacturer.

Even third parties do not have access to common law. For example, the manufacturer of forklifts will now have absolute legal protection from any employee who is seriously injured as a result of a defective forklift. He cannot be sued. He can provide a defective forklift that can cause an injury to a worker in another workplace and cannot be sued.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Wrong!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He cannot be sued by the worker who is injured. The minister has taken us through this before. He firstly told us in response to a question — this is how much he knows — 'Well, actually the employer could sue on their behalf'. He is on the record as having said that in the house. While the worker could not sue, he or she could get the employer, according to the minister, to sue on his or her behalf.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I later corrected that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The minister later came into the house, as he just interjected, and said it was not the employer but the authority that could sue. As I have consistently pointed out to the minister, what is the benefit to the worker if the authority cannot recover its costs or recover its

premiums? That is of no consequence whatsoever to the worker except that the worker is normally put through another court case for no reason. So far as the worker is concerned, it is of no benefit.

Hon. C. A. Furletti — You don't know.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mr Furletti, as I said before, you have no credibility whatsoever in this place because most of the people who are injured out there in the workplace, in the factories, on the construction sites and so on, happen to be of ethnic background. While you were at the Ethnic Affairs Commission you pretended that you cared about ethnic people and multiculturalism but you come in here and every time an issue is raised that affects ethnic workers and migrants you go to water. You have absolutely no defence for those migrant workers.

Hon. C. A. Furletti — You are a racist. What I say makes sense.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I suggest we get back on the bill.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Any time you want to have a racist debate, Mr Furletti, I will have one with you. Members opposite do not like the truth being told. They do not like people coming in here and pointing out to them that a large number of people in the workplace happen to be people of ethnic background.

Hon. Bill Forwood — They have the same rights as every other Australian.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Let me point out something to you, Mr Forwood, which you may not know — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The house has been progressing well through the dissertation of the Leader of the Opposition up to now, but it is being diverted. It is not fruitful to cast the debate in racial terms. I suggest that we move on to the other points in the bill.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — If people are interested, the ABS statistics show that a disproportionate share of people with non-English-speaking backgrounds work in blue-collar-type work and in factories where a large number of accidents occur. That happens to be a fact. Therefore, providing information to them in their own languages is important. The Labor Party believes it is important to have a workcover system that works for them. Members on the other side would have a similar view. Multiculturalism is at least a policy that is upheld on a bipartisan basis. The minister is on the record on a number of occasions indicating his indifference. In a press release of 30 October 1992 he said:

> The escalating cost of common-law claims under Workcare will be brought under control by provisions similar to those which apply under the Transport Accident Act.

Again in 1992 the minister referred to his support for bringing the Victorian Workcover Authority into line with the Transport Accident Commission, but suddenly he appears to have changed his tune. The opposition is not convinced he has changed his tune because it believes there is a secret agenda to get rid of common law in transport accident cases. The government thinks it will bring the two systems into line by removing the common-law rights of people under the Transport Accident Commission. The *Age* of 15 May this year reported:

> The minister responsible for Workcover, Mr Roger Hallam, said: 'The fact is, it is generally known that this is the best system in Australia, that the changes we introduced were necessary and I am at a loss to understand ... why unions are taking the action they have'.

We are not at a loss to understand it. Workers understand clearly that the minister is taking their rights from them. The legislation discriminates between workers and other people in the community. The bill will have a far greater reach than that. It divides rather than unites Victorians.

Clause 23 introduces another draconian measure designed to attack the rights of injured workers. Its effect is to provide a legislated power for employers to ask potential employees about pre-existing injuries or disease they had prior to commencing employment. I suggest that the clause is not only discriminatory but also insulting. Some people may have suffered injuries they do not want to tell their employer or anybody else about.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — They do not have to; they have a choice.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The minister is offering them the following choice: do not tell your

employer — and then you're not eligible for compensation — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — That is not true.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is true.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Be accurate.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am happy to be accurate. It is true. A worker is not eligible for compensation if he or she suffers an injury that aggravates a pre-existing condition. Which part was not true?

Hon. Jean McLean — It is absolutely correct.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — It is not absolutely correct.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is correct, Mrs McLean. The minister is offering them a choice between lying to the prospective employer and suffering the consequences or simply refusing to answer the question. The minister is suggesting that prospective employees have a choice between telling the truth or lying. All employers will ask a prospective employee the standard question: do you have any previous workplace-related injuries? Is the minister seriously suggesting or condoning that employees tell a lie when answering the question?

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — You're putting up the straw man — you answer it.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is not a straw man at all, Mr Hartigan. They happen to be the facts. The legislation will allow employers to ask that question.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — What's the question?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The question they can ask is: do you have any pre-existing injury or disease that was caused by a workplace accident in the past?

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You're paraphrasing now. Why don't you try just a bit of accuracy?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I did. The minister is suggesting that when employees are asked the question they have a choice of telling a lie rather than telling the truth. He said earlier they have a choice. What is the choice if it is not between telling the truth or telling a lie? What the minister is putting up is absurd. He is saying, 'If you tell a lie and you say, "No, I don't have any pre-existing disease or injury", you suffer the consequences'. The consequences are that if you are injured you cannot claim compensation.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — That is not true.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — This is the minister's idea of a no-fault system.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You're a disgrace.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — No, you're a disgrace because you have brought this legislation into the house.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Either you do not understand it or you are distorting it — they are the only choices.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The choice has been identified by the minister. He said, 'You can either tell your prospective employer what the pre-existing injury is — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I did not say that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You said they have a choice of either telling the truth or telling a lie. I do not know how else you can interpret that.

Hon. Pat Power — It is possible it works differently in the National Party.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Perhaps the truth is stretched in the National Party. When the minister was asked in this place whether he could guarantee that people would not be discriminated against he made the unbelievable response that he thought workers would improve their employment prospects by telling prospective employers about accidents they had had in the workplace and the injuries they sustained. He said that would somehow help them to be successful when making job applications.

Ultimately government members will understand that just because they say something does not mean people believe it. That is what has happened in relation to Workcover and the Auditor-General. Members of the government keep saying things and thinking that because they had said them people would believe them. The minister should realise that people are not fooled so easily. They understand their rights and that the minister is taking them away.

Clause 23 will allow employers to discriminate against people applying for a job. An applicant will have the choice of telling a lie and taking the chance that he or she will not be injured or — if the applicant does not want to take that chance — telling the truth and suffering the consequences — because he or she will not get the job. The provision is totally unnecessary and is vindictive.

As I have said, motor vehicle accident victims will be discriminated against. There will be two classes of drivers on our roads: those who are driving in the course of their employment and those who are not. Those driving in the course of their employment will have no common-law rights. The bill will create two classes of consumers: those who are using products in the course of their employment and those who are not. Consumers will be also divided into those who are using defective products and those who are not. Those who are not using defective products will have no access to common law against the person who has provided the product to them in the first place. There will be two classes of patients in hospitals: those who have suffered workplace injuries and those who have suffered injuries not relating to work. Firefighters will be divided into two legal classes. Discrimination will be rampant throughout the community as a result of the legislation.

Debate interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Waterfront: mercenaries

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I refer the Minister for Roads and Ports to the waterfront mercenaries currently being trained in Dubai. Has the minister had any involvement in this project to date, and when was he first made aware of this harebrained, gung-ho scheme?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Minister for Roads and Ports) — The answer is no.

Unemployment: rates

Hon. R. H. BOWDEN (South Eastern) — Will the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology advise the house of the latest employment levels in Victoria?

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) — I am pleased to advise the house that according to ABS figures released a few hours ago Victoria is now experiencing the highest level of employment in its history. The ABS statistics are obviously of enormous encouragement to people looking for jobs, particularly young people leaving school this year. Most importantly, the figures show that Victoria has recorded its lowest trend unemployment rate since 1990.

Victoria has a lower seasonally adjusted unemployment rate — 8.3 per cent — than the national figure. Let us not forget how good this is by comparison with the unemployment figure Labor left us with — 11.6 per cent. Labor's legacy was the worst unemployment rate that the state had seen.

An honourable member interjected.

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — The opposition talks about workers, yet it was Labor that put the workers out of work and onto the dole queue. There has never been a time in Victoria's history when more people have been employed. That is the outcome of good government and good management.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! It is useful for the house if the minister's answer can be heard. I ask members to cooperate.

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — The Labor Party never wants to hear the good news and never wants to be reminded of what it left behind. The latest ABS statistics show we have had five years of progress — —

An honourable member interjected.

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — Haven't we turned it around since you left office? According to the latest ABS statistics Victoria is the only state in Australia to record a fall in the trend unemployment rate. I add that the level is a lot better than in the Labor state of New South Wales. The full year's statistics are not yet available, but to date this year Victoria has reported a decrease in unemployment of 20 500. No other state except Western Australia has managed to reduce its unemployment queues this year. The results show that Victoria has led the way in that field, as well as getting unemployment down more generally. Statistics vary from month to month

and I do not place a great deal of faith in the month-to-month figures.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Why are you doing it then?

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — We could almost pay you, Mr Theophanous. What is important to us is the trend unemployment rate. Where did it go? It fell. Again that is good news. The government expects strong economic conditions and further employment growth next year.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — No thanks to you.

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — Perhaps the foghorn would like to give credit to the Howard government — and I am prepared to share it around. I am prepared to compare it to anything that happened under the Keating government, which gave us the recession we had to have and put people on the dole queue. We know that the state has the highest level of employment that it has ever had, and that is a credit — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The highest level it has ever had?

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — It has to be true that you have been listening to yourself for far too long, Mr Theophanous — no-one else does. Victoria is experiencing the highest level of employment in the state's history.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — We have the highest population we have ever had, too — what a fool!

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Is the minister finished?

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — I have almost finished.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Something a little less provocative might help.

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL — I take up Mr Theophanous's argument that as the population grows so does employment. Will he explain to me why the Kirner government went in the opposite direction? Let us pick out 1991. That was a good year, Mr Theophanous — and you were a leading member of the Kirner government. Remember how bad that was, and enjoy December 1997. The trend is good. The government is more than happy to see how people who have wanted jobs have been able to find them in Victoria. Victoria has had better growth in relation to the underlying trend than any other state.

Workcover: audits

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — Given the fact that the Auditor-General will no longer have the power to perform audits of statutory authorities such as Workcover following the government's changes to the Audit Act, and given the fact that Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Arthur Andersen, and Price Waterhouse, which is merging with Coopers and Lybrand, have all recently provided services to the Victorian Workcover Authority, will the minister responsible for Workcover explain how under the new regime it will be possible to obtain an independent audit of the Victorian Workcover Authority?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — There are a number of assumptions implicit in the honourable member's question. Firstly, he assumes that because three or four of the big six may be ruled out by the Auditor-General because they have done work in the recent past for the authority that will make it impossible to find a private sector auditor that would not have the same sort of complication.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Who do you suggest?

An Honourable Member — It is not up to the minister.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — That is a very good interjection. It is not up to the minister to determine that; it is up to the Auditor-General. If you are suggesting that, simply because three or four of the better known audit firms have provided services to the authority, it is therefore likely that the Auditor-General may deem it appropriate to appoint someone else and that no-one else will be able to do it, I suggest you spread that message out among the accounting profession. If you do, I am sure you will get the appropriate response. There is one other candidate you have deliberately overlooked, and that is Audit Victoria.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The one controlled by your government? I forgot about that. It will do a really independent job!

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — As an aside, exactly the same organisation — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The one you will shortly appoint the board of.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I remind the member that not so many hours ago he was arguing for the Auditor-General to be appointed to the board of Audit Victoria.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That is absolutely right.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Now the same organisation is not good enough to do — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Because you are appointing the board.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It is appropriate to offer exactly the same comment to the honourable member that I offered to the audit profession. The notion that an Auditor-General has to undertake the audit is ignoring what goes on in the real world. The fact is that in the immediate past the Auditor-General has been commissioning much of his work from outside auditors. In local government, the subject we discussed last night, every audit is outsourced. No-one is suggesting the Auditor-General is losing control of local government.

If that is the argument you are running, it is pretty difficult to understand how you can now suggest that the public good is not served by external auditors when those external auditors are members of exactly the same profession that you are talking about in respect of the Auditor-General. You cannot have your cake and eat it too. You cannot say that working in a particular organisation in the public sector is the only way those people can retain anything that looks remotely like professional standing, because that is simply not the way the world works. If you think it is, then why are you not criticising the 75 per cent of work that the Auditor-General currently outsources. As it happens, he does not criticise it. He thinks it is working very nicely indeed.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — None of the central agencies.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — All we are saying, Mr Theophanous, is that exactly the same principles you are prepared to support in another context should be applied in the totality of the context.

Taxidriver of the Year Award

Hon. C. A. FURLETTI (Templestowe) — Will the Minister for Roads and Ports advise the house on the progress of the Taxidriver of the Year Award, which is part of the government's reform of the taxi industry?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Minister for Roads and Ports) — Mr Power showed his real motives and his lack of knowledge of the taxi industry yesterday when he tried to do a job on taxidrivers. Most people would acknowledge that he has no experience of the areas his shadow ministry covers.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I suggest the minister responds to the question.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — The Premier called for nominations for the Taxidriver of the Year Award in April, and we received a total of 76. The candidates were subjected to extensive testing. The written test required the preparation of a tourist route and the identification of the tourist attractions in Melbourne and Victoria, as well as the extensive plotting of point-to-point routes. Melbourne candidates were also required to undergo a test demonstrating their knowledge of the city.

The finalists were interviewed by an independent panel made up of representatives of the major taxi clients within Melbourne, including the Crown complex, the Australian Grand Prix Corporation, the accessible transport committee, Tourism Victoria, the National Australia Bank, which is the single largest user of taxis in Victoria, and Melbourne Airport. Four finalists have been shortlisted in each of the two categories, rural and metropolitan. The Premier will announce a winner in each category on Tuesday, 16 December.

The Taxidriver of the Year Award highlights the respect the government has for the state's taxidrivers and the way in which they serve their industry. I congratulate all those who have participated in the award process. I also acknowledge, which is more than the Labor Party has ever done, the contribution taxidrivers make to the taxi industry, public transport and Victoria.

Victorian Channels Authority

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I direct my question to the Minister for Roads and Ports, although I am tempted to address it to his mentor, the Minister for Health. I ask the minister to acknowledge that the Victorian Channels Authority is responsible for the maintenance of channels and navigational aids in the ports of Melbourne, Geelong, Portland and Hastings, and for controlling the movement of vessels in those port waters. Will the minister assure the house and the Victorian community that the Victorian government has no plans to sell the Victorian Channels Authority.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Minister for Roads and Ports) — Firstly, I will answer the first part of the honourable member's question.

Hon. Pat Power interjected.

Hon. M. A. Birrell — Why did you ask the question in two parts?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — I acknowledge the information the honourable member has given to the chamber. I am pleased to announce that the Treasurer is the responsible minister, and I will make sure I refer the question to him.

Health facilities: fire safety

Hon. K. M. SMITH (South Eastern) — Will the Minister for Health advise the house of initiatives to improve fire safety in public health facilities in Victoria.

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — Fire safety is clearly an important issue for all private and government-owned facilities. Since we have been in government, we have put emphasis on ensuring that health facilities are upgraded so that they meet high fire safety standards. We have spent more than $25 million over the past five years to bring those facilities up to standard.

Notwithstanding that investment, we recognise that we need a better appreciation of the improvements that are required. We have therefore instigated fire safety audits of all public hospitals, which have to be completed over the next 12 months. In addition, we have allocated almost $50 million of the upgrade of the metropolitan health care network to ensure that existing facilities are upgraded to meet those requirements so they can be maintained in the longer term. I make it clear that fire safety is an important issue for us, and our capital works program indicates that priority.

In a number of areas it is simply not possible to upgrade the facilities because they need to be entirely reconstructed. Public nursing homes are a good example of that. We are seeking to create home-like environments in those nursing homes, but that is not possible in facilities that are a century old, particularly those that had been badly neglected prior to our coming to government. The government is on track towards ensuring that, over the next few years, all Victoria's public nursing home facilities will be brought up to a level so that they provide not only modern and appropriate fire safety measures but also deliver nursing home care as required by the commonwealth.

From time to time comments are made about the importance of this issue. It is a high priority for the government. Indeed, the government is allocating the appropriate resources to ensure that those facilities are brought up to the required standards.

Port of Geelong: grain wharf

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — With some trepidation, I direct my question to the Minister for Roads and Ports. Has the Kennett government consulted the Minister for Roads and Ports about the proposal to sell the grain wharf in the port of Geelong? If so, has the minister indicated his support for the proposal?

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Minister for Roads and Ports) — I thank the honourable member for his question.

Hon. Pat Power interjected.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — It is important to know that the government and the Treasurer — —

Hon. Pat Power interjected.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — Mr Power asked the question and then chatters on. If he would at least give me a chance to — —

Hon. Pat Power — You did nothing about taxis until we put it on the notice paper. Nothing.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — If he does not want to listen, I will sit down now and not even answer his question.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — If you cannot offer the house and members the dignity — —

Hon. Pat Power — You spat the dummy!

The PRESIDENT — Order! Those sorts of remarks only inflame the situation. Mr Power has asked the question and the minister has managed to get out only about six words. I suggest that Mr Power allow him to respond.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — The ports of Geelong and Portland were both sold by the government to the advantage of all Victorians, in particular — —

Hon. Pat Power — We're not talking about mercenaries, so don't get excited!

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — To answer the honourable member's question, the sale of any facility in the port of Geelong that helps improve our productivity and efficiency will certainly be of benefit to Victoria.

Madame Tussaud and Rembrandt exhibitions

Hon. SUE WILDING (Chelsea) — Will the Minister for Tourism inform the house of the success of the Madame Tussaud's and Rembrandt exhibitions?

Hon. LOUISE ASHER (Minister for Tourism) — I thank Mrs Wilding for her support of and interest in Victorian tourism. Many of Victoria's strengths are in the arts and tourism, including cultural tourism and events. Honourable members would be aware that the Madame Tussaud's exhibition is currently open, and the Rembrandt exhibition, after a very successful run, closed on the weekend.

The Madame Tussaud's exhibition began in Paris in the 1770s, and the coup that the Premier achieved in bringing the exhibition to Melbourne is only the second time it has toured since its establishment. I am pleased to advise the house that about 16 000 visitors a week have attended the exhibition since its opening in October. According to last week's figures, the total number of visitors to the Madame Tussaud's exhibition is 160 000.

The original estimate for visitation to Madame Tussaud's was 10 000 interstate and international visitors over 12 months, with an estimated economic impact in Victoria of $1.5 million. That is a real input into Victoria's economy, and if the current visitation rates continue the economic benefits may be even higher. Madame Tussaud's employs 52 people locally, and Tourism Victoria has contributed $50 000 to the marketing and promotion of the exhibition. We have marketed interstate in conjunction with shopping packages, January packages, activity packages, promoting real visitation options for Melbourne as a result of the coup of having the exhibition come to Melbourne.

In terms of the Rembrandt exhibition, the government has continued an exciting tradition of bringing the works of the world's best artists to Melbourne. Preliminary estimates from the National Gallery of Victoria are that 2500 people attended each day of the Rembrandt exhibition, and there is a strong possibility that it will have been the most successful exhibition ever held at the gallery. Although it has been great for locals, as tourism minister I am focusing on getting interstate guests to the city to attend these attractions. Also, we have put out a range of travel packages. For example, Tourism Victoria and Ansett Airlines put together a $50 000 media campaign which was very successful in promoting travel to the Rembrandt exhibition.

One of the great things was the back-to-back and showcasing simultaneously of Madame Tussaud's and the Rembrandt exhibition. A significant number of packages to both were sold and the Victorian Arts Centre is helping increase the number of visitors coming to Melbourne, which again is very much a part of the government's philosophy. The government is providing activity and excitement for the people of Victoria, while also trying to extract maximum visitation for those exhibitions and arts events.

We have converted local opportunities into real tourism opportunities, and I congratulate all of those involved in both the Madame Tussaud's and the Rembrandt exhibitions for yet again making a significant contribution to Victoria's tourism.

Community health centres: fees

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — I refer the Minister for Health to his statement that he supports health promotion and wishes to make community health more accessible. I also refer to his decision to force community health centres to charge for services and his further proposal for large-scale tendering of community health services.

Will the minister assure the house that this decision will not lead to less usage of community health services and to higher rates of preventable diseases and hospital admissions?

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — In terms of health promotion and services for which there is a charge, it is a contradiction in terms to run preventive health programs and charge people to take them up. The whole concept of preventive health is to promote a change of attitude. You cannot nominate one preventive health program for which this government or any previous government charged. It is a bit like saying, 'We are going to charge for anti-smoking campaigns but you do not get access to the material unless you pay. It is a stupid comment.

It perhaps explains there is no policy from members of the Labor Party. They cannot understand the concepts let alone come to grips with how one might structure a health care preventive program. If the question is about charging for some services provided by community health services let me again take the opposition through the issue. Fifty per cent of community health services have been charging and were charging under the previous Labor government but, typically, they had no framework and no consistency and it depended on which side of the street one lived on whether services were paid for or not.

The present government said that system was totally unacceptable and it was not going for 100 per cent. If the Labor Party is advocating 100 per cent charging let me put it on the record that there is a clear difference between the government and the Labor Party: the Labor Party wants to charge 100 per cent for service providers and we do not. We want consistency between programs and across the state. We do not believe what people have to pay for services should depend on where they live.

After a great deal of consultation the government introduced the present policy, which is consistent across different programs, whether Home and Community Care or primary health care programs. The government has gone further and will continue to monitor the operation of that system to ensure it does not lead to people who need access to the service not getting it.

Wide discretion is available to service providers; the underlying principle that is required of service providers is that anyone who requires a service ought not to be unable to access it because a small payment is associated with the provision of the service. That applies to services that are not programs or health promotion services. Those programs are in a different category and consistent with what — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — We knew that already!

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — If you knew it why did you ask the stupid question?

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — We are talking about the other one.

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES — I am sorry, but the Leader of the Opposition obviously did not listen to the question his deputy asked. His deputy asked about health promotion and community health programs and charging associated with them. I have taken the opposition through the facts. They are not programs that are subject to the question.

Workcover: Mr John Halfpenny

Hon. P. A. KATSAMBANIS (Monash) — I refer the Minister for Finance to serious allegations raised about Mr John Halfpenny's use of Workcover benefits. Further allegations have been raised that this year Mr Halfpenny paid back Workcover benefits to the Trades Hall Council after acknowledging that he had in fact been employed at the reputable company Skilled Engineering while receiving benefits. I ask the minister to ensure that this matter is also pursued as part of the investigation he has already initiated.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I am prepared to give the house the commitment that I shall refer the additional information Mr Katsambanis now cites to the Victorian Workcover Authority with the specific request that it be included in the inquiry which is already under way.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) (*By leave*) — If I receive any answers to questions on notice during the day I shall table them by leave.

ACCIDENT COMPENSATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — It is important in this debate to examine what the minister has said and compare it with reports from other authorities. I refer to some of the comparisons provided by heads of the Victorian Workcover Authority report which was adopted in January 1997. The minister would be aware of that. Comparisons are made between schemes on such things as weekly payments. It is interesting to note in relation to weekly benefits for serious injury cases that Victorians receive 95 per cent of their pre-injury earnings for the first 26 weeks, which will now drop to 95 per cent for 13 weeks.

Under the commonwealth scheme the percentage is 100 per cent, not 95 per cent, and the period is 45 weeks, not 26 weeks as in Victoria, so when the minister says we do not have the lowest benefits in Australia, we must compare them with other states. The commonwealth pays 100 per cent of normal weekly earnings up to a maximum amount. The minister has made his own points about how the maximum will increase to $850 a week. The maximum in the commonwealth scheme is $1014.60 a week. What is the maximum in New South Wales? Perhaps the maximum there is lower than in Victoria? Perhaps the minister is referring to New South Wales. The New South Wales maximum is $1086.40, which continues for 26 weeks, unlike the Victorian system where it continues for 13 weeks. Moreover, in New South Wales, after the 26 weeks additional payments are made beyond a base rate which is paid for a dependant spouse and children. A person with four dependant children would receive $250.80 in additional payments.

In South Australia the maximum rate is $1337.80. Is that what the minister means by the lowest rate? Whether one compares the commonwealth system with those of New South Wales or South Australia, Victoria is still the lowest in terms of maximum payment of weekly benefits.

Let me make clear what is actually being proposed under the weekly benefit proposals. All workers who are covered under the old scheme and received 95 per cent of pre-injury earnings with a maximum payment of $680 for 26 weeks will now receive a maximum payment of $850, but the minister has reduced the time from 26 weeks to 13 weeks. That fact does not appear in the advertising material presented by the government. Whether one looks at the advertising material or makes a comparison between the states, the government system certainly does not stack up at all well against other systems in Australia.

The minister likes to pretend that workers are not entitled to lump sum payments for pain and suffering, but we know they are entitled to $53 000 in a lump sum payment for pain and suffering. If $53 000, or a proportion thereof, is added to the calculation, the real figure for the loss of a limb or injury can be obtained. Under the current scheme a person who loses a lower leg in an accident receives $113 000, but under the new scheme he or she will receive $56 000; for the loss of a foot a person now receives $113 000, but under the new scheme, $43 750; for the loss of a right finger a person now receives $34 000, but under the new scheme, $19 000; a person suffering a severe lumbar disc injury now receives almost $29 000, but under the new scheme, $17 500; for the loss of sight in one eye a person now receives $61 000, but under the new scheme, $42 000; a paraplegic now receives $161 000, but under the new scheme, $122 000. They are the lump sum categories, but under the new scheme workers will not be entitled to make common-law claims. Injured workers will be severely disadvantaged compared with the amounts they would receive under the current scheme. Injured workers are worse off in terms of both weekly and lump sum payments and because they cannot get access to common law. In all three categories workers are worse off.

The proposed legislation will undermine yet again the independence of the judiciary. It is a further indication that the government has no commitment to the principles of judicial independence and to the right of every person to have his or her day in court. The bill removes provisions for the testing of critical fact evidence about how a worker receives an injury, whether there was any contributory negligence and a range of matters properly determined by an individual judge. The bill gives judicial power to the government-appointed medical panels. Those panels will decide questions of fact about contributory negligence and about how an injury was caused rather than what they should be deciding — medical issues. The Kennett-appointed doctors will decide the medical condition and the facts about the worker's injury. The legislation will make the medical panels and doctors the judge and jury of workplace assessments. Government-appointed

medical practitioners are another way of squeezing more money out of injured workers.

The government has no mandate to introduce the changes it is attempting to bring about through the legislation. It is clear that many government members are concerned about the proposed legislation. A recent article in the *Australian* quoted an anonymous government member who said that 23 members voted against the legislation the first time. The report referred to him saying, 'If we can get another 10 or 15 we can make a lot of noise'.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — That is a figment of your imagination.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It was reported in a newspaper article. The anonymous member further states, 'But then again, there are a lot who oppose them who'll be too scared to raise their hand'. That is precisely what Mr Pescott said — people are to scared to raise their hands.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — I'm not.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You are so much of a yes-man that it does not matter.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — To whom?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — To the Premier.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — The Premier says yes to me.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is a big statement. Mr Hartigan, before we congratulate you, we would need to know what question was asked. The question may well have been whether Mr Hartigan was an idiot and the Premier said, 'Yes'.

The report in the *Australian* indicates how frightened government members are to put up their hands. The Premier has instituted a reign of terror in the Liberal Party. Members opposite are frightened rabbits. They are not prepared to stand up and be counted.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Where were you when Workcare fell over?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Unlike you, Mr Hartigan, I have stood up for principles within my party. That is the difference between you and me.

The honourable member for Shepparton in the other place was adamant that he would support the continuation of common-law rights. In a letter to local lawyers in Shepparton he proclaimed:

> I believe my office colleague, Peter Ryan MLA for Gippsland South, has had discussions with you and that you are now fully up-to-date with where the issue stands. I can assure you that I will be supporting the continuation of common-law rights.

Hon. D. T. Walpole — What did he do?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am afraid he was one of the backbench members who was silenced in the party room. He wrote this letter before he was silenced by the Premier and others. The letter reflects what he truly believes, but he was not prepared to stand up and vote for it. He was told, 'Do you want a future? If you want a future, shut up and sit down, behave yourself and do what you are told'. That is the way it works these days.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — I don't shut up.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They obviously do not tell you very much. They only tell you to jump and you say, 'How high?'. The honourable member for Gippsland South was not the only one to comment on the legislation because a number of other members — I'm not so sure about Mr Hartigan — have told their constituents they support the retention of common law. But at the end of the day they all went to water! They abandoned their beliefs and their Liberal Party principles in one hit.

I know Mr Hartigan is a sometimes student of political theory. He likes to come in here and talk about his knowledge of economic and other theories. One day he even quoted John Maynard Keynes — or was it Friedman?

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Hayek.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He was a good liberal economist. Had you, Mr Hartigan, read the political philosophy of Liberal governments — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — I have.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You should know Hayek was strong about the rule of law and on the notion that the individual's rights should be preserved, as was, I am sure you know, Mr Hartigan, John Stuart Mill, the father of liberalism. If you go back through the history of

liberal thought, back to Bentham and even before — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Jeremy was a good mate of mine.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You are obviously a student of these matters, Mr Hartigan. As such, I would have thought you would be the first to stand up here and say that the removal of common law runs counter to all liberal principles.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — You finish and I will tell you about it.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I know you will give us the same speech you normally give about economic rationalism, cutting costs and everything else. How about giving us a speech in which you justify, on the basis of liberal philosophy rather than economic rationalism, the removal of an individual's rights to seek common-law justice through the courts?

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Would you like me to do that?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I would like that; I might even stay here to listen to your contribution!

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — In that case, I will throw away my prepared speech and give you that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I would be interested if you are prepared to tell us how this legislation accords with liberal philosophy and thinking. I am happy for you to go out to the library — —

Hon. R. I. Knowles — He doesn't need to do that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I know you have a good memory and I know you have read about all the liberal thinkers. I am sure you will be able to explain to us how that fits in with the great liberal theory that Hayek developed during his life, of which the central issue was how the individual's rights are to be protected. He said one of the major methods of affording that protection was through access to the courts where everybody is treated the same. It is called the rule of law, Mr Hartigan. It means that, regardless of whether you are a minister of the Crown or a worker in a factory, you have the same access to the same law.

The important principle of the rule of law is that it is not discriminatory within the community. The trouble is that some will have access to the law while others will not. In the examples I used earlier the passenger in the taxi would have access to the courts while the driver would not.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — Are you starting your speech again?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — No, I'm not. I am simply putting my thoughts in the context of the thinking of the great liberal philosophers who espoused the notion of the rule of law. I now refer to the advertisements published by the Victorian WorkCover Authority. I have already spoken about the first and second advertisements to which the opposition takes exception. The authority has also published a third set of advertisements in which it makes a number of claims.

Its first claim is that the Victorian WorkCover Authority's no. 1 priority is workplace safety. That claim is false because by abolishing the right of injured workers to sue negligent employers, the authority is giving the green light to negligent employers to continue operating unsafe workplaces. I repeat: claim no. 1 in the authority's advertising about workplace safety is false.

Claim no. 2 is that the authority would soon have more inspectors in the field than at any other time; that claim, too, is false. When the Kennett government came to power, 189 inspectors were in the system but, through a two-stage process, within months of the Kennett government's election, the number was slashed to 136. Today, the authority has only 122 inspectors who would have been classified in 1992 as inspectors. I say 'would have been' because in another sleight of hand the Workcover Authority has increased the number of inspectors by simply reclassifying people. Its claim of an increase in the number of inspectors is a fabrication.

Previously, a section of the authority was known as the technology branch, whose staff assisted inspectors in the field in specialist areas such as ergonomics, occupational health and safety and hygiene. In what can be described only as a cynical act the authority has reclassified that branch so all its members are now known as inspectors even though they are doing the same jobs as previously. The authority is also now reclassifying as inspectors staff who have been part of its management structure.

Claim no. 3 is that 173 inspectors are now in the field. However, only 122 inspectors are on the road actually conducting field work. The figure of 173 represents 60 per cent of the number of inspectors on the road in 1992. By comparison, New South Wales has 254 inspectors in the field, resulting in prosecutions and resultant convictions of negligent employers. Last year about 70 convictions were recorded in Victoria compared with the approximately 170 that were recorded every year in Victoria under the former Labor government.

Claim no. 4 of the Workcover Authority is that since 1992 the authority has contributed to a massive decrease in the number of workplace injuries. That is deliberately misleading because in 1992 the number of reported workplace injuries increased significantly — but only so injured workers could avoid the Kennett government's first round of cuts to the accident compensation system. In including that blip it attempted to deliberately mislead the public — as it did with its claim of a 700 per cent increase in the number of common-law claims. The opposition believes the government and the Workcover Authority are deliberately misleading Victorians. They have failed their brief, and the legislation is the best example of that failure.

The opposition has concerns about many aspects of the legislation, but I do not intend to go into them in detail because they will be discussed during the committee stage. The amendments we will move are specifically designed to overcome some of the worst aspects.

The problems with the legislation go beyond that. For example, we have had legal advice about the use of the words 'total loss' in the new part dealing with lump sum payments for the total loss of bodily limbs. That wording may completely exclude anyone who has suffered the partial loss of a limb. We will certainly raise those sorts of issues during the committee stage.

We will seek an assurance that the reference to 'total loss' does not mean an injured worker will not be compensated unless he completely loses a limb, that the partial loss of a limb will also be covered and that payments to those who have suffered partial loss will not be slashed or even eliminated. During the committee stage we will present the legal advice we have received on those issues in the hope of getting some clarification on how the clauses are meant to work.

I make it clear that the opposition believes the legislation is unfair to both workers and employers. It will create a system that discriminates between workers and other members of our community by taking away workers' fundamental rights. We believe the legislation is unworkable: it will create a set of problems that the government has not foreseen.

For example, we believe the bill will give rise to a significant increase in expenditure, delays and litigation. It will make Workcover almost entirely reliant on the medical panels. We are aware that authorised insurers have had urgent discussions with their legal advisers about the use of the medical panels. We also know that plaintiff lawyers have had urgent discussions with some of the insurers' legal advisers about the provisions.

All of them agree the changes will give rise to enormous problems from a legal and an administrative perspective. In fact, some of the proposed changes will make it extremely difficult for insurers to properly administer the scheme and will regrettably give rise to unnecessary delays, confusion and litigation.

The legislation will not repair the Workcover scheme; rather, it will make it worse. Unfortunately, the people who will pay will be workers who are injured in the workplace, not the minister or other members of the government. Injured workers will have their rights taken away from them. They will be paying for many years to come — until a Labor government restores their rights.

I will conclude by saying that I was somewhat encouraged by what the Premier was reported as saying in the press about my 3½ hour speech on the audit legislation! I told myself I had to do a bit better with my speech on the Workcover legislation so I did not let the Premier down.

Given that the changes to the Workcover legislation are at least as important as the changes to the audit legislation, it has been important to put the opposition's objections on the record. I hope the Premier takes the time to read my speech on the Audit (Amendment) Bill and this speech. If he does, maybe then he will understand why the opposition and the community are so strongly against the changes.

What has happened is very straightforward. This legislation is an admission of failure, because of the following simple reasons. Fact 1 is that it seeks to

increase employer premiums by $100 million. Fact 2 is that it seeks to reduce the rights of injured workers so that they will no longer have access to common law and will receive lower payments under both the lump sum and weekly benefit provisions. Injured workers and employers will be worse off as a result of this legislation. It is therefore an admission of the government's failure to manage the scheme properly. The government has not been able to bring scheme costs under control and has resorted to extreme measures.

Under this legislation a whole range of Victorians will be discriminated against in a way that has not occurred before. It will create two classes of people: those who have access to common law for damages and those who do not. Unfortunately, this runs counter even to the principles that the Liberal Party is meant to be built upon.

I urge members to reconsider their position and the effects of this legislation and to consider seriously some of the amendments the opposition will move during the course of the debate. We hope they will also consider whether the bill can be deferred, changed and sent back. Believe me, the greatest thing that the house could do for democracy in this state and for injured workers would be to send a message to the Premier saying that members can actually make up their own minds; that even though they might be pushed around, they believe in some things such as the common-law rights of injured workers, fairness and justice. It would be the best message we could send. Unfortunately for injured workers in this state I do not believe that will occur. Injured workers in Victoria will therefore face new challenges, a new set of rules, more pain and more trauma. For those reasons the opposition opposes the bill and will oppose it during all stages of the debate.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Two minutes short of 4 hours of tendentious nonsense!

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN (Geelong) — I find myself, unfortunately, coming to the defence of the Leader of the Opposition in this matter. Mr Forwood has accused him of having indulged in 4 hours of tendentious nonsense; I have to include the fact that it was 5½ hours of tendentious nonsense. Mr Forwood could afford to be accurate when he makes statements like that. The Leader of the Opposition is proud that the speech he made on this subject was longer than the one he made about the Auditor-General, and he hoped the Premier would read it. My understanding is that the Premier has had his press people edit the audit speech, and he read the speech in 3 minutes!

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The audit speech?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Yes, your audit speech was converted to 3 minutes of detail, and I imagine that this speech will not take much longer.

I was invited by the Leader of the Opposition to talk about some of the philosophical issues rather than getting involved immediately in the detail of this legislation. Mr Theophanous referred to John Stuart Mill. It is some years since I read John Stuart Mill, but people in this chamber will know that he was very much a man of his time. He had some forward-looking views but my memory of him, apart from his discussions of the need to support the independence of the individual, were constrained by his view of what the ruling ethos was. If Mr Theophanous reads some of his material he will find Mill also believed that the world and individual nations should be run by males of European descent and good birth. He excluded women.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — I don't think that is true.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I am perfectly happy to go and have a look, because I assure you I am right. John Stuart Mill also expressed in correspondence with some Americans his serious concern at the idea that there should be universal franchise in elections in that country. I might say the word 'universal' used there excluded women, but he said something along the lines of, 'If the ill-educated working class is allowed to get involved in such important issues as the running of the state, all that can result is disaster and the end of the civilised word as we know it'.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That's not true. You obviously haven't read Mill.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — My friend the Leader of the Opposition has a bad habit of saying, 'That is not true'. The fact that he is not aware of something does not necessarily mean it is not true. I will go to some trouble in the next few days to obtain the commentary. I will remind him in the next session to get up and say, 'Mr Hartigan, you are right'.

As I said, John Stuart Mill was a man of his time, and he had some progressive views. He is one of the

people to whom anybody interested in political life will refer as a person who moved things along. However, let's not get carried away about the nature of his background and the times in which he grew up and wrote. It is not unexpected that while he was progressive according to 17th century thinking he would not be considered progressive in today's world.

As far as the common law is concerned, as everybody in this chamber knows, I have a high regard for the legal profession and generally take what its members tell me as true without comment or disagreement. Therefore, when I was first involved in some concerns over this issue — and indeed the Leader of the Opposition repeated the observation this afternoon — lawyers said, 'For goodness' sake, this common-law system as it applies to workers compensation is embedded in British democracy and is therefore immutable. If you play with this you will destroy the foundations of democracy as we all know it; it has been around for hundreds of years'. I thought, 'Gee, that is interesting. I am not a lawyer, I have not studied this; I will get a book'. I have been reading a book about the advances of Europe out of the Dark Ages after the Roman fall through the medieval and high medieval ages. Quite frankly, it is an interesting reflection.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — What's it called?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I have it out there and I will show it to you in a minute. In fact, Mr Smith, if you don't mind, would you go up to my office and get the book next to my chair? Thank you!

It is an interesting book on the beginning of the Renaissance in Europe in the 9th and 10th centuries as the so-called civilised states of southern and western Europe were starting to expand for the first time after the Dark Ages. For example, it talks about the Spanish Catholic reconquest of Spain when the Spanish forced the Moors out. The only point I want to make about that — —

Hon. Jean McLean — Stick to the bill!

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Either Mrs McLean was not here or she has forgotten the invitation issued to me by the Leader of the Opposition 5 minutes ago.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — We would like to hear you talk about the Moors.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Yes, I can do that in depth, Mr Theophanous. I now have the book. For Mr Theophanous's edification, I advise Hansard that the name of the book is *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonisation and Cultural Change 950 to 1350* by Robert Bartlett. I have been reading this book for some considerable while!

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Since 1350!

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Not quite since 1350, Mr Nardella. Unlike you, I read with some speed. When the conquest of Spain was taking place, one of the difficulties being faced by the conquerors was the civil administration. When people of the Muslim religion had disputes among themselves they decided them according to Muslim law. Jewish people were in large numbers in Spain, and when they had disputes among themselves they decided them according to the Jewish law. When the Catholic conquerors decided disputes among themselves it was done according to the Christian law.

Hon. Jean McLean interjected.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Just listen, Mrs McLean! If you concentrate for longer than 30 seconds it is conceivable that you may learn something! This is not a political lesson. This is a lesson you can all learn from! The speeches made by Mrs McLean are all so insufferably boring. If she can sit through 5½ hours of contribution by Mr Theophanous she can sit through 20 minutes of mine!

In disputes between the Muslims or Jews and Christians the Christian law prevailed. After a little while they found that this was not a satisfactory way of settling disputes. Instead of using common law that applied to the various religious groups they started to introduce statutory law.

It is interesting to note that if one went to Constantinople during the Byzantine period — that is not long ago; 600 or 700 years — one would find that the people of Venice were given the right to occupy a certain quarter of the city. The Genoans had another section of the city and they ran it according to Genoan law. When the Normans invaded England the economic — —

Hon. D. A. Nardella interjected.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Engels would have much in common with you, Mr Nardella. He was also a property owner of great wealth and — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Go back to the ancient Greeks and read Aristotle!

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Mr Nardella raised Engels. I note that they were both property owners. However, Engels did not earn his property; he inherited it. I notice that Mr Nardella has started down the slippery primrose path of capitalism and I hope he will be more successful! When the Normans invaded England — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — John Kenneth Galbraith!

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Galbraith thought John Maynard Keynes was too far to the right. When the Normans invaded England their view, which was quite common during their expansion in the Middle Ages, was: what you see and take is yours! A good deal of Norman law was first imposed on the conquered races. The main provisions of Norman law were designed to secure property they had seized by conquest. It is interesting to read through some of those provisions.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — You invited me to speak on the subject. You will find that some of the important relationships that are covered by the legal system of the Normans were brought into play at that time. They were designed to secure control of the land they seized from the conquered people. I found it very interesting to read about fiefdom, fiefs and the homage subordinates paid to their lords. Homage of course comes from the French word for 'man'. Homage meant providing a knight, three or four foot soldiers and a couple of horses to defend the lord's property.

The common law that operates in Great Britain began from a very practical consideration of the Norman Conquest. It reflected that the Middle Ages were not well known for safe or easy travel and common law was generally used to deal with situations in which communities were small, well-established, generally interrelated and knew a great deal about each other. Principles were established to enable the civil disputes to be resolved. Indeed, I suppose it can be said about the common law of the time that it was better than none! To suggest it was some superior principle of law is nonsense!

I find when looking at Milson's *Historic Foundations of Common Law* that he talks about common law in this context:

> Lawyers have always been preoccupied with today's details, and have worked with their eyes down. The historian, if he is lucky, can see why a rule came into existence, what change left it working injustice, how it came to be evaded, how the evasion produced a new rule, and sometimes how that new rule in its turn came to be overtaken by change. But he misunderstands it all if he endows the lawyers who took part with vision on any comparable scale, or attributes to them any intention beyond getting today's client out of his difficulty.

Talking particularly about the way in which the common law and the legal system of the time operated he also observed:

> Many petitioners of the 14th and 15th century complain of matters which in principle were remedied by common law. Special treatment is sought —

via the chancellor, representing the King —

> because the petitioner is too poor to sue, or his adversary so powerful that sheriffs will not do their duty or jurors tell the truth.

The reality of the common-law system both in general and as it applies to compensation for workers injured in their employment was that it was better than no law at all, but capricious in its development and application and available primarily to those with means. Indeed, legal history during the 19th century demonstrates that common law and practice — as opposed to theory being put forward by many people in support of the retention of common law — was completely inappropriate and irrelevant in the context of the growth of industry, enterprise size, complexity and the development of corporations whose equity arrangements were far removed from the specific master–servant relationship on which common law forms and practice were based.

If one goes through those sorts of considerations one will understand a little better why companies are concerned. Workers compensation was introduced in Great Britain in 1897 — by chance 100 years ago. In commenting on that one writer said that it was an exceptional and liberalising law in that it excepted workers who fell within it from the then-existing laws and imposed on employers liabilities — and conferred corresponding rights on workers — that

did not previously exist. The primary raison d'être for this legislation was to provide an escape from the rigours of common law and the deficiencies of the then existing legislation.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — One hundred years ago!

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Munkman on employers' liability at common law says the legislation at the turn of the 19th century is relevant to this development. Two matters call for special notice: firstly, how far was an employer liable at that date for the acts of his servants; and, secondly, in what circumstances could a plaintiff recover damages for serious injury? I found that interesting, too! Vicarious liability is a fascinating opportunity for recovery for injury on the part of the employer. Early law did not in general recognise that a master was liable for the torts of his servants — the wrongs performed by his servant. The master was responsible only in certain special cases, such as where the act was expressly ordered or where the master took some benefit from it.

The point to be made in the doctrine of vicarious liability was that it was essentially set up to protect the interest of strangers on the basis that, in the eyes of an outsider, master and servant are one. That is the sort of legislation that covered the operation of ships.

With respect to the law covering liability for personal injuries, for example, when personal injuries directly resulted from the defendant's act there was a remedy at common law in the action of trespass — that is, if you thump somebody, that person could sue you or have the capacity to sue you in the action of trespass. Where they resulted indirectly, as would usually happen in employers' liability cases, there may or may not be a remedy in case. In deciding whether an action in case should succeed, the courts had grown into the habit of considering whether due care had been shown. But the notion of an independent tort of negligence, depending on a positive duty of care between two persons standing in a close relationship, had not yet arisen. A common-law action, for example, was defeated by the defence of contributory negligence where the plaintiff's own negligence had contributed to cause his injuries.

The doctrine of common employment is a fascinating insight into common law which I was told before I became interested was such a vital part of a defence available to the common man. Before 1837, no case can be traced in the English law reports where a servant sued his employer for injuries sustained in the course of his employment. The first case of its kind was *Priestly v. Fowler* — and I understand lawyers and those interested in the law are generally familiar with this case. It is an interesting argument to underpin the problems that an employee had at this time. That case involved a butcher's employee. The plaintiff was employed by a butcher and carried on the butcher's van in the course of his employment. The van was overloaded, one of the wheels gave way, and the plaintiff was injured. He sued his master, the butcher, in case, alleging it was the defendant's duty to have the van in a proper state of repair and carry passengers safely. The plaintiff lost and the suit laid down, for the first time, the doctrine of common employment: that a master was not liable to his servant for an injury caused by the negligence of a fellow servant with whom he was engaged in common employment. Successive similar suits accepted the same finding and confirmed the doctrine of common employment.

The interesting point was that one of the judges who sat in determination of this case was a Lord Abington, and the author from whom I drew these comments observed that Lord Abington himself had in his various houses and mansions of business hundreds of servants. I can imagine how horrified he must have been when it was suggested that some servant far removed from his gaze and direct control might have the temerity to bring a case for negligence. This was accepted as something that could not possibly be sustained.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Are you drawing an analogy between him and Minister Hallam?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Minister Hallam is a much more modest master. The first breach in the doctrine of common employment was made by the Employers' Liability Act 1880 which, however, gave only a partial and incomplete remedy to the workman. Plaintiffs remained free to sue at common law in cases where common employment did not apply. Interestingly, during the currency of the 1880 act an attempt was made to defeat its object by introducing the doctrine of common employment in another form — that is, the defence of volenti non fit injuria. Lawyers have very fertile minds and, generally speaking, when they are on a dodgy case they give it a Latin title to give it the impression it has some virtue. The argument was based on the fact that the workman had voluntarily assumed the risk of dangerous work and thereby released his employer from liability.

However, in 1897 this inadequate act was replaced by the first Workman's Compensation Act which was based on an entirely new principle. Liability did not depend on the negligence of an employer or any of his servants. Compensation became payable automatically whenever a workman met with an accident in the course of his employment and was incapacitated for work.

In this scheme common employment had no place: but the compensation was, in most cases, much smaller than damages would have been under common law had an employer been able to bring a common-law claim successfully. In reality, it was a scheme of insurance under which the employer insured the worker against half the loss of his wages as a result of accident. It was nevertheless legislation that had regard to the mores of the time, as will be seen in the principal section of the British 1897 act. I went to the trouble of reading that act in the library and I will quote it. It has a couple of virtues; it is a good historical piece of material. The other point I admired is its brevity. I do not wish to offend anybody but perhaps the parliamentary draftsmen of today could have a look at it. It reads:

(1) If in any employment to which this act applies personal injury by accident arising out of and in the course of the employment is caused to a workman, his employer shall, subject as herein-after mentioned, be liable to pay compensation in accordance with the first schedule to this act.

(2) Provided that:

(a) The employer shall not be liable under this act in respect of any injury which does not disable the workman for a period of at least two weeks from earning full wages at the work for which he was employed;

(b) When the injury was caused by the personal negligence or wilful act of the employer, or of some person for whose act or default the employer is responsible, nothing in this act shall affect any civil liability of the employer, but in that case the workman may, at his option, either claim compensation under this act, or take the same proceedings as were open to him before the commencement of this act; but the employer shall not be liable to pay compensation for injury to a workman by accident arising out of and in the course of the employment both independently of and also under this act and shall not be liable to any proceedings independently of this act, except in case of personal negligence or wilful act as aforesaid;

(c) If it is proved that the injury to a workman is attributable to the serious and wilful misconduct of that workman, any compensation claimed in respect of that injury shall be disallowed.

That was pretty much the burden of the 1897 workers compensation legislation introduced in Great Britain which spread itself throughout the British Empire of the time through the commonwealth as it is today. Bismarck's Germany had already introduced a form of workman's compensation but it is this legislation that became the template for all legislation that followed elsewhere. Under this act an employer had the option of using common law, as I have just identified, but you have to remember in the context of the common-law option of the time, since none had been successful, it was a fairly cheap gift. As you can see, the people of 1897 would have been considered quite adventurous with this legislation in terms of the views that most of them, particularly masters, had held for so long.

In 1914 we adopted legislation in this state that very closely mirrored the 1897 act. Again, it is pertinent for no reason other than the history to read the debate that took place in this house at that time. It is interesting in the sense that the debate, while it was fulsome and took a number of pages, virtually made no reference to the detail of the workers compensation act. The only reference it made to it was that it had been seven years in the lower house in debate. The general observation was that it was pretty good law, and we should do something about it. The interesting point from my perspective was that most of the debate in the Legislative Council in 1915 dealt with the radical idea of how the scheme should be funded. The idea was that the employer would pay half the premium, the employee would pay two-sixths and the state would pay one-sixth. The whole principle we are discussing here today of common-law workers compensation is pretty much a good thing and we should do it; but did they debate the issue of two-sixths of the premium which had to be paid by the employee?

Those who are interested in the broader role of the political history at the time will recall that the judgment of 1907 had occurred about the time that legislation was introduced into the lower house. Most of the debate was based around an expectation that if you put the requirement on the worker to pay two-sixths of the premium over a matter of time the

arbitration court would bill it into his wages. The view is, why not build it into the employers' payment in the first place and there would therefore be some capacity to monitor it? The more vigorous debate concerned the prospect put by some members in this chamber in 1914 that the state should pay one-sixth of the premium. That was a horrific thought! I never did work out what happened, but they were very upset at the prospect of the state making any contribution. They picked up the British law literally as it was.

The Canadians, on the other hand, took the opportunity to readdress the whole issue. Ontario introduced its workers compensation act on 1 January 1915. Before that date redress for an injured worker depended on the common law, using the same practices and precedents that applied in Britain. The Canadian act, however, did a number of things: it removed the worker's right to sue his or her employer at common law, and substituted benefits in lieu of that right; and instituted a system of collective mutual liability of employers, and the great bulk of industry carried on.

It is clear in the eyes of some people, not excluding the opposition and those professional people for whom the opportunities in this industry are so profitable, particularly with the present system of compensation, that the common law should be actively promoted as some immutable system on which rests the whole structure of democracy. The initiative for the statutory regulation of workers injury compensation schemes, starting a century ago in Britain, represented a total departure from the ineffective and repressive common-law treatment of negligence in the case of injury to workers.

Workers compensation was introduced because common law had failed the worker. Common law was found to be wanting, as it has been in many other areas because of the progress in industry and technology, the desire to have standardised legislation and the adoption of statutory law to ensure that injustices were not done by virtue of the quirks and fashions of individual common-law arrangements.

Hon. P. A. Katsambanis interjected.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I will not be trapped into commenting on the judiciary. I want to keep away from the judges, because, who knows, in the future that relationship might be important to me. Canada moved to a comprehensive no-fault system at the very beginning of its adoption of the then radical program for workers compensation. Victoria did not. I imagine it did not because it was said that what Britain does is good enough. That attitude has persisted until now, more or less. We run a no-fault system and allow a common-law system that is out of step to run alongside and around it.

I turn to some of the history with which some members on the other side may be familiar. The report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Victorian Workers Compensation System, chaired by the now Senator B. C. Cooney, was submitted on 8 June 1984 to the government of the day. It provides a good insight into the history of workers compensation. I refer those who are interested in getting a good potted history of common law relating to workers compensation to section 9 of that report. Curiously enough, with some qualification as to timing and extent, a majority took the view that the abrogation of common-law negligence action should be considered in the context of a national accident compensation scheme. They are talking about the New Zealand system where everybody has access to compensation for accidents, no matter whether they occur in employment, in homes, yards or vehicles. I am not sure that the expectations of a national accident compensation scheme have been realised in the practical world in the experience of places like New Zealand where it has been extraordinarily expensive because its broad and unrestricted nature has led to a variety of abuses and high costs.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — They are $8 billion behind at the moment.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — The minister has more knowledge on this. He says they are about $8 billion behind in liabilities versus assets. The Cooney report recommended that common law be dropped some time in the future. In the library archives there is a submission from the Law Institute of Victoria. What I like about the submission is that it followed and opposed the thrust of the Cooney report. It is exactly the same argument as today; it holds the same position. It had the same vehement opposition regarding the removal of common-law access when in 1984 it made its submission to the Labor government, which was contemplating a major revision of workers compensation. It, presumably, had a more persuasive way of handling these issues, because during the process the Labor government was contemplating the abolition of common law.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Actually advocating it.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Yes. I presume it was persuaded by a variety of people, like the august body of the Law Institute. It abandoned the no-fault workers compensation insurance scheme. Lawyers at least must be given an accolade for almost 100 years of consistency in respect of their income interests. More importantly, they have run a masterful and expensive public relations program aimed at the current legislation. I thought the size and the vehemence of that program was probably the best evidence I had that I was on to something effective. It was the first evidence I had of how much money was flowing out of workers compensation because of the transaction costs of our system.

The whole issue of common law and workers compensation is not something the government dreamt up over the past few months. It has been around for a long period. When examining all types of negligence action the Australian Woodhouse committee of the 1970s unequivocally recommended the abrogation for the following reasons:

1. Neither the issue nor the attribution of responsibility can be justified by implications of personal fault that are tested quite impersonally. Nor does the fault philosophy have any rational bearing upon the distribution of awards that are really a charge upon the community.

2. The negligence concept is used not to assist the injured but to exclude numerous claimants on grounds of economy. The ostensible purpose of the system is to measure real losses in order to provide equal damages in return: but by permitting the fiction to survive that the trial is a contest between individuals the process becomes an attempt to achieve not the fairest solution but the best possible bargain.

Does that ring a bell of recognition? This is not last year or the year before, this is 25 years ago. It continues:

3. Lump sum awards are required not because future losses ought to be paid for at once but because future payments cannot be controlled conveniently by the courts. The disembodied attempts needed to prophesy the future in terms of a once-and-for-all payment now, can only fortuitously avoid over-compensation on the one hand or under-compensation on the other.

All those radical new ideas the government is accused of introducing have been around for a considerable time. It continues:

4. The attraction of capital in hand is illusory; and if the fund should be exhausted too readily, there could be calls upon the social security system for relief and a consequential second payment for the one injury.

5. In more serious cases, at least one-fifth of successful plaintiffs have their assessed losses reduced by average amounts that range from no less than 30 per cent in Queensland up to a figure of 49 per cent in New South Wales.

The reference is to negligence cases in general, not only those brought under workers compensation legislation. It continues:

6. The system leaves at least half of all the claimants with permanent disabilities waiting for their damages for more than two years; —

does that strike a chord? —

> significant numbers are still unpaid after four years; and in some instances the cases have not been finalised after five.

That is a reference not to last year or 1980 but to 1970. It continues:

7. The adversary system hinders the rehabilitation of injured persons after accidents and can play no effective part beforehand in protecting them.

Lots of people have expressed concern about the common law. For example, in May 1988 the current Leader of the Opposition in the other place, Mr Brumby, who was then a Labor MHR, voted for the abolition of common law, presumably in support of the position of the then federal Labor government as expounded by the then Minister for Social Security, the Honourable Brian Howe.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Are you reading a Liberal Party advertisement now?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Mr Nardella needs to be in my situation — that is, firstly, to have been around when this was being debated and passed in the Parliament in Canberra, and secondly, to have a look. It is not a hard trick. I rarely ask the people in the parliamentary library to help me but they have helped me this time. The Honourable Brian Howe was then the Minister for Social Security in the federal Labor government.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — And the Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I should give him his full title, but I am not sure he was Deputy Prime Minister at the time. I have no doubt that he had the full respect and support of Mr Brumby. I had never

heard of Mr Brumby before he came and sat opposite me in this house, but I presume in the absence of any comment to the contrary that Mr Howe had the unequivocal support of Mr Brumby.

In addressing the general inadequacy of common-law provisions Mr Howe said:

> Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the new legislation is that common-law actions against the commonwealth will be replaced by the comprehensive benefits which I have described. It is clear to this government that common-law negligence action which bases its entitlement on proof of fault is a costly, inefficient and inappropriate mechanism for compensating injured workers. Delays in settling these actions act as a positive disincentive for employees to return to work and encourage them to maximise the extent and duration of their injuries. The provision of an adequate level of weekly income, substantially increased lump sum payments on death or impairment, payments for additional expenses for medical costs, aids and appliances and household help, combined with a commitment to rehabilitation and the return to suitable employment make redundant any need for redress to the courts.

Obviously Mr Howe, who was representing the federal Labor Party, did not think that the proposal to remove common-law provisions was the end of Western civilisation. He did not think he was denying people their rights or that he was creating a class of disenfranchised people.

Hon. B. C. Boardman — It wasn't just him. They all voted for it, didn't they?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I understand that the Senate made some changes to the bill. I refer to other comments made by Mr Howe in the House of Representatives on 20 May 1988, as reported at pages 2753 and 2754 of *Hansard*. The report states:

> We have removed the common-law provision not because it will save us money — although it will in fact make the scheme less costly — but because we see it as antithetical to the fundamental orientation in this scheme towards getting the worker back into the work force at the earliest opportunity so that he can feel independent and support his family. There is another point involved, but I do not have time to develop it fully. However, I find it absolutely extraordinary that both opposition spokespeople have, on the one hand, acknowledged that the government wanted to deal with double dipping and rorts, but on the other hand they have insisted in their amendments that we preserve the possibility of people continuing to receive not only compensation payments at an adequate level but additional payments as well.

Mr Howe is not the only Labor member of Parliament who has expressed concern about common-law provisions.

Another Labor member is reported as having spoken about their general inadequacy in the following terms:

> Back in 1973 parliamentarians recognised that the common-law system did not work, that it was an expensive way for victims of crime to try to get redress, and that it was not the appropriate way for the society to recognise and compensate people against whom criminal acts had been committed. That recognition, which was provided through the 1973 legislation, was very important because the conservative government at the time understood and cared about victims of crime.

Those comments were made during the debate on the Victims of Crime Assistance Bill in this house by Mr Nardella, as reported at page 1049 of *Hansard* of 4 December 1996.

I read that passage because Mr Theophanous gave the example of a policeman who was injured by a criminal and the statement made by Mr Nardella is analogous to that situation. Although it may be true that an injured policeman has the right to sue a criminal under common law the problem is that the criminal will either not have any money or whatever he or she has will be hidden. The capacity to sue under common law does not do anyone much good, and that was the point Mr Nardella was making. Mr Boardman can attest to the fact that there are not a lot of policemen suing criminals for negligence or injury — for very good reasons.

The fact that the legal profession has frightened politicians in the past with the threat of substantial funding of support for opposition to reforms is more a criticism of politicians than it is of lawyers. It is up to people sitting in this place and other parliaments to resist those sorts of pressures and to do what is right and proper for the public in general, and in this case for employees.

Hon. P. A. Katsambanis interjected.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I would have thought that lawyers are rational. I would be surprised if they did not act in their own

self-interest — and if they did not it would be the first time that had happened.

However, we have now reached the stage where the so-called common-law area of workers compensation has taken on a life of its own, independent of the wishes or present capabilities of the government of the day. The government has proved to be less capable of describing the parameters within which it wishes to the apply the so-called common-law claims than have the clever lawyers.

The government has attempted to define the area by prescribing that there should be a 30 per cent whole-of-body impairment before a claim can be made. It has attempted to convince itself that the issue of employee negligence is capable of debate and differentiation. It is quite clear that the government's attempts to clearly and unambiguously define the 30 per cent injury barrier have failed.

On the few occasions that the judiciary has been asked to make decisions about common-law claims it has made judgments that have had no regard for what might be called an essentially medical judgment about what constitutes a 30 per cent impairment.

If anyone has any doubt about that I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* an attachment to a letter of 2 December from the chief executive of the Victorian Workcover Authority which was sent to the Leader of the Opposition.

Leave granted; table and graph as follows:

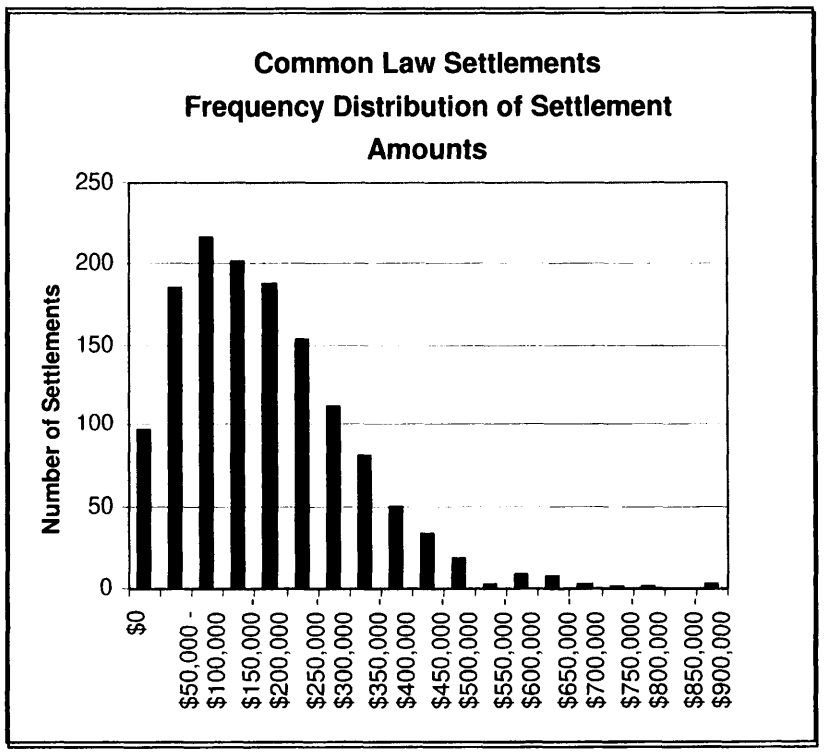
ATTACHMENT B

Attachment to a letter to the Leader of the Opposition dated 2/12/97 from Chief Executive, Victorian WorkCover Authority.

Common Law Settlements

Frequency Distribution of Settlement Amounts

Settlement Amount	Total No.	%	Cum %
$0	97	7.1%	7.1%
$0 - $50,000	186	13.6%	20.7%
$50,000 - $100,000	217	15.9%	36.7%
$100,000 - $150,000	202	14.8%	51.5%
$150,000 - $200,000	188	13.8%	65.2%
$200,000 - $250,000	154	11.3%	76.5%
$250,000 - $300,000	112	8.2%	84.8%
$300,000 - $350,000	80	5.9%	90.6%
$350,000 - $400,000	50	3.7%	94.3%
$400,000 - $450,000	34	2.5%	96.8%
$450,000 - $500,000	18	1.3%	98.1%
$500,000 - $550,000	2	0.1%	98.2%
$550,000 - $600,000	9	0.7%	98.9%
$600,000 - $650,000	8	0.6%	99.5%
$650,000 - $700,000	3	0.2%	99.7%
$700,000 - $750,000	1	0.1%	99.8%
$750,000 - $800,000	1	0.1%	99.9%
$800,000 - $850,000	0	0.0%	99.9%
$850,000 - $900,000	2	0.1%	100.0%
TOTAL Settlements	**1,364**	**100.0%**	
MEAN Settlement	**$173,794**		



Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — It is clear from looking at the frequency distribution of settlement amounts since 1992 that more than one-third of settlements produced amounts of $100 000 or less — some 20 per cent produced amounts of less than $50 000. It is clear that attempts to define the 30 per cent injury barrier in a way that can be consistently interpreted have failed.

It is also clear that there is no longer a debate about employer liability. There appear to be no circumstances under which an employer can avoid the prospect of failing in a claim under common law. The employer seems now to be always guilty under the general broad consideration of the duty of care to be liable for any injury caused to a worker in his or her place of employment. We know that because virtually no claimants under common law have failed to reach a successful settlement.

Approximately 90 failed, many of them only because they were unable to prove the accidents occurred in their places of employment. Another proportion failed because the level of injury fell below whatever level the judiciary found was acceptable. A number of others failed because they withdrew their actions.

Most so-called common-law claims are settled on the steps of the courthouse following negotiations between the plaintiff's and the defendant's legal representatives. Each settlement is made in isolation from any other settlement and, one presumes, literally on the basis of each party's assessment of the likelihood of court action and the cost of such action. Those assessments are perhaps made on the basis that one lawyer may be smarter and quicker than the other, but they may be made on almost any basis and any combination of considerations.

My observation on this issue is not the only one that has been made. I noticed from reading through *Hansard* of some years back that another member of the Victorian Parliament expressed the same view. I refer interested members to page 1334 of the *Hansard* report of proceedings in the Legislative Assembly on 16 July 1985. The context is injustice arising from the fault and litigation process. The report states:

> A case history that recently came into my office deals with a worker who had a common-law claim pending against his employer and was offered $75 000 for a permanent back injury. The insurance company offered a settlement of $39 000. The worker was advised by his solicitor not to accept the offer but to go to court and that he should receive much more than $75 000. Unfortunately the jury did not take too kindly to the person — he was a migrant and he did not speak good English, he did not come across too well — and the award given was $39 000, well short of $75 000 that was offered at the door of the court.
>
> The difficulty then arises when the legal fees must be paid out of that award because the award given was less than the amount offered. Out of that $39 000 for common law settlement, he must pay $20 000 in legal fees. This indicates the extras that are loaded into the workers compensation system when legal fees of $20 000 are taken out of a $39 000 settlement. This would leave the worker with approximately $19 000 in his pocket.
>
> The worker has a permanent injury and he is left with $19 000 to provide for him and compensate for the pain and suffering, plus loss of income and future loss of earnings.

Who was the acute observer? None other than Eddie Micallef, the Labor member for Springvale in another place.

A cavalier attitude towards the so-called common law route to workers compensation was to some extent fostered by a widely held view that there was a vast ocean of money out there for the taking that did not belong to anybody, and there was no need to demonstrate any restraint or any consistency of attitude towards assessing appropriate awards.

For all these reasons, although aggregate claim numbers and traumatic injuries have fallen dramatically, the numbers being assessed as serious injuries continue to climb. When Workcover was introduced in 1992 the number of common-law writs was expected to be approximately 500 per annum, yet the number has now reached 1000 per annum. The rate of use of the common-law system has grown significantly but not because the number of accidents or level of trauma have increased. Common-law payments have increased from $17.9 million in 1995–96 to $139.7 million in 1996–97 — and they continue to grow.

In using those figures I am not attempting to state that they reflect the number of claims received in each of those years — they reflect the number of claims settled in those years. However, looking at the trend lines it is hard to argue that any of the constraints the government's legislation originally anticipated would be built around the capacity to claim under common law now exist to any considerable extent.

Given the reductions in injuries the government set out to achieve neither the results we now see nor the new costs involved in the increasing use of common law were anticipated when the 1992 legislation was introduced. The government is not prepared to allow uncontrolled growth in unfunded liabilities to take place by deferring the action necessary to correct the trend.

Competitive premiums continue to be an important element in the government's industry policy. They should be an important consideration in the view of every honourable member who is concerned about employment opportunities. Workcover premiums cost nearly $1000 million a year. The level of those premiums is not only important to injured workers but also has a very dramatic bearing on the capacity to maintain growth in investment and demand for labour. A good workers compensation policy must have regard to unemployed and injured workers.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — We had 86 months of the best unemployment rate in Australia. You can't even get 86 milliseconds.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I will not reply to the interjection. As usual it was without any intellectual content or relevance and therefore does not bear responding to. It was merely a distraction. Not one person in this room should dispute the point that imposing additional costs on the employment of labour is adverse to the interests of the unemployed. That is a very simple view. The trade union movement does not disagree with it, so why would Mr Nardella?

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Is that why you are increasing it by 11 per cent?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — You make a very good point, Mr Nardella. One of my disappointments is that the government is increasing it — and you are quite right, it will have an adverse impact on unemployment. However, it is a less serious disappointment than I would feel if the government were pretending it does not happen.

It is less serious than if the government were to do what Joan Kirner did and deceptively recognise the adverse impact of high workers compensation premiums on employment. She reduced premiums from 3.3 per cent to 3 per cent because she was under great pressure from the employers. Employers were saying, 'You are destroying our ability to employ', so she reduced premiums. The only thing wrong with that was that Victoria was $2 billion in a hole and the amount was rising at a rate of $400 million a year. Labor members talk about honesty. Is that the way to put together an industry policy in a long-term program aimed at increasing investment on employment? I suggest that no-one on either side of the house wants to get involved in debating that issue. However, the government is acting decisively and quickly to turn around the trend to meet the dual requirement of providing good, safe, early and fair compensation for injured workers and a competitive premium system that helps to foster employment growth and so provide relief for unemployed workers.

I can understand the position taken by the lawyers, because it is pretty straightforward, and I can even understand the position taken by the opposition, which is not committed to acting rationally, anyway. I suppose it sees its role as opposing for opposing's sake. It could have done that more effectively, because so far all it has demonstrated is its hypocrisy.

The only way in which I can understand the position taken by the Trades Hall Council is to accept that it believes, with some justification, that the common-law process is too far removed from the 1897 legislation that dealt with the failure to provide workers with compensation for workplace accidents. As a result, the legal arguments put by lawyers and accepted by judges in the few cases that come to court have effectively lowered the 30 per cent whole-of-body impairment gate.

Also, again in the few cases that come to court, judges so often judge employers to be negligent on the basis of workplace practices and notions of duty of care that very few common-law claims are rejected. That has led to a situation where, to all intents and purposes, we have a no-fault system. But it has one tiny problem — it is expensive and has high direct and indirect transaction costs.

As a result, if you attempt to pursue a common-law case today, firstly, it is unlikely that the so-called 30 per cent whole-of-body impairment gate will stop you, and, secondly, you will not fail. That is because in the few cases that reach the courts, judges have established that there are no bases on which to reject the claims. If you were representing the authority, why would you go to court? You would do your best to settle, given that we have a no-fault system with high transaction costs.

If the Trades Hall Council believes we have a strategy that is based on our recognising that we

have a no-fault system that returns more advantages than any other system, because of the way some of the professional bodies out there have operated, it is likely that, regrettably, the trade unions believe the claim that what we are proposing does not represent an improvement over the common-law system. We can argue all we like here about whether or not it is, but we will know in one year or two year's time. Given all the work that has been done here, I am satisfied that it will be an improvement when considered in terms of gross net payments to injured workers.

It makes sense to move to a system that provides compensation equivalent to that which injured workers receive today — without the transaction costs. That seems reasonable to me. Members may recall the Leader of the Opposition making a similar point. First of all he said we did not have a mandate to do what we were doing. Then he asked what we intended to do to fix the cost overrun?

Is the Leader of the Opposition saying that if we have no mandate to fix it we have to let the scheme run at a continuing deficit? Is that the moral principle that guided the Labor Party when it allowed Workcare to blow out? Perhaps a more accurate explanation was the apologia the Leader of the Opposition delivered in February 1994, when he said the Labor government wanted to do something about the overrun but the trade unions would not let it.

He is the man who says that if we were principled we would get up and oppose these sorts of things. He admitted in February 1994 that he had done the wrong thing, but where was he in 1990 and 1991 when something constructive could have been done? Members opposite are the same people who talked about Victoria having the lowest unemployment rate in the country for 86 uninterrupted months during the Cain-Kirner years. But in that 86 months they spent $10 billion to $15 billion they did not have and employed 50 000 to 60 000 more civil servants than they needed. So much for its economic policy and its industry policy. The evidence is clear that Labor was a government of deception, a government of incompetence and a government of cowardice.

Perhaps the Trades Hall Council believes its continued use of the so-called common-law provisions would further expand the gross payments injured workers receive from the Workcover Authority. I do not believe it would, because there is no more left!

It is appropriate to recognise that we have moved a long way from the situation that led to the introduction of the parent workers compensation legislation in Britain in 1897. That legislation expressly recognised the option to make a claim under common law — in the almost certain knowledge that it would fail. Given the introduction of legislation governing occupational health and safety in factories and given the changes in the prevailing culture, which now talks about a broad duty of care, we now have a situation where every common-law claim succeeds.

The notion of duty of care that in 1897 denied workers the right to seek compensation for work injuries has now been completely reversed so that there is no need to demonstrate negligence. More than 90 per cent of common-law claims do not proceed to court. They are settled outside to avoid the costs involved — and in the almost certain knowledge that if the plaintiffs go to court they will succeed.

Of the 1364 Workcover common-law actions that had been settled to 14 November, only 97 settled with no damages payable because there were no compensable injuries, the monetary thresholds had not been exceeded or the workers had withdrawn their actions. That is to say, none of them failed because the claimant was unable to prove employer negligence. As a consequence, it is time to recognise that for all practical purposes a no-fault system now exists and that it is time to get on with establishing a new system that provides the same results without the high transaction costs.

The past century has seen the establishment of a considerable workers compensation industry, particularly in money terms. That gives the government the opportunity to eliminate costs that are unnecessary and irrelevant to the fair and proper treatment of injured workers. That explains the adverse reactions we received from those members of the industry who will be most affected by the legislation — and they are not workers. They have been very noisy in defending their vested interests.

In the past, governments of all persuasions have looked at eliminating common-law opportunities in workers compensation. They have failed because of their uncertainty, their inability to clearly see the consequences, or a lack of political courage. The latter certainly does not apply to the government. Over the past few years there has been a debate about the consequences of common-law access. Recent evidence makes it clear that we have now a

de facto no-fault system. The government has the political courage and sufficient interest in injured workers to introduce a comprehensive, fair and responsive workers compensation system.

When we introduced Workcover in 1992, we not only had to fix up the unfunded liability mess left by Labor, we had to establish clear objectives to offset the lack of those who were responsible for the failure of Workcare. The government attempted to develop a system that would provide fair and comprehensive protection for injured workers. It was intended that employer premiums would be internationally competitive and would attract rather than reject investment.

When we took office the average premium level of 3 per cent was massively uncompetitive, and employers complained bitterly about it. The Labor government knew it was unacceptable and, for political reasons, reduced the premium level from 3.3 per cent to 3 per cent, notwithstanding that the fund was already in massive deficit and was getting worse. A quick glance of the *Hansard* record over the years reveals that the liabilities were rising at a rate predicted by the then shadow Treasurer, Alan Stockdale. In 1992–93 he predicted the deficit would be $400 million, which is what occurred. The Labor Party could not blame him for that, and you have to give him full marks for accuracy. The former Labor government was unable, unwilling and lacking in political courage to address the Workcare issues. That was clearly identified in Mr Theophanous's apologia in February 1994.

The government recognises that it needs to address the potential for a sustained rise in unfunded liabilities through medium increases in premiums, and to reform the whole system to ensure fairness, predictability and consistency with the objectives of accident reduction and early return to work.

Mr Theophanous suggested that I lack principle. I will tell the house what I said about a year ago on this matter. On page 860 of *Hansard* of 20 November 1996 we were debating workers compensation. I should say that it reads rather well — and modesty is one of my noted virtues — but I should give full credit to the Hansard staff: they really do an outstanding job. It reads as follows:

> It may be a natural objective of a lawyer to keep his or her business going, but one of the responsibilities we have as a government is to ensure that that business is not kept going on the backs of workers and economic activity — and we will put a stop to it.
>
> I am increasingly nervous about the efficacy of the legislation, having had a preliminary insight — a preview — of what Labor lawyers apparently have planned for when the legislation comes into force —

Mr Theophanous had already given us an insight into what was planned —

> We will see how it goes. If they find another way of rorting the system, I — I rank about 34th in this house; guess where you guys rank — will have some say in the matter. That is what I will be pushing for, so don't be surprised if you see further developments in the way workers compensation is run that are designed to ensure that workers are the beneficiaries, not those who prey upon the system.

On 10 December, just barely a year ago, as recored at page 1231, I said:

> This debate and the one we had last week during time set aside for opposition business give rise to concerns that some of the better minds in this business — and they do not happen to be working for the workers or Trades Hall Council! — are already addressing the issue of how to find another loophole or another way.
>
> I know the minister will not take offence, because this is my own personal view — although for the past four years it has been largely ignored! — but we may well need to move towards a specific lump sum payment for the table of maims injuries and pensions: no common law, no debate and no argument about psychological impairment.

We want a system that meets the modern requirements and avoids the failures and the trends of the past. We want a system that provides fair, comprehensive and early compensation to injured workers. We want a system that provides improved safety in the workplace, particularly in small and medium-sized firms, and encourages workers to return to work as soon as possible consistent with their capabilities. We need a system that ensures that the premiums paid by employers are at the lowest cost consistent with fair treatment of injured workers, to encourage investment and employment.

Let me fill out this statement with some specifics of the magnitude of the transaction costs to be largely eliminated as the new legislation begins to apply fully, appreciating that we still have the tail of the present common-law system to overcome.

Hon. Bill Forwood — And Workcare!

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Yes, Workcare is still in there. That was a mistake, the cost of which has a very long life!

The total costs to Workcover of all legal work and medical reports approximates $115 million a year, or more than $1 in $8 of all Workcover premiums. The new reforms are aimed to reduce those costs substantially by eliminating common-law claims, by removing the 'serious injury' determinant of weekly benefit levels, where the first level of legal and related costs occurs today, and by streamlining the dispute resolution procedures.

Honourable members would appreciate that most of those people on the serious injury weekly compensation scheme are more or less waiting their turn at a common-law claim. They are in the queue, receiving a serious injury payment of 90 per cent, while they wait to have their common-law claim settled, which generally takes 2 to 3 years.

People say to me, 'Look what you people are doing. You are planning to reduce the 90 per cent rate to 75 per cent', but the honest reality of the matter is that, as anyone who has anything to do with Workcover will know, when you reach the common-law settlement it is reduced by that amount of money. It does not make any difference whether you get 90 per cent or 75 per cent, you lose it. Therefore, if you plan not to have to wait for common law to get the settlement, the issue of the 90 per cent becomes largely irrelevant.

To return to the savings we expect to make, the $33.5 million the legal profession argues as being the legal and related costs of the present Workcover system actually relates only to legal costs paid by Workcover to lawyers in respect of so-called common-law actions. Other payments by Workcover to lawyers, directly and indirectly, because of the adversarial nature of the structure amount to $40.2 million. Medical report costs, again because of the adversarial nature of the system, amount to $24.7 million, and other related administrative costs make up the balance.

In addition, the worker makes substantial payments out of awards to lawyers to cover solicitor-client costs. Clearly this is an expensive business. Consequently, we are confident that these costs, which approach almost $100 million, will be available to offset the burgeoning costs and the overruns of the common-law system. That will at least make a contribution to those resolutions.

The bill is based on the premise that eliminating those costs and increasing the premiums will not only address the unfunded liabilities but will guarantee that the aggregate level of net compensation flowing to workers in the broad will not be reduced. The bill will eliminate the right to recover any damages in a common-law action from work-related injuries arising after the date of commencement, and in that regard I heard the spurious nonsense being flogged by Mr Theophanous, which was exactly the same as the argument espoused by a variety of professional vested interests in dealing with the common-law options under the Transport Accident Commission, and indeed under Workcover.

I will not get heavily involved in the pros and cons of the Transport Accident Commission, although I will make a couple of observations. Firstly, it covers a wide variety of people other than workers — about half the people who make claims under the Transport Accident Commission are not in employment. Secondly, I am absolutely convinced the compensation scheme we are putting forward under the bill is superior to the common-law scheme as it operated under Workcover and as it operates for the Transport Accident Commission.

I have no embarrassment in arguing that the government is putting together a compensation system that provides superior benefits to workers than the previous one. The first thing is to reflect on comments made by Mr Theophanous about the level of activity undertaken by the Workcover Authority to address the causes of injury. In part there is a need for us to have a carrot that will encourage employers of workers to improve the workplace environment. In addition, we have to have the stick of higher penalties.

Among other things, the legislation will increase the penalties for indictable breaches of health and safety requirements to at least five times their current maximum. Mr Theophanous appeared to argue that because more fines were imposed in New South Wales than in Victoria this in some way reflected a better occupational health and safety environment in New South Wales than it did in Victoria. I suggest it might also reflect the fact that there are better occupational health and safety systems in this state and better control over the environment in which workers earn their income.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — It is suggested that we have a better government. All the objective facts say we have a better government. I might also observe for the record that Mr Brideson, admirable man that he is, said we have a better Premier as well.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — The statutory death benefits will be increased substantially. The present lump sum will be increased substantially and there will be a new additional system of support for a dependent spouse and children. We maintain the opportunity for action to be taken under tort for amounts up to $500 000.

The provisions dealing with compensation for permanent impairment — non-economic loss — will be expanded and modernised to reflect the needs of the 21st rather than the 19th century. Following the elimination of the so-called common-law claim, the statutory maximum for such impairment will be increased from $161 000 to $300 000.

The fourth edition of the American Medical Association publication *Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment 1993*, modified to take account of Australian best practice in evaluating psychiatric and hearing impairments, will be used. The weekly benefits system which compensates for lost earnings will be reformed to focus on work capacity rather than injury, thus directing efforts towards improved rehabilitation and return to work. The payment system will be simplified with two streams depending on whether people have or do not have a current work capacity and whether after two years any lack of capacity to work is likely to continue indefinitely.

Although much has been made of the elimination of the 90 per cent payment for serious injury, the fact is that the 90 per cent payment for serious injury almost always translated into a common-law claim and was offset at in the total settlement of the common-law claim. Since the government anticipates it will make a much quicker settlement I do not think this will be any great disability to workers in practice.

The government will also make changes to improve the objective quality of medical assessment and the timeliness of resolution of the injury claim. Opinions of expert medical panels will be made final and conclusive, and there will be a free service to assist workers and employers as an alternative to expensive legal advice, although the opposite will exist.

Finally, recognising the potential for unfunded liabilities to appear and rise, premiums will be increased to 1.9 per cent on a new base, including superannuation. That will generate an increased revenue stream of about $100 million for the authority to fund its work.

Given the comprehensive nature of the legislation and the desire of the government to make it as certain, unambiguous and expeditious as possible, it is a lengthy and detailed document. The important structural issues are, firstly, a greater emphasis on workplace safety, return to work and rehabilitation. Not only do premiums to a large extent reflect individual firms' experience, but penalties for breach of health and safety requirements will be increased.

I might say in that regard that while much has been done to ensure that premiums reflect cost experience in workers' injuries, as a practical matter all honourable members will appreciate that the incidence of a large claim on a small firm could lead to unproductive consequences and result in the firm going out of business; consequently the Workcover Authority would have to meet the cost anyway.

There will still be an element of cross-subsidy, and with the best will in the world we can see no practical way of eliminating that fully. Nevertheless, in addition to the increased penalties for breach of health and safety regulations there are clear, positive and penal signals to employers to continue to focus on improved safety — to avoid accidents — and early return to work through more flexible employment arrangements.

Secondly, Workcover is now uncompromisingly based on the original objectives of the first legislation made a century ago that provided that liability did not depend on the negligence of an employer or any of his servants. Compensation became payable automatically whenever a workman met with an accident in the course of his employment and was incapacitated for work.

The legislation separates payment for loss of income from payment for permanent impairment. There will be, in effect, one level of payment for permanent incapacity to work set at 75 per cent of average weekly earnings — after the first 13 weeks at 95 per cent — indexed to the CPI, while the non-economic loss through permanent impairment will be provided independently of capacity to work, with

higher levels of compensation rising to $175 000 for 70 per cent impairment and $300 000 for impairment of 80 per cent or more.

Since the permanent impairment payment under this legislation is not associated with the issue of income the pressures of the initial 'serious injury' claim and then the common-law claim to defer the earliest return to work to avoid any adverse impact on such claims are removed. It becomes clear that over recent years the break-out of serious injury classifications demonstrates a major change in the outcomes of the legal process of adversarial argument and judicial decision and out-of-court settlements.

In 1992-93 the number of workers who were classified as seriously injured was 672. By 1996-97 the number had risen to 2436, against a background of a decline in the number of traumatic injuries and resulting deaths from 4924 in 1992-93 to 3256. That is in the context of a much more active labour market. This is the single biggest factor driving the cost of so-called common-law claims as the number of claimants able to achieve the classification of serious injury has grown in a way that was clearly never envisaged because it had no historical basis and because injury levels on every other measurement were in decline.

As the Workcover Authority says in its most recent annual report:

> The use of this category continues to exceed all expectation and to defy remedial measures. The continued incentives to undermine the original intent of the legislation must be addressed.
>
> This classification is the threshold requirement for initiating common-law proceedings and achieving a higher rate of weekly payments.
>
> It can also be the basis for continuation of weekly payments beyond two years and higher table of maims and medical costs.

Nevertheless these reforms also provide for a no-disadvantage test that will ensure that no workers suffering a total loss under the present table of maims would be paid less than they would have received under the new arrangements, and includes a specific loading for pain and suffering assessed at the same percentage of the total as represented by the specific table of maims payment. These payments will be made, subject to agreement with the commonwealth, over a period not exceeding 10 years, and they will be indexed to the consumer price index.

I am pleased to advise honourable members that I have been informed by the minister that the commonwealth Minister for Social Security has agreed that the payments will not have an adverse impact on the right of injured workers to seek other social services from the commonwealth. The commonwealth is considering continuing its present treatment of the first instalment but exempting all other instalments of payments for non-economic loss from the social security income test for both pensions and other allowances. One of the obstacles to introducing the legislation has been removed, and that in-principle support will be translated into commonwealth legislation.

In practice, a person who has no work capacity and who is suffering a major, permanent impairment will receive a weekly payment of 75 per cent of average weekly earnings, up to a threshold of $850, until retirement age, plus an impairment payment, also indexed to CPI.

As the data for the frequency distribution of injuries shows, only a small number — in fact, only 74 — of the common-law Workcover settlements have exceeded $400 000. Four of those case studies demonstrate how the legislation will offer a genuine increase in benefits. Honourable members should know that the lump sum equivalents of weekly earnings represent the present-day value of incomes received until aged 65. The present-day values are adjusted with a discount factor of 3 per cent to take account of inflation and increases in the CPI.

Case 1 relates to a person with pre-injury earnings of $1500 a week who was aged 51 at the date of settlement, which was 27 March 1997. He received a common-law settlement of $407 500 for an injury suffered on 13 December 1995 that caused paraplegia and a 75 per cent whole-of-body impairment. Under the new benefits that injured worker would receive a lump sum of $237 500 plus a weekly benefit of $850 until retirement, which would total $339 356. That figure is discounted for present-day values including CPI increases. Taken together, the compensation payments total $576 856, much greater than the common-law settlement.

Case 2 involves a person aged 30 with pre-injury earnings of $713. He was injured on 16 April 1993, and his claim was settled on 1 September 1997. His payment for paraplegia with associated medical conditions amounted to $646 118. Under the

legislation, given his 90 per cent whole-of-body impairment, the injured worker would receive a lump sum of $300 000 plus weekly payments until retirement of $535, making a total of $457 738. Those compensation payments amount to $757 738, as against $646 118 for the common-law settlement.

Case 3 involves a 17-year-old who had not finished school. However, he was deemed to have had pre-injury weekly earnings of $680. The date of his injury, which resulted in his suffering brain damage and fractured hips, was 29 July 1993, and his claim was settled on 6 June 1997 — again, almost four years later — for $490 000. Under the legislation, for an 80 per cent whole-of-body impairment the worker would receive a lump sum of up to $300 000 and weekly payments of $510 adding up to $516 000. Both amounts would total $816 000, a great deal more than his common-law settlement of $490 000.

Case 4 involves a worker aged 44 with pre-injury weekly earnings of $660. He was electrocuted on 4 September 1993, suffering burns, brain damage and paraplegia. His common-law settlement on 30 May 1997 amounted to $510 000. For an 80 per cent whole-of-body impairment the worker would receive a lump sum of $300 000 plus weekly payments until retirement totalling $298 000. Together, they amount to $598 000, again far exceeding the $510 000 awarded under common law.

As the data to December for the frequency distribution of settlements shows — the information is in attachment B of a letter to the Leader of the Opposition from the Workcover Authority — 84.8 per cent of the 1364 settlements of common-law actions were below $300 000. Those settlements negated any payments for pain and suffering and any weekly payments for loss of income.

It is not unrealistic to project that if 208 of those workers were to claim for compensation under the legislation they would receive payments for permanent impairment and CPI-indexed weekly payments which, when combined, would at least match the distribution of settlements between $300 000 and $900 000 for common-law claims.

The evidence is clear. It is likely that total benefits for seriously injured workers under the government's scheme will exceed the benefits paid to injured workers under the present scheme.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Do you have any actuarial evidence of this?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Those four examples were selected because they involved people with various levels of injury and various ages — and, therefore, lengths of time before they turned 65. The examples are designed to demonstrate that the combination of lump sums and weekly payments, when properly adjusted for present-day values, will generate the sums I have referred to.

I can go through all the 208 if you like. I am talking about those whose compensation levels exceed $300 000. I am trying to deal with the sorts of people who are always brought up when the opposition argues that the government does not and will not look after seriously injured workers. There have been approximately 200 such cases since 1992, and there may be some involving people who were injured before that have still not come through. However, over those five years there have been about 40 or 50 a year, so we are not talking about large numbers.

Members of the opposition and others keep talking about the Premier having an overriding say in the implementation of the changes. They should understand that most of the impetus for the action has come from the government as a whole. The government will accept responsibility for what it believes will be a beneficial change. Although you will always have debate in a party like ours, in the end we all accept that something has to be done.

Mr Nardella asked for evidence that the aggregate amount of revenue paid annually to workers will be no less than it is now. The actuarial assessment that underpins the legislation supports that view. In other words, the arrangement has been made on the clear understanding that that objective will be met. That is not a guess or simply a round number. When we were doing this work as a group, not as a cabinet or with the minister, the requirement was for actuarial projections. I quoted four examples. You will note the care with which we have chosen equivalents to match the lump sum payments. In other words, we have discounted the value of future salaries by a certain amount less the CPI increase and said, 'This represents the present value of those payments'. We have gone out of our way not to hike the payments we anticipate will come forward. We have been satisfied after the most rigorous examination possible that the net aggregate payment to workers would not be reduced; if anything, through instructions to the Workcover Authority, we would rather err on the side of exceeding the payment than falling below it.

As the house knows, the payments are guaranteed by the state. Recipients do not run the risk of getting a lump sum, investing it and having the economy crash or the particular investment opportunity falling over. They will be guaranteed their pension indexed to the CPI through to the age of 65 years.

I have heard arguments from people representing vested interests saying that lump sums are better. The clear evidence is that the people who want lump sums are generally not looking at the interests of the workers. That is the evidence of the review carried out by working parties from the opposition and by independent bodies. The argument for lump sum payments and the computation of pensions is invariably based on two considerations: firstly, employers calculate an actuarially lower amount of money than the pension will produce — the rest is all flim-flam; secondly, they think, 'It's easier to get my fee from a lump sum payment than from a pension'. They are not bad guidelines for rationalising lump sum payments.

I advise Mr Nardella that we have actuarially assessed the impact of the scheme based on the best experience available and determined that the individual levels of payment would at least meet, if not exceed, the present level.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Are those actuarial reports available?

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I have not looked at them, but since the instruction was clear and not underpinned by a subinstruction to the effect of, 'By the way, you shall not exceed that', there is no reason for me to expect that will not happen. The other thing the opposition may take as evidence of our good intentions is that I would be the last person in this chamber to greet with any enthusiasm an increase in premiums of $100 million. Is it a question of political popularity? I was asked, 'Would that adversely affect employment?'. Yes, it would.

We have sat down and said we have to ensure the workers are not adversely affected. We have said we must ensure we do not run into unfunded liabilities and that the common-law claims flowing from the existing Workcover scheme are properly provided for. Some people argue that the increases in premiums are higher than they need be. On the question of whether they should be higher or lower, it is better that they be higher because we can adjust them. If they are lower, we are always chasing our tail.

We have, in effect, made a decision that we will have a conservative premium environment to ensure we can catch up with the uncertainties ahead on Workcover common-law claims that have not yet revealed themselves. Every time Mr Nardella puzzles about what we are doing here I ask members of the opposition and the public to contemplate what we have done.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — One of our problems is that, like you, we have not had access to the actuarial reports so we can satisfy ourselves that those figures are correct.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — The opposition may or may not have had access, but the truth and accuracy of what I have said will soon be revealed. We are as interested as Mr Nardella is in seeing a year from now that the projections we have made are accurate. We have, in a sense, a great deal more at risk than the opposition has in failing. The minister, other government members and I are giving our unequivocal commitment that the total compensation paid to workers will not fall. It would be a significant personal embarrassment for me if it did fall other than because of some radical change in the level of traumatic injury.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — And to me and the consulting actuaries.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — Yes. Mr Nardella should ask the minister that question. I have taken it on faith that there is no reason why the Workcover Authority or the actuaries would not do as we ask them to do.

The payments will be guaranteed by the state and indexed to CPI increases. They are designed to ensure that a seriously injured worker receives recognition for non-economic impairment and that the injured worker receives an income that is sustained through his or her life at whatever the current economic costs are.

Surely the Labor Party and the Trades Hall Council can have no argument with the government about the structure and philosophy underpinning the legislation. It encourages the employers and employees to improve workplace safety and have injured workers return to work as quickly as possible after injury, and ensures that the injury, not the responsibility, is the sole criterion in making a compensation payment. It consequently removes the uncertainty and inconsistency in the use of so-called

common law and ensures that judgments are made on the basis of medical facts.

The new legislation reflects the fact that the basis of workers compensation is to look after the interests of workers on or below average weekly incomes. It is not intended to extend its income coverage further than that. The legislation and its compensation are not designed to cover incomes forgone by people in professions earning high incomes. It is up to them to protect themselves. This is a policy designed to protect the average worker.

The objective assessment nature of the new legislation will provide a reasonable degree of certainty about premium levels, all other things being equal. It will provide a solid base from the Workcover Authority, and employers can make real efforts to reduce injury and trauma where they occur and to deal with them immediately and financially in the most expeditious manner.

There is no argument among the members of the government, from the Premier down, that we will be making the most serious and strenuous efforts possible to improve occupational health and safety in workplaces. It is not just a question of keeping the premiums down; it is not a question of ensuring that injured workers get such-and-such a payment, but it is a major question of social responsibility to ensure the level of injury in the workplace is kept at a lower and declining level.

There will be losers from this legislation. They will be the people that we as a Parliament have encouraged to exist substantially on the imperfections that our failure to address the common-law question has allowed to expand. I understand the strength of the opposition from these people for any change in the system that has served them, if nobody else, well during the past century. Their interests are not for the injured workers nor good government nor the efficiency of the economy in general. Therefore, members of Parliament from both sides should exclude their interests from their assessment of the public good.

Trade union leaders, particularly those in the non-tradable sector — by which I mean those looking after people who do not work in areas that have to compete internationally either on imports or export markets — seem unconcerned about Australia's international and national competitiveness. If they regard an increase in Workcover premiums to support an increase in common-law payments, notwithstanding the substantial leakage from those payments to the professions that live off the workers compensation system, as an improved level of benefit to workers and a promise that the growth in common-law payments to doctors and so on will continue to stretch the boundaries of what the present common law applies to, they will have to understand that we have responsibilities to a broader public.

They should understand that we are all subject to the common good and that even if people are in a non-tradable industry and are defended in the first place against the vagaries of international trade, at the end of the day our failure to compete nationally and internationally will come back to bite all of us. The attitude is, 'We don't care too much about international competitiveness and we are perfectly happy to see — —

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Who says that? Not us.

Hon. W. A. N. HARTIGAN — I am pleased to hear him say he doesn't, in which case I look forward to his support for getting rid of the transaction costs associated with common-law claims. Those transaction costs do nothing for injured workers or people who are looking for employment. If the Trades Hall Council has fundamental concerns about levels of compensation, it should raise them. But it should not use false, unsubstantial and unsupported assertions to try to argue the case for retaining common-law claims. It should talk about how it can reduce the cost of Workcover, because therein lies the only way that compensation for injured workers can reasonably be increased.

I was surprised that the Trades Hall Council rejected the offer made by the Premier and the minister. It was a great pity, because it missed an opportunity not only to achieve slightly higher levels of weekly compensation but also to have the present cases transferred to a better, more beneficial system. Its reaction was ill advised, whether because of a misunderstanding, because of a lack of knowledge of the two systems or because of malicious, political spite.

The legislation at last provides a fair, compassionate, worker-friendly and decisive workers compensation scheme that reserves as much as it can of its premium income for injured workers. It will stabilise payments to injured workers at the present aggregate net level. It will also deal with the present and prospective unfunded liabilities by setting objective assessment standards and increasing

premiums to meet the rising costs flowing from the exploitation of the common-law flaw that has bedevilled the Victorian system for 83 years.

The 1897 British legislation, on which our own and much of the commonwealth legislation were based, took an entirely new attitude towards compensation for workplace injuries. Liability did not depend on the negligence of an employer or any of his servants. Compensation became payable automatically whenever a workman met with an accident in the course of his employment and was incapacitated.

The legislation, for which I ask the unanimous support of the house, finally, after 100 years, fully implements the original and universally accepted principle of no-fault workers compensation.

Hon. C. J. HOGG (Melbourne North) — Every member of the house listened carefully to everything — or almost everything — Mr Hartigan said. Most of us would say it was a terrific, well-researched speech on legislation that the opposition does not regard as terrific. He certainly put his point of view in great detail and to great effect.

Mr Theophanous thoroughly set down the opposition's views on the legislation, which were fully canvassed in the party room, and during the committee stage those views will once again be put on the record.

A civilised society is ultimately judged by the way it treats its most vulnerable — its young, its old, its sick and its injured. That is why my party finds the legislation the most disturbing and troubling of any Parliament has debated this session — and a good deal has troubled us.

The Labor Party was founded on the union movement of the day. For 100 years Labor, both in government and in opposition — although mostly in opposition — has sought to develop and implement policies for all Australians with equity, fairness, access and participation as their core values. However, issues affecting Australians as workers — and, by extension, injured workers — go to its very heart.

All unions put a great deal of time and effort into advising their members of their rights and their obligations in the workplace. Unions take workplace safety very seriously, and no-one would deny that they have been in the vanguard of all attempts to make workplaces safer. Unions have often risked considerable public opprobrium in using dramatic and sometimes costly tactics to make their points. Yet in the middle of the century, the use of dramatic tactics was sometimes the only ways for progress to be made.

A good friend of mine worked on the Chadstone shopping centre building site as a labourer during 1959 and 1960. He can still make his friends' blood run cold when he describes conditions on the site at that time — and that would be within the memory of most members of the chamber. He talks about the precarious work carried out in all weathers against the workers' better judgment — and about the deaths.

We are light years from that time in many respects. In my view, the pace has been set by the organised work force, by progressive employers and by governments that have done their best to get compensation schemes right. When any changes to Workcover are contemplated, the most important aspect to get right is workplace safety. Any measures that lead to better workplace safety, more workplace accountability and more tightly regulated sites should be embraced.

I would have to look seriously at any no-fault scheme that offered decent and appropriately indexed benefits to injured workers. I know lump sum payments can be something of a lottery and that often they fail to generate the income needed many years hence, but the amendments we are debating do not provide the benefits I would be seeking. In the absence of a scheme that offers decent and appropriate benefits, workers must have the fundamental right to seek justice in the court and to seek compensation for traumatic injuries that are the result of other people's negligence.

I know from talking to constituents of mine — I am sure other members have had the same experience — that for injured workers the psychological release of going to court in a sense puts the worst of the trauma and struggle behind them. Maybe it draws the psychological line in the sand. I do not say that happens with all injured workers who seek their common law rights, but I believe it happens for a significant number. There is also a powerful argument that says that the threat of court action keeps the pressure on employers, forcing them to take worker safety seriously and to run safe and secure workplaces.

At this stage in the debate, after the major speakers have made their contributions, it is always hard to

know how to make the most of one's time. I thought I would concentrate on some of the ways in which I believe the amendments will affect women workers. I want to look at the plight of women, particularly migrant women workers, who are often affected by workplace injury. Let us remember that weekly payments dropped from 95 per cent of pre-injury average weekly earnings to 75 per cent or 60 per cent at 13 weeks.

The people hardest hit by this change are the ones with the most severe injuries and low incomes — notably I guess, those who have only a part-time income. In June this year, 73 per cent of part-time workers were female. One can see therefore a disproportionate effect on women's average earnings of $460 gross per week, which according to ABS figures of August this year will drop to $345 gross after 13 weeks if the woman has no capacity for any work, or $276 gross if she has some capacity.

Of the injuries suffered by women, sprains and strains account for 67 per cent, stress injuries for 8.5 per cent and RSI, or musculoskeletal disease, 7 per cent. Because of the change of the terminology from 'totally incapacitated' and 'partially incapacitated' to evaluation of 'a work capacity' or 'no work capacity', workers who have sprains and strains, occupational overuse syndrome — which is RSI — and musculoskeletal diseases are likely to be classified as having a work capacity, therefore receiving 60 per cent of payments after 13 weeks; whereas prior to this proposed amendment to the legislation they would have received 95 per cent of pre-injury average weekly earnings.

The requirement to declare previous injuries or illnesses to prospective employers would or could jeopardise any prospect of being employed while cutting off income for those with current work capacity. With our existing unemployment rates of around 9 per cent, workers who declare pre-existing conditions will have no real chance of obtaining suitable alternative employment. Similarly, it is women who suffer most cumulative onset injuries, overuse injuries, sprain and strain injuries.

Clause 42 will specifically disadvantage those with cumulative onset injuries as it requires notice to be given to the employer 'within 30 days of the worker becoming aware of the injury'. This may well give rise to dispute about when the worker first became aware of the condition — was it the onset of pain, the first medical consultation for pain or the first information that this condition was employment related? Migrant women workers suffer disproportionately from such injuries, yet these are the very workers who, with poor English language or literary skills, will be disadvantaged by the tight time frames and the lodging of the forms 'in a manner and form approved by the authority'.

We heard at question time today that there is a record level of employment in Victoria. I doubt whether the new jobs are in the main full time; so many jobs these days are not full time. Many of the new jobs are part time, and many of those are casual. Many, of course, are held by women. In part they are the jobs that suit them because they are not full time but they are usually the low-paid jobs and they are in areas where we all know many painful, often invisible, incapacitating injuries are sustained. These workers — these women — are not going to be well served by this legislation, and to lose the right to use the common law may be a real disaster for some, both materially and in a psychological sense.

Certainly that has been the submission made by various constituents of mine. The area I represent is, as Mr Nardella and I would say, an industrial area; it is largely a migrant area, and people have felt strongly about the legislation and have taken the time to ring or call in and say so. One of my constituents who wrote to the Minister responsible for Workcover, Mr Hallam, and to the Premier and from whose letter Mr Theophanous read this morning also wrote to me, and I want to conclude by quoting from her letter. Her name is Sheila Tucker and she lives in Sunbury. Her husband, as Mr Theophanous pointed out, is a world-class jazz pianist. When I received the letter I rang them to talk a little about the circumstances that they found themselves in, and Mr Tucker was at home. I found him to be a man of immense stoicism, balance and good humour despite the appalling injury suffered when he literally smashed the base of his spine in an accident at the Victorian College of the Arts.

I want to quote from several paragraphs of Mrs Tucker's letter because they seem to me to sum up with particular eloquence what a number of people struggle to say — perhaps about injuries that are not as bad but nonetheless ones that they find difficult to describe when talking about themselves. Mrs Tucker wrote that since her husband had surgery in August 1992 he:

> has done everything that doctors have advised; we have fought to have him included in a pain management program and for the ongoing therapy

> which enables him to stay mobile with the assistance of crutches.
>
> He is currently attending a session each of hydrotherapy and massage every week (and was doing a weekly session of Feldenkrais physiotherapy but that was cancelled by the insurer on Friday, September 26) as well as doing various exercises at home. In order to maintain his current physical condition (doctors have virtually given no hope of any improvement) he must work at it every day which, because of the exertion, increases the pain level. This does not leave time for much of anything else ... While we manage to deal with most of the above fairly well, the thing that is most difficult to handle is the ongoing and constant battles one has to cope with in dealing with the insurer/Workcover Authority. The fact that the terminology of the various levels of long-term injury is ludicrous in the extreme is, in and of itself, a problem — e.g. how can a person who is totally and permanently incapacitated not be seriously injured? One would think that a seriously injured person may have a chance of improvement, but when categorising a person as being totally and permanently injured, this says there is no hope of improvement. Which would you prefer? In fact, of course, according to the Workcover levels a person who is seriously injured is in worse shape than a totally and permanently incapacitated person. Does this make sense? Accordingly, the weekly payment schedule is the reverse of what commonsense would dictate. Or have I missed something here?

She concludes:

> Now I believe the government is considering removing the right to sue for damages. I am appalled to think that such a move would even warrant consideration. Surely the current cap placed on common-law claims is already sufficient. Believe me, no amount of money could help to relieve pain or to replace a lifestyle. In certain circumstances I would beg to suggest that an amount of $187 000 (or whatever the cap is) borders on insulting. Do you have any conception of what happens to people (mentally and physically) who are seriously injured? Perhaps before any further reductions are made you might look for some insight into the lives of injured persons, before and after the injury!

I suppose it is the pitch and intensity of that last comment that made me believe that the right to keep the use of the common law — perhaps never to be used in most circumstances but the right to have that — is tremendously psychologically important for some people. Other constituents have come into my office who have really only been able to leave behind them the stress, the trauma, the disaster of what has happened to them when they have taken that action. To remove the right to take that action will have consequences that we have not looked at enough. I know many of my colleagues will want to stress that point as the debate goes into the evening, but from the small experience I have had with injured workers across the counter at my office and with colleagues when I was in the work force, I have found it to be a very important psychological issue.

As I said at the start of my contribution, were the Workcover scheme perfect in the way it delivered benefits that would not be necessary. I have found from people who have come into my office that it is a struggle for them to obtain the benefits set down, to attend the courses — and not find they have been cancelled — and to be able to get the therapies that are prescribed without being hassled over them. Until the day we have a perfect scheme — that would be wonderful — people on this side of the house do not want to lose access to common law. We see that as very important.

I am by no means an expert in this field, but I place on record the things I have observed from the legislation and of which I have been advised. Many contributions will be made tonight that will trace in much more detail the objections from our side of politics. I want to set these things on the record, not just for Mr and Mrs Tucker, but for many other constituents who have taken the time and trouble to get in touch with me.

Hon. P. A. KATSAMBANIS (Monash) — It is with great pleasure that I speak in favour of the bill. No doubt we will hear a lot of debate this evening and in the wee small hours of the morning. It will probably replicate the type of debate going on in the public arena over the proposals contained in the bill. During the past few months various sections of the public — to wit, some sections of the legal profession, trade union movement and the Labor Party — have been deliberately distorting the position of the government. They have been deliberately presenting a position to the public that they know is calculated to generate the greatest possible fear about what the government is trying to achieve. That is why I welcome the opportunity to speak on the bill in an attempt to clarify why the Labor Party and its fellow travellers in the union movement and in some sections of the legal profession are completely wrong about what they are doing to prop up their crumbling base.

I shall not speak for the same duration as Mr Theophanous and I probably will not speak as eloquently as Mr Hartigan did during his erudite discussion of the development of the legal system and particularly common law. I would almost have been inclined to call him My Learned Colleague if I did not think he would take offence at my suggesting he in any way has some form of legal training. I believe he considers it a badge of honour that he does not!

The bill delivers a workers compensation system of which the people of the state can be proud. In particular it delivers peace of mind for injured workers and those who fear the potential of suffering workplace injuries. Workers can rest assured that under the system introduced by the bill they will be properly looked after. They will receive fair and just compensation in the form of weekly payments to compensate for their loss of earnings and put them back in the position they would have been in if they had not been injured. Moreover, they will receive medical treatment and rehabilitation. A person with a permanent incapacity will have access to automatic compensation for non-economic loss. That will be achieved without need for protracted legal action and without the need for the injured worker to prove fault or negligence on the part of the employer. It will be achieved in a timely manner rather than having a case drawn out for many years under our legal process.

The system will ensure total protection for those who are injured in the workplace. I put that on the record because some people, for pure political gain, have been manipulating, twisting and distorting the facts. These people should be condemned for their actions, which prey on vulnerable people. Any fair and just workers compensation system should ensure that premiums for employers are as low as possible and that that position is sustained because, as Mr Hartigan made clear, the level of workers compensation premium is directly related to the level of employment in this state. We saw that during the 10 years of Labor maladministration with the premium blow-out and excessive payouts — —

Hon. D. T. Walpole interjected.

Hon. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — If Mr Walpole truly cared about workers he would be concerned to have sustainable low premiums because that would ensure that employers were able to provide maximum employment opportunities for all Victorians.

As well as low premiums, the workers compensation system should aim to provide fair and easily accessible medical treatment and rehabilitation services for injured workers. Most importantly, a workers compensation system should compensate injured workers for the losses they have suffered to put them in positions similar to the positions they would have been in had they not been injured. I do not step away from that primary focus. The injured worker would have been receiving wages on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis for his or her services. The primary objective of the system is to replace those earnings and provide medical treatment and rehabilitation to encourage injured workers back to productive work. The weekly benefits should be the main focus of the workers compensation system and that is what the bill does. The bill reinforces the focus of the workers compensation system that has been in operation since 1985, when the former Workcare system was introduced.

I agree that there should be payment for non-economic losses when someone has suffered incapacity, but I do not believe, particularly at a time when a worker is receiving treatment and is trying to rehabilitate himself or herself in order to return to gainful employment, that injured workers should be subject to the lottery of the common-law claim or having to prove fault or negligence on the part of the employer before he or she receives compensation. We have done away with the concept of workers having to rely on fault on the part of their employers to claim compensation for injury that occurred many years earlier. Over many years the common-law system has proven to be a rigid, difficult and inadequate system for people injured in workplace accidents.

On 30 September 1986 at page 732 of *Hansard* the former Treasurer, Mr Rob Jolly, who I believe was the former member for Dandenong, commented on the general inadequacy of common law. He states:

> The proposal rests on three fundamental points. The first relates to a general no-fault scheme. It is interesting that eminent lawyers both in this state and in New South Wales, who do not make their money out of third-party cases, hold the strong view in favour of a no-fault system. Both the Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Melbourne and the Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales in Sydney hold the view that we should have a no-fault system, and they hold that view for two fundamental reasons: firstly, because of the exceptionally costly system of common law that operates both here and in

> New South Wales; and secondly, because of the inequities that arise when one relies on an outdated common-law system. The government believes the benefits should be delivered to those persons who are seriously injured, regardless of whether they can or cannot prove negligence by another party.

As honourable members would know, I do not agree too often with anything the previous Labor government did — and certainly not with Mr Jolly — but on that point he had it absolutely 100 per cent correct that injured workers should not be forced to rely on an outmoded common-law system or on proving negligence or fault in order to be compensated and to provide for their families during the time of their greatest need, during their workplace injury. The system should be that they know whether it was their fault, their employer's fault, someone else's fault or no-one's fault that they will receive compensation if they are injured in the workplace, which is what the bill does and the government's intention. The government wants to provide fairness and equity to all workers, particularly those who are injured in the workplace. It does not want to subject those people to seeking common law to try to prove negligence, incurring legal costs and drawing out disputes for two or three years — an average claim takes more than two years in the common-law system — before they are provided with some form of compensation. That is why I support the initiatives in the bill to remove access to common law in circumstances of workplace injury.

I focus on the fact that the Labor Party, particularly through the Leader of the Opposition in this place, has strenuously defended the rights offered by common law. It is interesting because these wonderful defenders of the rights of the common law attempted to completely remove common-law claims in the 1985 Workcare legislation, and again in 1989 when they had another go. Both times they were stifled by opposition within their own ranks from their controllers in the trade union movement and the Labor lawyers. But, as Mr Hartigan so eloquently pointed out in his contribution, the commonwealth Labor government removed common-law claims in the commonwealth's workers compensation system. A Labor government in South Australia has done the same thing.

Most importantly, the Leader of the Opposition in this place and others fail to realise that within the current workers compensation and Workcover system very few people get access to common-law claims. In 1996–97 more than 3100 claims were reported to the Victorian Workcover Authority. Since the introduction of Workcover just over 1300 people have received common-law settlements, so we are talking about a small proportion of all injured workers. When I hear people like Mr Theophanous and some of the lawyers and the trade union movement defend common law and hold it up to be an absolutely faultless system to which everyone should have access, I think to myself: if it is good enough for this very small percentage — less than 5 per cent, or about 2 or 3 per cent, of all injured workers have access to common-law claims — why doesn't the Labor Party advocate that all injured workers should have access to this fantastic system it is defending so eloquently? Is the Labor Party saying it wants to ensure that all injured workers have access to the common-law system, because that is the best possible way of compensating injured workers? Opposition members defend the common law so stridently and passionately, as if it were unambiguously and immutably the best possible system an injured worker could rely upon. If that is the case, why doesn't the Labor Party argue to extend the system to all injured workers? Why should it restrict the benefits of this fantastic system to a small percentage of injured workers and not roll it out to all of them?

Many years ago Victoria had a similar system. As Mr Hartigan pointed out, workers under the system were the ones left carrying the can. It was not a system that protected injured workers, which is something that has been known in this and other countries since the turn of the century. We have consistently introduced legislation that limits access to common law because at the end of the day that system is based on an adversarial process, on having a winner and a loser. Where there are winners or losers, often it can be the injured worker who ends up the loser.

It is interesting that of the 1308 common-law claims that have been settled under the Workcover system 95 have been settled for no compensation; in other words, 7.3 per cent of those workers who access the common-law system ended up not getting 1 cent out of the system. That is not a fair and just system. Injured workers should not be left with the lottery of common law to provide for their families and to have compensation for their injuries. A statutory scheme where the entitlements are known, where they are not arbitrary but based on well-established principles, where injured workers can receive weekly payments to compensate them for their loss of earnings, where they can receive payment for their medical treatment, rehabilitation and

associated expenses and where seriously injured workers can also reap a benefit for the non-economic loss associated with their injury or illness caused by a workplace accident, is the sort of system I should have thought the vast majority of Victorians, including the opposition, would have supported. That is why I support the proposed legislation.

Much has been made about common law and how it provides for a one-off payment, which allows people to get on with the rest of their lives and not have to rely on weekly payments and handouts. I did some research and discovered, with not a lot of searching, that between October 1995 and December 1996 — a period of only 14 or 15 months — 484 people received Workcover common-law payments. Some 261 of those people received more than $15 000 in common-law payments. By July of this year — between 7 and 22 months after the payments were received — 183 of those 484 people had gone off to what is now called Centrelink and applied for basic social security income support, which puts a lie to the fact that these people get their one-off payment and are out of the system forever; they can live the rest of their lives in peace and harmony without having to rely on the system. So between 7 and 22 months later 183 of the 484 people who had received common-law payments had knocked on the door of the social security office and said, 'We need support; we need assistance'. Although 128 of those people were still precluded from applying for benefits because of the treatment of lump sums by Social Security 79 people, less than two years after they had received their common-law payment, were being paid social security.

Of those 79 people, 43 received more than $100 000 in compensation. Of the 43, 21 received more than $200 000 in common-law payments. The argument that they go out of the system is a fallacy. The unfortunate reality is that for many people the payments are treated like Tattslotto wins. Lump sum payments are dissipated, badly invested or spent unwisely and the people concerned end up on social security, which is what the government is trying to avoid. It must be soul destroying for a person who, firstly, receives a workplace injury and cannot work again and, secondly, receives a compensation payment and not only has to rely on the social security system, but a few months or years later must claim social security payments.

A lot has been made in the media about the new scheme's removal of lump sum payments for permanent impairment. Under the bill there will be one payment and then periodic payments to avoid the circumstances I described where people who have received compensation have to resort to social security benefits. Had those lump sums for non-economic loss been changed into periodic payments it would have had significant implications for social security recipients.

The minister undertook that the impairment benefits would not be paid by instalments until the commonwealth government gives an undertaking to the state government that those payments will not be taken into account under the social security income test. That was an iron-clad commitment. Those provisions will not be proclaimed until the commonwealth government makes a commitment that the people receiving such payments will not be disadvantaged for social security purposes. I was heartened to read a letter from the federal Minister for Social Security to the Minister for Finance dated 10 December. It states:

> I am happy to confirm my in-principle support for favourable treatment of periodic payments of compensation for non-economic loss.

That favourable in-principle agreement from the Minister for Social Security endorses in full this government's commitment. Although discussion is continuing on implementation, it will require a change in the social security act. I am sure the minister will honour his commitment that the provisions will not be proclaimed until the social security implications are fully worked through between the state and the federal governments.

In conclusion, I must pick up some of the comments made by Mr Theophanous. His speech was so verbose and so boring that I could not spend the whole of the 4 hours in this place listening to him. He was repetitious, tedious and used the same tired arguments that the opposition always uses. But I picked up one point when he spoke about workers from non-English-speaking backgrounds. He said the Victorian Workcover Authority had failed those workers and was not providing them with information in their own languages. Mrs Hogg also alluded to the fact that migrant women were not being served well because they had to complete forms they did not understand before making claims. Certainly she made the point that there must be provision for people of non-English-speaking backgrounds. I point out to both Mr Theophanous and Mrs Hogg that the Victorian Workcover Authority is the leader in this country in providing information to all Victorians irrespective of their background and their language. The authority

produces literature in 10 languages other than English and that is provided to both employers and employees. It is important to provide it to employers because many come from non-English-speaking backgrounds. An interpreter service is also provided. At the initial claim-form stage the person is asked whether he or she requires an interpreter. I recall that some time ago the authority took out advertisements on prime time commercial television in about 10 different languages other than English.

I do not know of any other authority or corporation, public or private, that has ever taken prime time advertising space on commercial television in languages other than English. Mr Theophanous accuses the government and the Victorian Workcover Authority of failing people of non-English-speaking backgrounds. He should not be the one to cast the first stone. The commitment of the authority and the government to people of all backgrounds has been first class and the advertisements and information provided by the authority are good examples of the commitment of this government to people with non-English-speaking backgrounds.

I would not support any bill that takes away the entitlements of injured workers; nor would I support one that compromises the process of providing compensation, rehabilitation and treatment for injured workers. Irrespective of what the opposition has tried to peddle in the community over the past few months, this bill does not do that. It provides a workers compensation system that is fair, just and ensures that employers will continue to pay the lowest premiums of any state. That can only encourage continuing job growth and investment in Victoria. Importantly, it ensures that all injured workers will have access to a fair and just compensation scheme without having to go to court to prove that someone else was at fault or was negligent. For those reasons, I support the bill and urge government members to discount the illogical views of the opposition.

Hon. D. T. WALPOLE (Melbourne) — It is interesting to follow Mr Katsambanis because we arrive at our conclusions from two different positions. I look at the bill from the point of view of someone who has been a trade union official for many years. I have had considerable experience dealing with injured workers and the problems that confront them. Mr Katsambanis comes to his conclusions from a theoretical angle.

Mr Katsambanis says that the proposal is in the best interests of workers. He has not been among those injured workers and seen the trauma, injury or hurt of those people and their families as I did over 19 years as a trade union official, when I was living and breathing that stuff every day. He has not seen those things and I challenge him to give me any proof that he has a proper understanding of the matters that trouble injured workers and their families on a day-to-day basis. He does not know. It is as simple as that.

Needless to say, I oppose the bill. I do so with a sense of deja vu because over the past five years members on this side of the house have had to get up on five occasions to try to protect injured workers from the deprivations proposed to be imposed on them by the government. Opposition members wonder when the attacks will cease. The government will not be happy until it has stripped the last remaining shreds of dignity from people who rely on payments because they have suffered injuries in the workplace. The government does not believe that injured workers have a right to dignity.

I spoke in the debate on Workcover in this house when the government last set out to reduce benefits available to injured workers, which coincidently was exactly 12 months ago yesterday. I refer to my contribution, which is reported at page 1239 of *Hansard* of 10 December 1996. It states:

> This bill continues the attacks on people who are already suffering greatly and heaps further indignities and suffering on them. It is unbelievably callous legislation, but what would you expect from this government, given its track record? Workcover should be a safety net for those unfortunate people who as a result of work injuries are unable to carry out their preferred occupations. When Workcover was introduced it was clear the government sought to provide a safety net with large holes. It wanted to shake out as many workers as it could and did not want to be responsible for injured people. This is the next stage. This bill seeks to cut a few more holes in the safety net. Unfortunately, this will not be the end. Further legislation will be introduced —

how right I was —

> to increase the number of holes in the safety net to shake out more workers at the bottom in the interests of so-called financial responsibility or economic rationalism.

> It is an absolute disgrace that Parliament is debating this bill, which is introduced by a heartless government and a minister who does not show a shred of humanity. I do not like having to say that about the minister because I have some respect for him, but I would have more respect if he stood up to the people who are pushing the agenda and said that workers compensation is about protecting workers, not about some economic rationalist philosophy or, as Mr Nardella said, attacking lawyers who might be rorting the system. Of course some people are rorting the system, but the answer is to put in place proper structures to prevent them doing that rather than attacking the people we should be protecting.

What I said on that occasion applies equally today. Nothing has changed. The attacks continue, and I bet my bottom dollar that next year I will be saying it again — next year it will be six times in six years, and the deprivations will go on.

At the end of the day the government would like to take 'workers' out of 'workers compensation'. That is a bit difficult so bit by bit it will take 'compensation' out of 'workers compensation'. The government is blinkered by its ideology of economic rationalism.

As I said, for many years I was a union official. I have been out there and seen the problems. I have met the injured workers, their families and dependents. I have seen close up the tragedy and the trauma. Members of the government do not want to know about it. They are running out of the chamber because the truth hurts. I have visited injured workers in hospitals. I have been to accident sites. I have been to funerals of workers who died on the job. I have been to the Coroners Court and heard the tales of horror. I have seen it; I have lived it. How many government members have done the same? I suggest the answer is none! I have felt the pain of the loss those people were suffering.

The government's agenda is driven simply by an inability to understand the pain and suffering that injuries in the workplace visit on people and their families. Of course it is true that every effort should be made to ensure the financial viability of the accident compensation scheme, but that need not and should not be at the expense of injured workers, which in large part is what the bill does.

The minister's only response to increased costs is to place an even greater burden on workers — the very people the scheme is designed to protect. Not for him the caring approach. The government should commence with the basic premise that workers compensation schemes are all about people. Most if not all of those who are so unfortunate as to be dependent on the system are in that situation through no fault of their own and must be given priority when any proposed changes are considered.

The reality is that those people are an easy target in the eyes of the government and the minister, who seeks to portray himself as a caring individual. If his cover was not blown previously it is blown now and the charade is finally over. The minister has exposed himself as a totally uncaring individual. He heaps indignity upon indignity on injured workers. His attitude is to kick them while they are down.

The truth is that now they are kicking back. They have been out in their tens of thousands knocking on the door of this place. They are not beaten in the fight. The fight has been enjoined and it is certainly not over yet. The workers are ready to continue the fight because an attack is being mounted on their wellbeing. They are not prepared to sit back and accept the government's continuing kick them and removing what has been put in place over many years to protect them and their mates when they are injured on the job.

The minister is not prepared to examine the Victorian Workcover Authority with a view to removing the inefficiencies, trimming the fat by streamlining the bureaucracy or making the organisation leaner and more efficient. If he were honest he would admit that there are areas in the Workcover Authority that could be tightened up, with resultant financial savings.

Sitting suspended 6.30 p.m. until 8.02 p.m.

Hon. D. T. WALPOLE — Prior to the suspension of the sitting I was talking about one area where savings could have been made in the Workcover Authority. An area of concern that should have been looked at by Workcover is the process which is initiated following discontinuation of an injured worker's benefits and which requires the worker to take the matter to conciliation.

We now hear the minister saying that the conciliation process is working very well. On 15 October he said, 'It is a matter of some envy in other jurisdictions'. The minister is entitled to his view but it is all a matter of opinion. I do not wish to argue the rights and wrongs of the minister's view but I point out to him that many matters are not settled at conciliation. Of course one would not

expect a 100 per cent result — there will always be matters that are not capable of being resolved at that stage. Nevertheless, of those matters that are not resolved and go on to the next stage — which is the courts — a total of some 90 per cent are determined on behalf of the worker.

If commonsense applied in the Victorian Workcover Authority one would be entitled to assume that serious note would be taken of that statistic and more effort would be put into resolving matters rather than subjecting workers to the pressures that come with being forced to run off to the courts to seek justice, which occurs in some 70 per cent of cases.

The legal costs incurred in court cases relate to significant problems associated with the legislation and its administration. Legal practitioners acting for workers are not responsible for the initial decision-making process. Workers' solicitors do not reject or dispute claims. It is relevant that in some 90 per cent of cases that proceed to court the plaintiff is successful. The majority of cases proceed to court because of interference by the Victorian Workcover Authority on procedural and policy matters or as a result of employers refusing to accept the advice of legal practitioners and/or barristers acting on behalf of their insurers. That is unfair and places even greater strain on workers who are already suffering as a result of injuries suffered in the workplace.

In a humanitarian sense there is a genuine need to reduce the number of injured workers who are forced into the courts. However, if the minister and the Workcover Authority find it is beyond them to approach the matter in a humanitarian manner perhaps they can look at it purely in respect of the costs involved. It would make more sense financially to take a more realistic approach at the conciliation stage with a view to causing fewer workers to go to the courts, with all the medical and legal expenses that entails.

Surely that area could be tightened up. Surely there are savings to be made simply by being more realistic as to the odds of a worker being successful in the courts based on previous experience. But, no, the authority blunders on insensitive to both the financial costs and the costs to workers of doing so. Instead of addressing the problem the government seeks to remove the right to redress at common law. For the government to go down this track is an absolute disgrace and an abrogation of its responsibility.

A letter from the secretary of the Victoria Police Association dated 15 October 1997 — I presume all members received it — gives an example of the inefficiency in the Workcover area. The letter deals with a case that demonstrates the anti-worker bias with no concern for the costs involved that permeates the Workcover Authority. The letter states in part:

> Recently one of our members lodged a Workcover claim for 3.9 per cent loss of hearing. The claim was for $2539.55. The claim was rejected and failed to be resolved at the conciliation stage and proceeded to the Magistrates Court where some 12 months after the claim was first submitted the Workcover Authority agreed to pay our member the amount of $2420 in compensation. This was an overall reduction of $119.55. We believe that Workcover amassed legal expenses in its fruitless exercise to the tune of $6000.

That is consistent with the adversarial approach of the Workcover Authority. Instead it should look at the real position and begin to understand that most workers are genuine. The authority simply cannot see that. The letter continues:

> What appears to be occurring with Workcover is akin to giving Dracula the keys to the blood bank. If government seriously wants to address the problem of spiralling costs of the Workcover system, then let it look at the Workcover management first.
>
> If it is established that the Workcover Authority is not being properly administered, then to take away a person's rights to sue for negligence would be a total travesty and abrogation of parliamentary responsibility. I support that view.

An assessment of $6000 for Workcover legal costs would not be far off the mark, and that is a disgraceful waste of funds. That is but one example, which you must multiply many times to get any idea of the losses that have been incurred.

I understand that the losses incurred by the Workcover Authority over the past financial year in legal and medical costs is of the order of $98 million. There is a lot of fat that can be cut from the system. That matter should have been addressed, but it has not been simply because the Workcover Authority is unable to accept that most Workcover claimants are totally genuine. If you forget the cynicism and approach these matters with a real concern for injured workers and an acceptance that the overwhelming majority of claimants are genuine, it is possible to dramatically reduce the number of

cases that go to court, with all the costs that are subsequently incurred.

I think it was on Thursday, 29 October, that I switched on my radio and heard by chance the tail end of an interview by Terry Laidler on 3LO. The interviewee was Eileen McMahon from the Workcover Authority. In the short bit I heard, Ms McMahon was evasive and unable or unprepared to properly address the questions Mr Laidler put to her. She continually claimed that the proposed changes would benefit workers, without in any way demonstrating positively how it would be so.

Later on the same day I was again listening when Mr Laidler said that a number of people had rung in to say they felt he had not given Ms McMahon a fair hearing. He admitted to that, making the point that from her very first statement, Ms McMahon was disingenuous and sought to put a spin on her comments that did not lead to the truth. I point out that Mr Laidler was a member of the Workcare Appeals Board, so he has an intimate knowledge of the system. From his experience with the board he had obviously formed a different understanding of the genuineness of most Workcover claimants and was prepared to view their predicament seriously rather than adopt the adversarial approach of the minister and his minions.

The government's approach to workers compensation is fundamentally flawed. Any scheme must primarily and absolutely be about the protection of injured workers. Of course, the financial side must be a matter of concern, but it must not be the primary focus. The welfare of injured workers and their families must come first. The government has lost sight of that fundamental fact — although I doubt whether it has ever acknowledged it. The government is unable to recognise that humanitarian outcomes must in the final analysis take precedence over financial ones.

There is no doubt that the ability of injured workers to take common-law action causes negligent employers to have second thoughts. The government claims that the increased penalties for unsafe work practices will deter negligent employers. That may apply in some instances, such as on construction sites, in heavy industry, the mining industry, and so on, where the failure to institute safe work practices can be clearly identified. For example, on a construction site it is blatantly obvious that, if an employer fails to properly shore up a trench and as a result the trench falls in and injures a worker, a negligent act has occurred.

There are examples where negligence is not so clear cut. Take, for example, repetitive strain injury — tenosynovitis, acute tenosynovitis and so on. In the late 1970s, that became a matter of concern. Not only in the union in which I worked but across the union movement it become known as Ericsson's arm, simply because it was first identified at the Ericsson plant at Broadmeadows. RSI is a soft tissue injury that arises from a failure to properly rotate workers who carry out highly repetitive tasks and to not properly assess workstation ergonomics.

My knowledge of RSI goes back much further than the 1970s and 1980s, because I suffered a mild form of it in the 1960s. I had a very sore and swollen right forearm. When I went to the doctor I was told I had a form of repetitive strain injury. It arose because the work I was doing was somewhat repetitive. I was an electrician and my constant use of a screwdriver and pliers created a soft tissue injury or a repetitive strain injury in my right hand. I was given medication for it, and it cleared up in a short time, so I had a very mild form of it.

When you meet people who have been affected by major repetitive strain injuries — and I dealt with many of them when I worked as a union official — you recognise how debilitating the injury can be. Sore arms, sore necks and sore shoulders make it impossible for people to continue to carry out their normal occupations. To claim, as the government does, that the increased penalties will help stop those injuries is absolute nonsense. There is no legislation that requires employers to properly rotate workers and ergonomically assess their workstations. How will increased penalties help? It is not as clear cut as that. The injuries will continue unless employers are made aware of the need to rotate workers and ergonomically engineer their workstations. Unless that happens, increased penalties will simply have no impact.

The ability to take common-law action can be and has been instrumental in reducing the incidence of those types of injuries. Repetitive strain injuries are not restricted to process workers, such as those at Ericsson's, who carry out repetitive production tasks. They are also prevalent in office environments. Increased penalties for negligent employers will be of little value, if any, in that environment. Certainly, they will not have the same impact that a worker's ability to sue at common law has had. If the government is genuine about wanting

to bring maximum pressure to bear on employers whose approach to the welfare and safe employment of their employees is negligent, a dual approach would be the best means of attack. By all means increase penalties. Members of the opposition would have no objection to that approach — in fact we would give it our total support. At the same time the ability to sue at common law should be retained, which in conjunction with increased penalties would be a far more effective deterrent.

Repetitive strain injuries are not the only area on which common law has had an impact by highlighting areas of negligence to the further benefit of workers and the community. Many deficient work practices and duties of care have been exposed as a result of common-law accidents. One of these areas is asbestos removal, which is now stringently regulated due to claims by injured and dying workers.

I have worked in and around asbestos on many occasions during my life as an electrician and, therefore, I am concerned about my own future prospects. I am grateful to those whose actions at common law have led to publicity about the dangers of exposure to asbestos. Many lives have been and will be saved as a result.

I recall an event in the early 1980s which demonstrates the incredible negligence that employers have been known to carry out. On this occasion I was at the CSR plant in Yarraville on an inspection with a judge of the New South Wales industrial court. In the course of moving around the plant to familiarise the judge with it, I saw a guy up on a ladder happily knocking asbestos lagging from a pipe with no protection whatsoever for anyone around him.

It was a day similar to today, with a hot wind blowing and asbestos was flying all over the plant. The manager of the factory, recognising that he had a slight problem on his hands, called the guy down and said, 'This man is a union official'. The bloke immediately pulled out his card and said, 'I'm a member of the plumbers union'. I said, 'I don't care what union you are in, I'm concerned about what you're doing with this asbestos, allowing it to be knocked off and to blow around the site, creating potential dangers for everyone on the site and all those people who live anywhere near the site'.

What amazed me was that the company was CSR; and if any company ought to know the dangers of asbestos, it is CSR. With the Wittenoom experience, and with all the matters that have gone on with CSR being cited as the cause of many asbestos-related diseases, such a company ought to be vigilant in this area; but in that case it certainly was not.

The common law is a living process. It reflects societal change and recognises changing standards of care. Without it a major means of exposing breaches of standards of care in the workplace will be removed.

The opposition, which has been much closer to injured workers than those on the other side, is appalled by the potential impact of the bill on innocent victims of workplace accidents, and the potential it has to create two classes of citizens. Should two people enter a building together — one an employee of the building and one a client — and should both sustain injuries as a result of a common incident, there will be no commonality in their rights. The client will have the ability to sue at common law but the employee will not. There, therefore, exists the possibility that the client will end up with a settlement better than that available to the employee, which creates first and second-class citizens. That result could in no way be seen as providing equity to the employee and it is absolutely discriminatory.

Another area in which the removal of common-law rights could discriminate against employees is where an employee is injured as a result of faulty equipment. Many workplace injuries are caused in that way. It could be a defective motor vehicle, dangerous chemicals or other machinery faults capable of causing injury. Manufacturers will be protected from legal action brought by an employee who is seriously injured arising from malfunctioning equipment. For instance, a forklift manufacturer will have absolute legal protection from any employee who is seriously injured as a result of a defective forklift.

To highlight the injustice where an employee has been made a quadriplegic by a defective vehicle or equipment, the employer can sue the manufacturer for repairs of the vehicle and for the economic loss caused by the absence of the employee — and most often it is the cost of replacing the now quadriplegic employee — but the quadriplegic employee will have no such right.

Another area of concern is the extraordinary impact the bill will have on the medical treatment of workplace injuries. Under the changes if a person incurs an injury in the course of his or her

employment in the workplace or on the roads any negligence by treating medical practitioners will be protected by the bill. The advice of Mr Michael O'Loghlen, QC, is:

> It may come as a surprise, to some, to learn that the loss of the common-law rights precludes the right to sue anyone whose negligence has attended the injuries even well after the injuries have occurred. For example, negligent medical treatment administered much later for injuries will attract no common-law redress.

He also states that injured workers:

> ... will lose their ordinary rights to sue any hospitals or doctors who treat them negligently for work-related injuries, including injuries received in traffic accidents in the circumstances outlined.

Again this encourages negligence and malpractice. A medical practitioner who sees an emergency patient coming through the door wearing overalls or a uniform will know immediately that whatever he or she does in treating the person can never lead to the doctor being sued by that person.

It is questionable whether common-law claims are a significant cost driver, as claimed by the government, compared with other aspects of the Accident Compensation Act. The issuing of common-law actions is significantly less than it was in 1996, and certainly less than it has been in previous years.

There has been a slight increase in the past two months because people are obviously panicking and demanding that their solicitors request serious injury certificates, and ultimately this has given rise to a number of actions being issued in the County Court. Plaintiffs with potential common-law actions are now concerned that they may miss the opportunity to have their actions issued prior to any changes that may occur in the law.

Over the past five years approximately 10 years' worth of potential common-law claims have been considered, with the majority of these matters being finalised. That has largely arisen as a result of significant changes in legislation, as well as mediation and the impetus to find earlier resolution, driven by the Workcover Authority.

That must be a cost saving for the system long term, coupled with the ongoing restricted access to common law as the legislation currently stands. Because there has been a considerable amount of activity and finalisation of a large number of cases there has been an increase in the amount of money paid out in common-law actions in 1996. However, for the reasons I have outlined this is not an ongoing trend. To introduce a no-fault scheme and abolish common-law claims, which are seen by the government as a lottery — Mr Katsambanis termed it that in his contribution — may on the surface have its attraction, but it is not as simple as that. Benefits that the government has failed to consider do arise from the ability to make common-law claims, and that fact has been simply ignored. To replace common-law judgments with the table of payments in clause 36 of the bill — on pages 64 to 66 — does no justice to those who will be entitled to such payments. The table fails to take into account the previous employment of the claimant.

Certain injuries will impact more on some people than on others. For instance, the total loss of the first joint of the middle or little or ring finger of either hand will produce a payment of $9683. No-one would like to lose any of those joints, but of course that sort of loss would be more traumatic for and would dramatically affect the future earnings of, say, a professional pianist than it would, for instance, the driver of a courier vehicle. That is not to say the injury would not affect the driver of a courier vehicle, but in terms of earning a wage the impact would be far greater on a professional pianist than on a courier driver. That is one example. There are many more examples but the point is made. Such a table of payments in no way provides equity. It fails to consider all the factors that should be considered when determining what is fair and equitable in any individual case. Only by having all the factors considered by an impartial judge and/or jury can we be sure justice will be done and that compensation payments will truly reflect the ongoing impact of the injury.

Recently Mr Nardella and I met with a number of members of the South Western Injured Persons Association at Warrnambool, in the electorate represented by the minister. Mr Nardella will deal with the matters raised with us at that meeting. I was very much affected by the sense of outrage and injury that was evident among those unfortunate people. 'Why', they said, 'are they doing this to us? Don't they understand? Don't they care? We are already injured. Why do they heap more injury on us?'. The sense of outrage and bewilderment was extraordinary. The truth is that it is unlikely that 'they' understand or care.

I have in my possession a number of letters written to the minister by injured workers and their families and dependants and I intend to place a small number of the letters on the record. For the purpose of the exercise I have selected the shortest letters. Not all the letters have signatures attached and where they do I cannot decipher them. The first letter reads:

> Mr Hallam, I am the wife of an injured husband and mother of three children. Our life would suffer dramatically as it already has but if further cuts to compensation for injured workers and accident victims is passed we among others would have no future. Our life now is in constant stress due to my husband's back injury and financially we barely make ends meet on the small amount of financial assistance that we receive. If you were in our position and you had a serious injury I am sure you would like to know that you were able to receive compensation and know your future is not at risk.

The second letter reads:

> Mr Hallam, Due to having been in a car accident in October 1995, if it wasn't for common law I would not have been compensated, which I think I was entitled to as I do not have the use of my left arm. Give us a go.

Unfortunately, I cannot decipher the signature. The third letter reads:

> Mr Hallam, I came out of a tractor and did my spine in. If you had any idea of the pain in it you'd realise we need common law. Only for solicitors speaking up for us and our rights, the likes of you trying to take that away from us, you have no right. I think you've been placed in the wrong position. Get out and give someone else a go to look after us.

I could not agree more. All these people have written letters, and I would be worried about that. They have genuine problems which the actions of the government will further exacerbate. In addition they are constituents of the minister. I say, 'Look out, Minister; these people are very angry.' This is a disgraceful bill that is based on economic rationalism. It fails to genuinely look after the interests of insured workers but simply adds insult to injury. The bill shows the ignorance of those who drafted it with respect to the problems faced by injured workers. It deserves to be thrown out and I urge that course of action.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I first want to acknowledge the sincerity of the concern felt by many people in the community about the proposed legislation. There is absolutely no question that many of the constituents I represent and other people have expressed genuine concern about the bill, and I have a lot of empathy for their distress. I realise that when people feel they are threatened they inevitably react in a fearful way. One must ask why they feel threatened and why I have received many letters from constituents and other people who believe the proposed reforms to workers compensation arrangements in this state will impact on them deleteriously.

It is clear from the rhetoric both in the debate and in the community at large — the comments by representatives of the opposition, the trade unions and many solicitors who are engaged in extensive compensation practices — that these people, including my constituents, feel threatened and are alarmed because there has been a significant misrepresentation of the philosophy behind the proposed government reforms of workers compensation legislation in Victoria. To that end, I would like to speak tonight because it is important for me to express the difference of view between the government and the opposition parties. It revolves around the notion of assumptions about what Workcover and workers compensation should be.

Clearly assumptions are made about the motives of employers regarding the treatment of their employees with respect to safe work practices, a safe working environment and the risk of accidents occurring at work. Invalid assumptions are made about the intentions of the Workcover Authority and its officers regarding administration of the scheme. Poor assumptions are made based on a false view of the intentions of the government with respect to Workcover.

Earlier today Mr Hartigan set out the history and development of workers compensation law in this state and, as a consequence, I do not intend to reiterate his remarks, except to say that in the 1980s and early 1990s, when the Labor government was in power, workers compensation arrangements were a disaster. When the Kennett government came to office in 1992 the scheme was unsustainable. Changes have been made over the past five years to improve the scheme. The result is that we have a well managed, effective workers compensation scheme, but some deficiencies require remedying, and the proposed legislation will do that.

The philosophy which divides the government and the opposition, and those who support the

opposition in its views on this bill, revolves around an understanding that workers compensation is somehow a prize — that the benefits accruing as a result of injury are somehow a prize. That philosophy underlies the concerns expressed about the removal of common-law rights, because it is seen to be a benefit to which injured persons can aspire. Clearly, workers compensation is about the notion of a person adversely affected as a result of a workplace incident being properly dealt with by rehabilitation and ensuring that he or she is sufficiently remunerated so as to carry the person through that period until he or she is able to return to work.

The government's focus clearly is on structuring a scheme that will enable individuals to most quickly rejoin their families and workplaces and enjoy a full life. To have a scheme that is designed in part almost to frustrate that intention by having long delays and by creating a litigious environment — an adversarial environment — between employees and employers does not create an appropriate culture. The bill is not seeking to take away a prize; it will ensure there are proper arrangements that enable a return to work and significantly improved benefits to those who are injured, and to minimise the transaction costs to enable that to occur.

Having made those preliminary remarks, I should say that I have had personal experience with workers compensation arrangements as an employer and as the president of an employer organisation in the 1980s and early 1990s, when we were operating under the Labor government workers compensation scheme. During that time there was universal disquiet about the operation of the scheme: employers were frustrated with costs, with the apparent inefficiencies in being able to deal with claims, with the administrative burden imposed upon their business and with the disincentive to employment that was created as a result. It is clear that employers find the present administrative arrangements much improved; there is far less disincentive to employment.

During question time today the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology said Victoria now has a record level of employment, which clearly reflects that the government has established appropriate parameters to ensure there will be a growth in wealth and employment opportunities.

Honourable members should focus on the primary issue: there will be a change from the approach that creates distrust and resentment to one that will inevitably mean in the future employers who have injured employees will be able to deal cooperatively with them, the way the community would expect, because the issues of litigation will not be suspended over the employment relationship.

Having said that, I reinforce my view that the government's approach to this important issue has been based on long discussions. There has been wide consultation with a significant number of stakeholders, some of whom have had all their wishes met and others who have not. That is the nature of the development of legislation under any government. There has been consultation with unions, employer groups, lawyers, doctors, insurers, the board of the Victorian Workcover Authority and many members of Parliament, who were involved with the minister in developing and framing the legislation. Critically, I have provided the opportunity for people in my constituency to engage me in discussion about the principles of the bill, which I welcome in every instance, and I have gone away from those discussions without doubt in my mind that the issues have been clarified. All of those with whom I have corresponded — and I have replied to them all in writing — have been satisfied with the response. At first a significant number of people were alarmed, but they have responded affirmatively after the issues were properly explained.

The government's amendments clearly give injured workers the highest impairment benefits in Australia, as well as significant financial security. The replacement of common law by impairment benefits of up to $300 000 and the ongoing weekly payments of up to $850 a week provide certainty and security for injured workers. These key elements have apparently been lost in the public debate. I regret that when the forces of the opposition party and organisations in the community such as the trade union movement combine through the media to run a scare campaign it is difficult for the government to present information that counterbalances that view.

It is important from the perspective of the historical record that there is a full debate, which I understand will be extensive, for the benefit of the community. The opposition has a fulsome chance to put its view, which it is doing, and I have no doubt that government members, particularly the minister, will respond appropriately. I expect any objective review of the debate will clearly define that the fears asserted by the opposition have been groundless.

There is no question that workers who have no capacity to work will be eligible for weekly benefits until retirement. That is an important initiative because an employee, threatened with an unknown future, must always be confident that the arrangements that are in place as a consequence of some unfortunate, unforeseen event, perhaps as a result of his mistake or that of his colleagues or employer, will ensure he will not be put in a situation from which he will never recover. The government's intentions have been met in that regard. For the first time in a Victorian workers compensation scheme pensions and lump sum payments will be paid to spouses of workers killed at work. That important initiative enables the community to be confident about the security being afforded to workers by the scheme. There is no question that the philosophy behind the legislation will ensure employees are not disadvantaged as a result of the Workcover changes.

To that end provision has been made to grandfather particular aspects of the bill. For example, workers who were injured prior to 12 November last will continue to have recourse to the old entitlements whereas workers injured after that date will be able to access the new benefits provided in the bill. I shall not elaborate on the provisions of the bill, which will no doubt be extensively canvassed during the committee stage.

The bill has attracted extensive community debate. Many people have become alarmed about the legislation, particularly after conversations with their solicitors. Many of my constituents have brought to my electorate office letters from their lawyers designed only to alarm Workcover recipients about the supposed implications of the legislation, yet workers have nothing to fear. I have no doubt many Victorians have been alarmed in that way. They should read the report of the second-reading debate and examine the legislation further.

As commentators and journalists will inevitably observe in the future, following reflection and on balance the legislation will be seen as good legislation and the government will be applauded for introducing it. I am confident the house will support the bill.

Hon. JEAN McLEAN (Melbourne West) — I oppose the bill. Although during question time today the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology said that according to the latest figures Victoria has more jobs available than any other state the government has proved it has no regard for Victorian workers by introducing the bill. I remind the house that Victoria has a youth unemployment rate of 33 per cent. The jobs the government told us about were part-time jobs and most workers want full-time jobs.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Is your job full time?

Hon. JEAN McLEAN — Very much so — as is yours, Minister. On the pretext that it is creating a competitive work environment the government is looking longingly at conditions of work in Third World countries and trying to replicate them in Victoria. The rule of thumb is so popular with the government that the Minister for Roads and Ports is full of policies and practices of Third World dictatorships. Last week the Minister for Roads and Ports showed great excitement at the prospect of military veterans trained in combat and toughened by decades of hard physical training taking on the wharfies.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Would it be better if they were trained in Cuba?

Hon. JEAN McLEAN — No, not if you are trying to take over the waterfront. I deplore the use of people trained by any military force. The minister should know that if they were trained in Cuba they would be too interested in fun and music to be a problem. Anyone who wanted them to stick to their jobs and not be interested in having fun would arrange to train them in Saudi Arabia.

The Minister for Roads and Ports is interested in the secret military training in Dubai of the people who some hope will eventually run our wharves. The minister told us he used to work as a union representative on the wharves. He had secret training — from the National Civic Council! He thinks it would be a good idea to use the military on Australian wharves.

Hon. Philip Davis — On a point of order, Mr President, I question the relevance of this contribution to the bill.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am sure it was only a passing remark.

Hon. JEAN McLEAN — The government has sacked a large number of public servants and put most workers on short-term contracts. It has created a feeling of insecurity among those who are lucky enough to have jobs. The government has now

decided to take away the common-law right of workers to sue their bosses if they are injured at work. Honourable members have become used to debating only few bills designed in the interests of workers and their families.

Victorian workers who oppose the legislation have taken part in large demonstrations on the steps of Parliament House — it has been quite some time since so many people have demonstrated outside. This bill and the Audit (Amendment) Bill have made Victorians angry. They know their rights are being eroded even further. Victorians know that common-law rights have played a crucial role in preventing workplace accidents because employers have faced the threat of being sued for negligence if accidents have occurred in unsafe workplaces. However, that has led to employers paying higher insurance premiums.

Honourable members know that thanks to El Niño, global warming patterns and our lousy environmental record, this summer Victoria will probably be hit by bushfires. As a result of this bill any paid firefighter who is injured will not be able to sue under common law, yet volunteer firefighters will retain that right. I know of many examples of similar injustices. Mr Theophanous also spelt out examples during his contribution.

The government, through the Victorian Workcover Authority, has spent a small fortune on advertisements that claim people will get a better workers compensation deal through the implementation of the bill. That is blatantly untrue. The maximum amount available under common law is approximately $1 million. Under the legislation the maximum amount of permanent impairment compensation is $300 000, and workers will have to be 100 per cent impaired to obtain it. The government claims it is increasing no-fault payments for permanent impairment as an alternative to common law payments. Permanent impairment payments will increase from a maximum of $161 390 to a maximum of $300 000, but only quadriplegics will be able to claim the increased amounts — and I hope there will not be many of those.

The legislation will introduce a 10 per cent AMA impairment rating threshold, meaning that many workers who are now entitled to lump sums will be excluded. Injured workers who are quadriplegics or totally blind are the only ones who will have AMA-rated impairments of more than 81 per cent. Every worker who is off work for between 13 and 26 weeks will lose at least 20 per cent of his or her income — and some will lose 35 per cent of income. After 26 weeks seriously injured workers will lose at least 20 per cent of their pay — and some will lose everything. Some workers who have injuries that result in a 30 per cent or more AMA impairment rating will be classified as capable of doing some work.

From speaking to injured workers who have visited my office and whom I have met in other places, I know that that sort of work does not exist. These workers will lose 35 per cent of their pay for the following 78 weeks — and after 104 weeks they will lose everything.

No claims will be able to be made against third parties. As has been suggested, a courier hurt in a plane crash will not be able to sue the airline but all the other passengers will be able to.

I refer to another area of discrimination against workers that especially concerns me. If a worker is poisoned by a toxic substance in a workplace, he or she will not be able to sue the maker or importer of that toxic substance. If a farmer is poisoned by pesticides or herbicides he will have no right to sue the manufacturers.

In my electorate I have huge petrochemical factories as well as Coode Island, which is a major storage facility for hazardous feedstocks for the chemicals, plastics and rubber industries. In July 1996, Mr Birrell, the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, sent a letter to Senator Robert Hill, the federal Minister for the Environment — perhaps we should call him the federal minister against the environment — advising that the relocation of the Coode Island facility to Point Lillias was a matter of urgent national importance. Now the facility is not being moved, but the danger to the workers and the local community remains. Nothing has changed.

The people who drafted the bill worked hard to diminish the rights of workers while protecting employers. Far from punishing those employers who have unsafe workplaces, they have decided to punish the injured workers instead. Apart from the suggestion by Mr Philip Davis that somehow workers saw the right to claim under common law as some sort of prize and that workers should not feel — —

Hon. Philip Davis — You are suggesting that.

Hon. JEAN McLEAN — What I am saying, Mr Davis, is that no worker wants to be injured and off work. Workers do not see the ability to sue under common law as a prize. They see it as a necessary right to survive — —

Interjections from gallery.

Hon. JEAN McLEAN — Workers do not want to get injured. If they do, they immediately become second-class citizens and their dignity is destroyed. Many times workers who have been injured have come into my office to say that when they apply for jobs, the minute the employer knows they have been on Workcover, he does not want to know them. From the moment they are injured they become second-class citizens and are suspected of being malingerers.

Those who support the bill have put the view that workers cannot be trusted with lump sums because they fritter them away. The perception has also been promoted that injured workers want to stay off work. Yet the fear of most injured workers is that their bosses will sack them. If that happens and they have to look for new jobs, they are advised not to tell their prospective employers that they are on Workcover. I know doctors who work for Workcover who say to injured workers, 'Whatever you do, don't mention you are on Workcover. If you do, you won't get a job'.

Workers are vilified for wanting the right to sue. All they want to be able to do is sue negligent employers for compensation under common law. The bill has been drafted to keep them in line. It sets up a model that will keep them poor and struggling. To be injured is to be pushed around by an unfeeling bureaucracy.

The payments a worker receives for two years for a residual partial incapacity will stop unless he or she works for at least 15 hours a week and earns at least $100. That prospect will be particularly worrying for workers in my electorate, given the huge rate of unemployment in the western suburbs. It is necessary to prove both a mental and a physical inability to work before being eligible for payments. The duration of payments at the rate of 95 per cent of previous income will be halved. Setting payments at 75 per cent of previous income will be a marginal improvement for those who would previously have been classified as totally and permanently incapacitated. But there will be a significant reduction for those who would have been classified as seriously injured.

This bill will give major powers to the medical panels. They will be asked to make conclusive judgements about whether working has caused the injuries. An injured worker will not be allowed legal representation. Doctors alone will decide whether injuries occurred in the workplace.

The young boy whose hand was mangled in a mincing machine recently — he did not receive sufficient training or guidance from his employer — will no longer have the right to sue under common law. He will be told that he has only a partial injury and that his life should just go on as normal. It made me feel sick for weeks just reading about it. I wonder how I would have felt if it had happened to me or one of my children.

We are all aware of politicians and others in public positions who have sued successfully under common law after feeling they had been defamed. Yet the government has decided that one section of the community must no longer have a common law right to sue a boss for negligence. I do not believe that in most cases workers either want to sue for negligence or are in a position to. But they must have that residual right; it must not be taken away from one section of the community. Workplaces in Australia may be safer than workplaces in some developing nations, but two people die and 3000 are injured in workplace accidents every week.

Very few people in society are lucky enough to have the sort of employment they really enjoy; very few can pick and choose and tell their boss that the workplace conditions are lousy and unsafe without being sacked. Most people want to work hard and get satisfaction from their jobs, but if they are unlucky enough to get injured they should have the same common-law rights as the rest of the community. The *Herald Sun* editorial of 9 October says:

> Injured workers must not be denied the opportunity by any government to seek appropriate damages through the courts — their common-law right to sue is not a privilege that governments should have the power to grant or take away. The right of individuals to have their day in court is a fundamental part of our free and democratic society.

We are all aware of politicians who have successfully sued by common law, yet the government has taken that right away from Victorian workers.

When the thousands of workers who came to the steps of Parliament to express their anger for having their rights as citizens eroded stood for a minute's silence for their injured comrades I was glad to see the thin blue line on the steps join with them. The Police Association had this to say:

> It is inconceivable that any government would put in place legislation which would shield from legal action any person who has caused serious injury to another through negligence. Every member of the community is accountable for their own actions and to create a situation that almost grants immunity for negligent behaviour in the workplace is unthinkable. We are angered by this proposed amendment and many other proposed amendments in the legislation.

Workers at every level are being gravely disadvantaged by this legislation, whether they are nurses, police officers, factory workers or truck drivers. The whole society is being diminished by the unfairness of this legislation. It should be condemned by all elected representatives of the Victorian people. I believe this house should condemn the bill.

Applause from gallery.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I remind members of the gallery that this is one audience from whom we do not encourage participation. Visitors are welcome to be here to listen to the proceedings but I ask them not to participate in any other form, otherwise I will be forced to clear the gallery.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — I think I am right in saying that during my time as a member of this house in every session of parliamentary sittings that I have attended there has been an amending bill concerning accident compensation. It is not hard to understand why, because accident compensation is complex, and frequent changes have been made to it under both Labor and coalition governments. Some of those changes have been complex in nature while some have been relatively simple. I certainly agree that the amendments we are looking at tonight fall into the complex category.

As I said, over many years there have been constant changes to the legislation which I think have been necessary because there should be a continual review process on such matters to ensure that the system remains relevant to today's needs and is kept up to date with changes in the workplace.

I want to comment briefly on one aspect of the legislation. I do not want to go over all the arguments, the history of the bill or the areas that have been covered by the lead speakers on each side. They delivered lengthy speeches and it does not seem to be necessary now to go through those matters again. However, the area of particular interest to me that I have pursued through the review process which was outlined in the second-reading speech relates to benefits to injured workers, and I shall make a few brief comments about those benefits.

It is no secret that throughout that review process I argued strongly that no person currently in receipt of Workcover benefits should be disadvantaged by any changes to the legislation. I am very pleased to say this legislation has achieved that outcome in that the conditions relating to people currently in receipt of Workcover benefits have been preserved. If people are receiving benefits now there will be no change to them under this bill. For those who are currently receiving benefits weekly repayments rates will remain the same and the lump sum payments under the table of maims and for pain and suffering allowance will stay the same. If injured workers are entitled to make common-law claims they will have a further three years in which to start action on the claims, or even if an illness resulting from a workplace incident develops in future years they will have three years from the date of becoming aware of that illness to make a common-law claim. Therefore there will be no change for people who are currently in receipt of benefits and have submitted Workcover claims. It is important to make that point in this debate today.

It is also no secret, certainly to my constituents, that throughout the review process I argued for the retention of common law as a component within the accident compensation scheme. That position is not provided for in the bill, and I suppose there are some people in my electorate who have suggested that because of that provision we should be voting against the bill, but the situation is not as simple as that. You cannot take one component of the bill and say that because you feel uncomfortable with that you might vote against the whole thing.

Here is a whole package of amendments, some of which will provide significant advantages and benefits to workers and improvements to the current system. Whenever there is a package of benefits one cannot tinker around with just one without a ripple effect flowing on to others. Therefore one must consider the package as a whole and weigh up the

advantages and disadvantages, the benefits that one believes flow from it against any disbenefits, and make a personal decision about whether this is good legislation or not.

I have given this matter very careful consideration. I was part of the government review committee that looked at the review legislation, and on balance I think the changes overall bring about a positive benefit to the accident compensation system in Victoria. That is why I support the bill in its entirety.

As I said, I wanted to concentrate on benefits to injured workers as my particular area of interest. I will quickly compare the benefit levels paid under the current system with those that will be paid to people who may submit claims if the legislation is passed in this form tonight.

Under the current system weekly payments to injured workers are paid at 95 per cent of pre-injury average weekly earnings for the first 26 weeks a person is off work up to a maximum of $680 per week. It is true that under the new system 95 per cent of pre-injury average weekly earnings will be paid only for the first 13 weeks, but to offset that the maximum that can be paid has been increased to $850 per week. I make the point in comparing this benefit that 70 per cent of claimants are back at work within the first 13-week period, so for some people the step down may have a negative effect but for others there will be the benefit of having an increased cap — and it is only a few because, as I said, the vast majority are well back to work within that 13-week period.

Moving through the weekly payment schedule, after 26 weeks in the present system partly incapacitated people currently receive 60 per cent of average weekly earnings up to a maximum of $408 per week. Under the new schedule people with current work capacity will be paid a 60 per cent benefit level, the same as with the present system except that the maximum has been increased to $510 per week.

That is a significant improvement for people who are in the current partially incapacitated category. Injured workers in the current totally and permanently incapacitated category receive 70 per cent of their pre-injury average weekly earnings up to $680 a week. Under the new system, people in those two categories now form a new category of 'no current work capacity' and they will receive 75 per cent of their pre-injury average weekly earnings up to $850 a week.

Of the many constituents I have had association with over the years, the majority of Workcover claimants who see me in my office are in the totally incapacitated or totally and permanently incapacitated categories. A major group of beneficiaries will receive increases in weekly benefits and many will qualify for increases because the cap on benefits has also been raised.

Under the present scheme those who are in the seriously injured category receive 90 per cent of pre-injury weekly earnings up to $680 but under the new scheme those in the category titled 'no current work capacity for the indefinite future' will receive 75 per cent of pre-injury earnings up to $850 a week. I recognise that in the future those people who would have been in the seriously injured category will receive reduced benefits, but many will receive increases because the cap has been increased from $680 to $850 a week, which is a significant increase of $170 a week.

I needed to look at this bill carefully as a package in terms of benefit levels and, overall, I believe that because of the way the new benefit levels have been structured it has significant positive effects for those unfortunate enough to suffer workplace injuries. More importantly, we need to look at other integral components of the benefits for injured workers such as the statutory benefits. Under the old system the table of maims and also the payment for pain and suffering provided a maximum payment of $161 390, but under the new system those statutory lump sum payments have been increased to a maximum of $300 000. Indeed, anybody who has an 80 to 100 per cent impairment will qualify for the maximum $300 000. Those with a lesser impairment will receive an amount that is proportionately reduced. It is important to say that the lump sum payments at each impairment level have been maintained at least at the current rates, so that nobody will be disadvantaged significantly, and many will be advantaged because of the increase in payments for some types of injuries. Further, a number of workplace injuries will now be eligible for payment of lump sums including injury to internal organs and respiratory damage.

The current death benefit is about $150 000, but under the new system the lump sum payment for a spouse, or dependants if there is no spouse, has been increased to $175 000. In addition, pensions will be paid to spouses for three years after death and to dependent children up to 21 years of age if they are full-time students.

My interest has been in the weekly benefits and the lump sum payments made to injured workers. We need to consider the legislation as a whole. We should not isolate one component that we are not happy about. As part of the government's review team I have given the legislation careful consideration over a long period. I have come to the conclusion that overall there are significant benefits which at the same time will maintain the financial viability of the scheme, and that is equally important. On balance, the legislation is reasonable and sensible and that is why I am pleased to support it.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I strongly oppose the Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill. I take this opportunity to set out on behalf of the opposition, and consistent with the broad range of community attitudes, the concerns in relation to the bill. It has been my experience since October 1992 that very little happens in Victoria that is not driven by economic imperatives identified by the Premier and the Treasurer. That was starkly evident today during question time when I sought an answer from the Minister for Roads and Ports about a matter affecting the port of Geelong and the Victorian Channel Authority. Clearly, the minister is a minister without portfolio.

Hon. R. I. Knowles — That is not right!

Hon. PAT POWER — The minister indicated to the house that the Victorian Channel Authority and the port of Geelong were not his responsibility and he was unable to answer my question. He said that if I or the community wanted any information about issues relating to the port I had to talk to the Treasurer.

Hon. R. I. Knowles — He is responsible for the legislation to which you referred!

Hon. PAT POWER — The minister interjects that I was talking about legislation, but I was not.

Hon. R. I. Knowles interjected.

Hon. PAT POWER — You quote me accurately! I asked the Minister for Roads and Ports whether he could advise the house in any way about the proposed sale of the Victorian Channel Authority.

The PRESIDENT — Order! This is a bill about Workcover! I am reminding you about the scope of the bill.

Hon. PAT POWER — I understand we are debating issues relating to Workcover and in my preamble I said that in my experience nothing of significance has occurred under the Victorian government that has not been predicated by the economic rationalist views of the Treasurer and the Premier. I am seeking to demonstrate that my observation is valid and that decisions about ports are no different from decisions made in respect of local government, education, health and in this case Workcover. It is my view, and I believe the view of the broad community, that this has nothing to do with providing workers in Victoria with access to a better workers compensation scheme. It has to do with exactly the same premise that has driven the government's decision making in relation to the sale of ports around Victoria. It has driven the government to sell off the Victorian Channel Authority. It has resulted in 8000 teachers being hunted out the door, country hospitals being closed and the *Vinelander* train service and other country train lines being closed. It is the same issue which led to the former member for Mildura in another place being defeated at the general state election by an Independent and which led to a by-election after Alan Brown deserted Victoria for greener pastures.

Hon. R. I. Knowles — I thought the speaker was raising a point of order.

Hon. PAT POWER — No, I was not.

Hon. W. R. Baxter — It has nothing to do with the debate.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Let him give his speech.

Hon. PAT POWER — Thank you, Bill; you are a very reasonable man. We know that when there was a by-election conducted in Gippsland West the community elected an Independent. Analysts would tell us that a large part of the reason that Independent was elected was the community was increasingly unhappy about the economic rationalist agendas that dominate the thinking and the decision making of this government.

I am more than happy to be challenged by the Deputy Leader of the Government about whether my views and the community's views on Workcover have anything to do with this government being deeply committed to economic rationalism in a way that makes Margaret Thatcher seem like an amateur. I have not the slightest doubt that on Saturday — yet another by-election — a very strong message will be delivered to the Kennett government by the people

of Mitcham. As I have said, the residents of Mitcham very much represent middle Melbourne. I have not the slightest doubt they will say, on behalf of the great majority of Victorians, that the Kennett government has gone too far; it is now seen as an arrogant government; it is too deeply and unswervingly committed to principles of economic rationalism. In that sense the government's nobbling of the Auditor-General and its preparedness to make injured workers second-class citizens will be strong themes in the minds of people as they walk into the booths on Saturday to cast their votes.

It does not surprise me that government members would not want any opposition speaker to raise that matter in this debate. Not only will injured workers be treated appallingly as a consequence of the bill, but also the legislation is part of a consistent attack on Victorians in reconstructing them, in many cases, as second-class citizens. During question time today it was interesting to hear the Leader of the Government give what could at best be described as a misleading answer. In response to a dorothy dixer he sought to make claims about the government's employment record. On Saturday, voters in Mitcham will deliver a clear message about the nobbling of the Auditor-General and the government's economic rationalist commitment. The Leader of the Government omitted to remind the house this afternoon in his answer to a dorothy dixer that Victoria has the highest youth unemployment record of any state in the nation. In Victoria there has been no real employment growth. As far as I am concerned and as far as those members of the community with whom I have discussed the matter are concerned, the attacks on injured workers through the Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill are no different from the attacks on the Victorian community that occurred in education, local government, hospitals, community health centres and the attacks the government has planned in relation to the provision of community health.

Today we had the absurd situation of the government making yet another economically rationalist-driven announcement about the level of remuneration it believes is appropriate for mayors and shire presidents. The government believes people who are representing their community as a consequence of democratic elections as mayors or shire presidents should receive a maximum allowance of no more than $36 000. Not only is the government prepared to treat injured workers as second-class citizens, but as a consequence of the commitment of economic rationalism it is prepared to treat the people elected as councillors, mayors and shire presidents as second-class citizens.

I refer to some observations about the government's proposals for workers compensation. On 9 October the *Age* editorial offered the following observation to the Victorian community:

> A character in Robert Penn Warren's novel on American politics, *All the King's Men*, compared the law to a blanket which was always somewhat shorter than the person it was meant to cover. This week the Victorian government, in announcing its plans to overhaul Workcover, the state's workers compensation scheme, set out to tear away a large piece of the blanket. It outlined legislation to arbitrarily abolish the common-law rights of injured workers to sue their employers, all in the name of efficiency and cost-saving.

It is not just the opposition and the general community that acknowledges the government is driven by economic rationalism and by the mantra of making things at any cost cheaper. I do not dispute education is now cheaper, but it is certainly not better. I do not dispute local government is now cheaper, but it is surely not better. I do not dispute the health system is now cheaper, but it is surely not better. I do not dispute the ambulance system is cheaper to run, but it is certainly not better. The government is about economic rationalism — cheapness; it is not about making life for the great majority of Victorians better. The editorial goes on to say:

> ... a wide coalition of lawyers, trade unionists and others are right to warn of the dangers of reducing common-law safeguards, and they are right to say that the changes are driven by financial imperatives rather than justice.

Again, this is not a debate in which the opposition is isolated from the broad community in expressing its concern about the changes — like all other major changes of this government — being driven not by creating a better society but by the bottom line, the need and determination to make governments smaller and the preparedness to sacrifice the rights and wellbeing of Victorians in doing so. I repeat: the *Age* editorial of 9 October reports:

> ... they are right to say that the changes are driven by financial imperatives rather than justice.

It concludes:

> If the Workcover changes go through, people injured at work will be conciliating from a position of weakness.

That editorial is not from the trade union movement, the Labor Party or a group of Trotskyites. It is an *Age* editorial. It continues:

> If the Workcover changes go through people injured at work will be conciliating from a position of weakness at a time, historically, and personally, when they are not in a good position to stand up for themselves. Their common-law rights should be defended, not abolished.

The community and the opposition have every right to point out that this legislation is not about providing better circumstances for injured workers and their families or creating a better and more equitable community; it is about cheapness and being prepared to sacrifice people and their rights so that the almighty dollar can rule the day. That will be made very clear on Saturday in Mitcham. Another *Age* editorial of 30 October headed 'Adding insult to injury' began by saying:

> Victoria's finance minister ... said yesterday that this state has the best workers compensation system in Australia.

I have not heard the minister or any government member dispute that that was the observation and the comment of the minister. It is not only a question of 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it', it is also a question of 'If it's the best in Australia, why break it'. The editorial goes on to say:

> If that is the case, it is puzzling that the government remains intent on removing a fundamental part of that system, the common-law right of workers to sue negligent employers.

It is fair to say that the issue of common law is central to the conclusion that a great majority of Victorians have reached — that is, this legislation will make injured workers second-class citizens. We must understand that the right of access to common law will not be withdrawn from us as politicians, from the Premier or from employers. My union, the Electrical Trades Union, has been threatened with action under common law as a consequence of industrial action that it took in support of the right of its members to have access to a free, modern and equitable workers compensation scheme. There is clear evidence — I will get to it in a moment so far as the *Age* editorial is concerned — that in pursuit of its economical rationalist ideas this government is prepared to remove the right of access to common law not from a worker the day, the hour or the minute before he was injured but immediately he is injured. Immediately he lodges a workers compensation claim he will be ineligible to access common law. His employer, the Premier and members of parliament will be able to access common law but not the injured worker.

I shall quote again from the editorial because it picks up the second-class classification that is being established. It states:

> Some employers affected by the strike sought from the Australian Industrial Relations Commission an order under section 127 of the Workplace Relations Act, allowing them to sue employees if they did not return to work by a stipulated time. The applications were made under federal law, since Victoria no longer has a separate industrial relations system ... the fact that employers are able to make such requests highlights the increased imbalance between the rights of employers and employees that will result if the government's proposed changes to the compensation system become law.
>
> The common law recognises obligations on behalf of both parties to employment contracts, such as the obligations of employees to work as directed and the obligation of employers to take all reasonable steps to ensure their employees' safety.

It goes on to give an example:

> An application granted in the Industrial Relations Commission ... allows a Melbourne ship builder to seek common-law compensation for damages.

The editorial concludes:

> ... common-law rights of employers will be left intact but workers who suffer injury in the workplace will lose their right to sue for negligence.

I acknowledge that in any compensation scheme there must be a proper awareness of the financial imperatives. I do not have any difficulty with the minister or government members saying there should be a financial assessment of the kind of workers compensation scheme we offer. But none of those issues gives licence to any government to withdraw the rights of workers to access common law, especially not when the employers of those workers will still retain their rights to access common law. I refer again to the clear example when

the Electrical Trades Union — the pecuniary interest register shows I am a member — took industrial action in support of workers' rights to a proper workers compensation scheme. As a consequence the employer sought to take action under common law against the union.

The government is supporting a position where injured workers, if based on nothing other than their inability to access common law, will become second-class citizens. Employers will be able to access common law, as the minister, the Premier and I will, but the only people not able to access common law as a consequence of a wish to exercise that right will be injured workers. I repeat: the opposition and the community are not saying one must not address financial imperatives when designing and crafting a workers compensation scheme.

That does not give the government licence to introduce legislation that is as radical, divisive and classist as the bill. I am absolutely confident that the opposition is in step with the broad Victorian community — in Mitcham or in any other part of Victoria — when it says that the Kennett coalition government is going too far, is arrogant, was wrong in nobbling the Auditor-General and is wrong in seeking to persist with the proposed legislation.

The Kennett coalition government is wrong again because the measure will reduce the rights at common law of injured workers, yet it will not reduce the rights at common law of any other Victorians in respect of their employment or occupational health and safety, and will not reduce the rights at common law of employers.

The Labor government of the 1980s receives an enormous amount of criticism from and is attacked by people on the government benches. I can understand that to some extent — I acknowledge that that happens when a former government is in opposition. Achievements in occupational health and safety are among the many achievements that can be laid indisputably at the feet of the Cain and Kirner governments. As the comedian and political commentator John Clarke might say: this is bad legislation — this is very bad legislation.

The community is absolutely correct in expressing its anger with and frustration at the proposed legislation. I seek to demonstrate that concerns about the proposed legislation are broadly held and the community response is not sectional or limited to the Labor Party or opponents of the coalition government. The evidence for that will be seen at the by-election in Mitcham on Saturday.

Many people who in normal circumstances would be comfortable about voting for the coalition parties are concerned about the economic agenda that drives the government. My experience of the education, transport, local government and health areas is that the people who are most angry about the proposed changes and most concerned about the impact they will have on Victorian families are people who consider themselves conservatives. Those people believe that governments must govern for all Victorians and must not allow their political agendas to dominate to the point where as a consequence of those agendas being implemented people find they are essentially second-class citizens.

A letter written by John McPherson, a solicitor in Bendigo, was published in the *Age* of 29 October. It states in part:

> ... the state government's planned restriction of workers' common-law rights is unlikely to be confined to negligence actions against employers ...
>
> Consider the following examples of the outrageous consequences of workers having no common-law rights.
>
> A person who injures a knee at work and is referred to hospital, where the surgeon mistakenly amputates their uninjured leg, will have no right to sue the surgeon.

I repeat: in those circumstances an injured worker will have no right to sue the surgeon. The letter continues:

> A trespasser, if injured due to the defective nature of the premises that he finds himself on, will be able to sue, while a firefighter attending an emergency will not.

All honourable members would acknowledge that it is a very generous interpretation of the law to say that a trespasser, with whatever intent, would be able to sue if injured due to some defect in the premises he was on. Let us imagine that as a consequence of his or her presence on a property a trespasser set up some emergency situation and firefighters attended the scene. The emergency workers would not have access to common law because they would be working.

The letter gives a third example of a worker running an office errand in a department store being injured when a display collapses. Under the government's legislation that injured worker would be prevented

from suing under common law. However, all honourable members know that if that same accident occurred after the person concerned had ceased work he or she would be able to sue.

The proposed legislation is driven by the ethos of economic rationalism, as have been other major changes the government has made. The pursuit of economic rationalism has led to school closures and to the retrenchment of 8000 teachers. The pursuit of economic rationalism has led to 25 000 local government workers losing their jobs and country train lines and hospitals being closed. I have not the slightest doubt that on Saturday the voters in the electorate of Mitcham in middle Melbourne will deliver a clear message on behalf of the broader Victorian community.

Economic rationalism is wrong and inappropriate if it leads to legislation that nobbles the Auditor-General or, as in this case, makes injured workers second-class citizens who through no fault of their own and unlike honourable members, the Premier, the minister or their employers are put in a situation of being unable to access common law.

In a letter to the editor published in the *Age* of 17 October, Dan McGlade of Ballarat, who describes himself as an accredited personal injury law specialist, addresses the question of a second-class citizenry. The letter states in part:

> The common-law right of an innocent victim to recover damages from their injuries is older than the universal right to vote and distinguishes us as a civilised society...
>
> If the common-law right to recover damages is abolished this much is certain — employer regard for workplace safety will drop, the number of workplace accidents will increase and our society will become a less safe and less civilised place in which to work and live.

Those are not the observations of the Labor Party, trade unions or extremist groups. They are the observations of a professional who is an accredited personal injury law specialist.

I return to the record of the Cain and Kirner governments in relation to workplaces and occupational health and safety. Everyone accepts that no government is perfect and that some governments are significantly less perfect than others. As one government passes into history critical assessments, often substantially critical assessments, will be made of its contribution to the state's welfare. It would be impossible for any substantive work on the former Labor government's commitment to workplace safety to indicate that it resulted in anything other than a lifting of standards.

During the 10 years of Labor government I had the opportunity to be associated with trade unions whose memberships included large numbers of people from non-English-speaking backgrounds and large numbers of people with minimal trade skills. Everyone knows that members of a work force with a minimal knowledge of the spoken language or a lack of skills training will be vulnerable because they will have a limited knowledge of how to use equipment safely.

In the 1980s the Cain and Kirner governments saw that situation as a window of opportunity rather than a trigger to treat those people as second-class citizens. The record of Labor on workplace environments and occupational health and safety was significant. Many of its contributions were small-ticket items, not big-budget projects.

The English on the Job program meant that migrant workers were able to more comfortably and with a greater sense of surety go about their private banking and sign documents with a greater level of understanding. However, its real value was that those workers, who were contributing a hard day's work for a fair day's pay, were able to familiarise themselves with a whole range of safe working issues, because safe working procedures are invariably written in English. As a consequence of the program workers from non-English-speaking backgrounds were able to talk with their workplace mates in a way that often had previously been impossible because of language difficulties. The program was a small-ticket item.

The Labor government did not seek to punish vulnerable people but sought in a positive and constructive way to address their disadvantage and provide them with the intervention and support that would not only make them better and more productive contributors in their workplaces but would inevitably lead to them being better and more productive contributors in their general communities.

Labor recognised the existence of inefficiencies and significant structural problems. It could have said to these workers from non-English-speaking backgrounds, 'If you have an accident as a consequence of your lack of knowledge of the English language your reward from us will be that

you will not be able to access common law to make a claim.' It certainly would have been cheaper and would have solved the problems, if they had been seen as dollars-and-cents problems. Labor did not see it like that. Labor considered that any state government has a responsibility to contribute to the advancement, upskilling and well-being of all Victorians in their workplaces, homes and social settings.

I do not have any difficulty in saying that if an assessment were made of the level of workplace injury during the 1980s it would show that the commitment of the former Labor government to occupational health and safety and to the well-being of the work force achieved results.

I do not think any honourable member would argue that major schemes ought not to be constantly monitored, if necessary reviewed, and if absolutely necessary altered in a positive fashion. The problems will not be solved successfully or profitably if injured workers are told they are the only class of persons in Victoria who will lose their access to common law.

If the injured worker's colleagues decide to take industrial action, the legislation will not affect the right of their employer to access common law. It will not interfere with the right of any politician, be it the Premier or the minister, to access common law. It is difficult for the government to argue that this is being driven by anything other than mean spiritedness or a need to make a dollar, the factor that drives all other decision making in the Kennett government.

In passing I make reference to some correspondence that has been forwarded to me, not by injured workers but almost always from their partners. Those of us who have been involved with injured workers know about the psychological consequences of being in their situation. Injured workers feel so disempowered and have such low self-esteem that they hardly ever advocate on their own behalf. That is one of the tragedies of workplace injuries. The first letter reads:

> I am a mother of a 28-year-old man who was in a car accident nearly two years ago. My son doesn't know who we are, we know we will lose him soon. My daughter-in-law had two young children to care for and was pregnant with their third child. I can be so grateful for common-law claims. I know my dear daughter-in-law and three wonderful grandchildren are at least secure financially. Please ... don't take away the rights we have for common law.

I refer to another sad letter from the wife of an injured worker:

> On 15 July 1991 my husband injured himself at work, at the place he had worked for 18 years. From that day on his life changed dramatically and so did ours.
>
> We as a family have no social life any more. We have no sex life as a couple ... we'll try to exist under the same roof ... I married someone who loved his life just as it was, he was the breadwinner for his family, able to play with his children and generally do for us no matter what the task was ... But boy, has he changed. My husband's mood swings would make your head spin. More often than not he will just fly into a rage, hop into his car and drive off ... If everything seems to be going smoothly something always happens: no wages in the bank, a letter saying more doctors' appointments miles away, and so the household is upside down again ... My daughter is a small 12-year-old who has a heart problem ... We have conciliation meetings, make and sign agreements and they are continually breaking them. At one stage we had no pay for six weeks ... I make a long distance phone call to Queensland ... the girl tells me that unless I start being nice to her she won't put the money in the bank ... My husband has pain killers injected ... that are supposed to last two to three weeks but they don't ... My husband was a person who didn't take anything for a headache. Now he has lotions and pills and needles ... what do you say to someone ... when they tell you that they are of no good to you, no good to their children, and ... useless to themselves ... I have sat next to my husband with our daughter present when a person told my husband that he was a fat lazy prick ... I have tried time and time again to reassure my husband that comments from people like this do not count for anything ... my husband is in so much pain that he can barely walk, sit or sleep ... in a sweat with severe pain.

That letter is signed. It is a question of whether the tragic circumstances of that worker and his family will be enhanced by their finding themselves in a situation where they will be unable to access common law when they believe it is necessary to do so, unlike the worker's employer or any state member of Parliament, the minister or the Premier. I do not believe the legislation will mean that that worker will feel a more valued member of his community or that he will be less of a second-class citizen than he is currently.

I refer to another letter forwarded directly to me:

> I am a married man with three children. I lost total use of my hand three years ago. I have not been able to work since and I'm told I'll never work again. This has affected me physically and mentally. I cannot play with my children. I often cannot tolerate my children due to pain.

The writer of the letter asks me to make a plea to the minister not to take away a basic right.

I refer to another signed letter that has been forwarded directly to me:

> I was involved in a motor vehicle accident three years ago. I have been told by medical experts that I will never work again ... My life no longer seems worth living ... I did not ask to be in a car accident. Why should people like myself be punished any further?

Those letters were written to me as a consequence of the concern people feel about the flow-on effects of the Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill. The next letter I refer to is not signed:

> I am a victim of a car accident that has severely changed my health, my relationship with my husband and children, family, friends and the community ... I was not at fault ... I have injuries that affect my everyday living and they will continue to do so for the rest of my life ... I cannot hang out or take in the washing. I cannot play with my children. My relationship with my husband and family and friends has deteriorated because of my health.

The letter was prompted by that person's concern about her wellbeing and the wellbeing of fellow injured workers if their common-law rights are abolished.

The next letter, which is signed, states:

> I am currently trapped within the system myself having suffered a serious work-related injury on 16 May 1995. At that time I had been employed with my current employer for 17 years and believed, as do many others, that I would receive appropriate income support, treatment and rehabilitation. That has not been the case. The insurer has chosen to dispute whether the whole of the injury can be attributed to work-related factors despite overwhelming medical evidence to the contrary.
>
> To limit the rights of genuine claimants or to exclude them altogether is simply unacceptable ... this further deprives injured workers of a dignified life and more surely enforces the substandard existence that is already inflicted under the current scheme.

Another letter hand delivered to my office and signed by a constituent in Reservoir states:

> I am a ... worker in an industry who like hundreds of thousands of other people have very strong concerns to any changes in Workcover which will affect the rights of an employee to protect against anyone being disadvantaged to the point where our standard of living could be jeopardised by not having the right to sue an employer who has been negligent in looking after the employee's interest by ensuring a safe working environment.

It is a somewhat confused letter, but this worker from Reservoir is saying very clearly: in his assessment the bill seeks to look after the wellbeing of employers in a manner that puts the rights and wellbeing of injured workers at risk.

Another signed letter states:

> My husband is a construction worker, and a day does not pass that I do not fear for his life. My fear is that the people he works for won't be able to be held responsible for negligence if something were to happen ... why hit the workers the most? ... aren't the workers the ones that keep 'Victoria on the move'? ... you can't tell me that $300 000 would help a person left paralysed for life, live and be able to get medical assistance for the rest of his lifetime ... I am greatly concerned for all workers out there ... It is almost like taking away the workers' human rights.

I received a letter from the Injured Persons Association, signed and dated 3 November:

> The proposed changes to Workcover will unfairly disadvantage seriously injured workers who have been injured through no fault of their own.

Honourable members who received this letter would be aware that attached to it was a horrendous photograph of a young man's hand that had been severely injured. The employer in this case was fined $20 000 as a result of the accident. It was the 13th accident in 10 years, mostly involving some form of loss of limb.

> It cost $16 000 to introduce the safety precautions which would have prevented the injury, but like the

Workcover advertisement in the timber yard, the employer did not introduce appropriate safety measures until it was too late.

After recovering, this young married man, with three children, returned to his former employer.

However, the psychological strain of working in the same place where the machine was housed that took his hand, and also a need for further surgery, caused him to leave and not return to work. He was unemployed because of his employer's negligence. He managed to settle common-law lump sum for pain and suffering, permanent impairment and loss of economic earnings. All of this for around $400 000.

By investing this he will yield $30 000 income per annum, which is almost $580 a week, with some capital growth. Under the proposed changes, in what circumstances would that person find himself? He would receive a lump sum of around $70 000 — not $400 000. Invested, this might yield $4200 a year — not $30 000 a year.

He would also be eligible for weekly benefits of 80 per cent of his basic pre-injury earnings but only for up to two years. The average weekly benefit paid by Workcover is around $380 a week before tax. After two years, because he is capable of some work, he will not be eligible for any further benefit.

I said at the outset that the opposition, the trade unions, the general community and the voters of Mitcham are not opposed to improvements in the workers compensation scheme, nor are they opposed to improvements in local government, education, hospitals or our ambulance service. But they are extremely concerned — and I believe the Mitcham electorate will demonstrate this beyond doubt — about decisions that are made in the name of improvement, decisions that, at the end of the day once all the information is assessed, represent a commitment to cheapness. It is cheapness driven by an unwavering commitment to economic rationalism.

I will repeat one particular example so that the house is in no doubt about the effects of the government's bill: in one case a common-law lump sum settlement of $400 000 was achieved; when invested it provided a return of $30 000 a year. Under this bill the lump sum would not be $400 000 or $300 000 but $70 000. It would yield $4000 not $30 000 a year from the investment.

The opposition is comfortable in joining with the trade union movement and with an increasingly significant section of the Victorian community to say that changes that bring about the results I have just outlined are not improvements, and the circumstances of the aforementioned worker show beyond doubt that the people financing and funding these so-called improvements in the Workcover scheme will essentially be injured workers.

I am not sure who the next speaker from the government side is to be but I would be delighted if they were able to visit that injured worker to compare his existing rights with the rights he will have under the proposed legislation and then argue to the house and the community that this example provides evidence of a better Workcover scheme. It is not a better Workcover scheme.

Nobody in this chamber would accept that alterations to the superannuation scheme for which we are eligible would be an improvement if the consequences were parallel to those of the injured worker I mentioned. We all know that ours is a very privileged superannuation scheme — one that is out of step with community standards as to the allowances that apply when one needs to leave office on the basis of ill health. I ask all honourable members of this chamber: who believes that changing the rights we have in a way that replicates what I have just set out would be an improvement to our rights? Which of us would believe that was an improvement to the rights of parliamentarians, present or future? It is a nonsense to say that it is an improvement.

I accept the view, in fact I almost respect the view that many people on the government benches have put forward in debates in this house about private conversations I have had with them. The last thing I want to suggest is that any member on the government benches is knowingly and deliberately setting out to attack Victorian workers. I do not believe that is the case.

I do know that one of the great dysfunctions in government, especially in relation to major decision-making, is that governments tend to be operated by one, two or three people and the rest of the people in the government are inevitably like mushrooms. I can think of many examples during the 10 years of Labor government when one, two or three people decided a particular scenario was absolutely and unequivocally necessary and treated the rest of the Parliament, caucus, and indeed the party, like mushrooms and fed them excreta, and in

good faith out of a belief that leadership must be supported those people went along with the strategies. It was only after careful examination of the full facts that people in the then Labor caucus realised there was much more to what they were being told and that there were many more consequences than those about which they had been primed. I do not have any doubt that occurs in all government.

The real challenge about opposition is not just to develop policy but to put in place agreements in relation to operations in government machinery so that all decision making is transparent and collective and open to the broadest scrutiny possible.

I say with the greatest respect that I do not believe there are any members of the government who want to see the Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill proceed if the outcome will be as I indicated in relation to the injured worker I mentioned. I do not believe anybody in this chamber wants somebody's entitlements savaged in the way that this clear and indisputable example indicates is being done.

I ask honourable members on the government benches not to accept the urgings they have received from people on their side who believe this legislation is necessary and that it is better than sliced bread. I urge them to examine in as much detail as possible whether there are any aspects of this legislation that can lead to the outcome I have outlined.

I urge government members to satisfy themselves that it is possible for them to give a guarantee to the people they represent that the legislation has a level of integrity, detail and protection so that no injured worker will experience the outcomes I have given in that example.

Mr Pullen would know from personal experience that the Fitzroy Community Legal Centre is celebrating 25 years of outstanding achievement in the practice of law in the community. Those of us who have had associations with community legal centres know that they are a wonderful initiative — in the case of Fitzroy, of 25 years ago — and that their achievements have been significant. I make that comment as a preamble to referring to correspondence I received which was signed and dated 10 November last from the Federation of Community Legal Centres at an address in Little Collins Street. It was written in the context of the Workcover changes. The introductory paragraph says that the writer is writing on behalf of the Federation of Community Legal Centres and that the federation is the peak body for 41 specialist and generalist community legal centres in Victoria. The letter goes on to say that those 41 centres deal daily with the repercussions of poverty in our communities.

The federation raises concerns about the impact of the proposed changes to Workcover on the community. It then states:

> The reduction of weekly benefits. In this regard, the federation is particularly concerned about the application of such changes to victims regardless of when they were injured. The reduction in weekly benefits will have the most significant impact on those Victorian employees not covered by federal awards or agreements because the five minimum terms and conditions available in Victoria do not compel an employer to make up the difference between weekly payments and the usual weekly wage received by an injured worker.
>
> The abolition of common law rights. The federation views that this proposal is particularly unfair given that, common law damages are only payable where an employer is negligent ... The changes are not economic or cost-effective as they will inevitably lead to an increase in unsafe workplaces and industrial accidents.
>
> The restriction of access to the court and independent review. The federation views that the restriction of such access is contrary to the principles of fairness and equity ...
>
> The federation considers that the proposed changes will have a significant and detrimental impact on injured workers, their families and the community generally. We consider that the proposed changes are unacceptable.

Members of the legal profession are often harshly criticised about their perceived self-interest. They have certainly received considerable criticism during the Workcover debate. Members who understand how community legal centres work are absolutely certain that the observations and accusation made about law firms in general do not apply to the people who work in those centres. Mr Pullen and others who have had a close personal involvement with community legal centres would say that the great majority of the work is done if not voluntarily then so close to voluntarily that the difference does not matter.

I ask the house to take note of the concerns expressed by the Federation of Community Legal Centres. They could not in any sense be said to be motivated by self-interest because of a fear that a major revenue flow will be endangered. The correspondence states that people who work closely with often the most vulnerable people in the community do so on remuneration levels significantly below those they would enjoy if they worked privately. Their experience is that the proposed legislation will lead to vulnerable people being disadvantaged and discriminated against.

I repeat that for the opposition this is not about not wanting to be involved in change. Rather, it is about disputing the claim that change is the only constant in our community. The opposition is committed to debating the legislation because it is ground-breaking. I have said to people on my side of politics that the debate on the Auditor-General's bill was important. The opposition sought to debate the principle of whether good governance was enhanced by the existence of an independent, properly resourced, fearless Auditor-General. However, the consequences of this legislation will be much more profound than the consequences that may result from the passing of the Audit (Amendment) Bill.

I have had the opportunity to document to the chamber, and I stand by its veracity, an instance in which a worker, as a consequence of being able to access common law, was able to have a court rule on what would be an appropriate payment. I put on the record the very substantial change that would occur to that worker under the proposed legislation. The worker did not seek to get injured — he was injured as a consequence of employer negligence. I do not believe the workers compensation scheme is improved when there is the possibility, let alone the likelihood, of someone's wellbeing being affected in the way I described.

I conclude by again saying how inequitable it is to introduce legislation that prevents some people from accessing common law but does not affect the rights of others to do so, no matter how parallel their circumstances. I refer to the *Age* editorial of 30 October, which quotes the minister as saying that Victoria's workers compensation system is the best in Australia. If it is the best in Australia, why the need to play with it in a way that brings about the outcome I highlighted earlier?

It was hypocritical of employers affected by a strike to seek an order from the Australian Industrial Relations Commission under section 127 of the Workplace Relations Act allowing them to sue workers who did not return to work by a stipulated time. The application was made under federal law because Victoria no longer has an industrial relations system. The *Age* editorial also said that the ability of employers to make such requests highlights the increased imbalance between the rights of employers and employees that will result if the government's proposed changes to the workers compensation system become law.

Common law recognises the obligations of both parties to an employment contract. The obligation on employees is to work as directed, and the obligation on employers is to take all reasonable steps to ensure their employees work safely. Under the legislation the common-law rights of employers will be left intact, but workers who suffer injuries in the workplace will lose their right to sue for negligence.

The Electrical Trades Union has a list of unfortunate examples of its members who have been injured as a result of employer negligence. That, and the ETU's commitment to the welfare of all workers, resulted in that organisation participating recently in industrial action in the public transport area. The consequence was that the government investigated the possibility through common law of suing the ETU because it sought to support the right of its members to maintain access to common law.

The bill is inequitable and about cheapness in the same way as the government has been about cheapness in its changes to education, health, ambulance and local government services and in its attacks on community health centres. The opposition and the majority of Victorians would support the government if it were tonight debating a bill that improved Workcover for all participants because a compensation system improvement that led to better outcomes for all participants would be a contribution to the wellbeing and welfare of Victoria.

This bill attacks the rights of workers and will lead to injured workers becoming second-class citizens. On Saturday in the Mitcham by-election the views being expressed tonight by the opposition about this bill will be supported by that electorate. This is bad legislation, as John Clarke would say, and it should be opposed.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY (Silvan) — I support the Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill. Mr Power praised the workplace safety changes that occurred during the 1980s but totally ignored the disaster of the Workcare

legislation passed by this house in 1985, also during a by-election period, and its impact.

Tonight we are again debating Workcover legislation in a by-election scenario, this time in the Mitcham electorate, which happens to be part of what was in 1985 the Nunawading electorate. Despite Mr Power's claims about changes in occupational health and safety, in the 1980s a surrogate social security system called Workcare was established. But it did nothing to encourage injured workers to return to work; it gave no encouragement whatever for employees and employers to seek to work together to enable injured workers to return to the workplace.

Mr Power talked about decision-making processes and how the next Labor government would have open government and open decision making. I find that highly amusing. The ALP has never had and never will have open decision making so long as it has a factional system. That is but one reason why the Labor government came to grief in the 1980s. The cabinet system completely broke down. When decisions taken at the cabinet table went against ministers, they simply went out and acted contrary to the way cabinet had decided. Former Labor ministers will tell you that the process completely broke down due largely to the impact of the factions.

The Liberal Party does not have a factional system. It has an open decision-making process at all levels of the party, whether that be in a bills committee, a party room of 90, a cabinet of 18 or its members receiving advice from all levels of the public service. That decision-making process enables everyone to have input at all stages of consideration on any subject. For every decision that leads to legislation coming to this place, 10 others that may have been overturned at the cabinet or party room levels will probably never see the light of day. It is inappropriate for Mr Power to equate decision making in the ALP with decision making in the Liberal Party.

It is also unfortunate that Mr Power quoted a number of current Workcover cases. I cannot understand why he would want to quote them here; he should have sought advice from the Workcover Authority before telling the house about those cases.

Workers compensation touches every tier of endeavour and every level of enterprise in our economy. The reform of the workers compensation system has been one of the most important reforms undertaken by the Kennett government since it came to office in 1992. The old Workcare system, established in 1985 when the Labor government had a temporary majority in both houses, lacked a focus on workers, their return to work and their rehabilitation. Workcare created a compensation culture which prevented a return to work and stigmatised genuinely injured workers.

All honourable members probably remember the terrible times in 1985. Workers who visited my office felt absolutely traumatised and stigmatised because of the way the system treated them.

In 1988 an all-party parliamentary committee examined the operation of Workcare. It conducted detailed investigations into what was happening with the system. The coalition members on that committee were the present Minister for Education, the Minister for Agriculture and Resources and the Treasurer in the other place, Mr Baxter and me. That committee did not publish a final dissenting report because it unanimously agreed upon a number of recommendations. However, it published an addendum to the report because the concerns of coalition members on that committee about issues not addressed by it could not be included in the final report as the Labor chairman had exercised a casting vote.

One of the important things we pointed out in our opposition to Workcare, as stated in the addendum to volume 2 of the Workcare committee's August 1988 final report at page 551, was that:

> ... the final form of the —
>
> 1995 Workcare —
>
> legislation was largely dictated by the demands of the Trades Hall Council.

That was something that came through time and again. We also pointed out, at page 552, that:

> The founding principles on which Workcare was based have become distorted. Instead of the order of priorities being prevention, rehabilitation and compensation, clearly from evidence put before the committee those priorities have become compensation, rehabilitation, prevention.

That puts into context some of the things that Mr Power said happened during the 1980s. Under the old Workcare system employers lacked any incentive to provide rehabilitation and suitable employment to allow injured workers to return to

work. The Workcare system overcompensated those with minor injuries and massively under-compensated the severely injured. The Accident Compensation Bill that introduced Workcover was passed by Parliament on 14 November 1992. That legislation marked the end of Workcare.

The primary functions of the Workcover system are: to prevent workplace injury in the first place; to ensure that an injured worker receives proper medical care and rehabilitation to enable an early return to the workplace; and to provide income support until a return to work or such time as it is established that the injured worker has no ability or possibility of returning to work.

The objectives of the bill are spelled out in the second-reading speech:

> It gives full effect to one of the key objectives enunciated when the Kennett government came to power in 1992 — namely, to develop a workers compensation system which provided fair and comprehensive protection for injured workers but did so at premium rates which were internationally competitive.

The bill is not based on reducing the overall benefits paid to workers but on securing the financial stability of the program while preserving the scheme's competitive premiums.

The need for change is twofold: firstly, to ensure the legislative structure is in place to encourage workplace safety, rehabilitation and the efficient delivery of compensation; and secondly, to ensure the protection and long-term financial viability of the scheme — rather than acting when it is too late, as has occurred in New South Wales and South Australia.

The key changes in this bill are the deletion of the rights of injured workers to recover damages in a common-law action; greatly increased penalties for breaches of health and safety requirements to at least five times their current maximum; substantially increased statutory death benefits; increased compensation for permanent impairment from the current maximum of $161 000 to $300 000; the use of the new fourth edition of the AMA guide in permanent impairment assessments, which considerably expands the number of items picked up; the restructuring and simplifying of the weekly benefit system; an improvement in the dispute resolution system; and an inclusion of superannuation payments in the remuneration base for the calculation of Workcover premiums.

I will examine some of the arguments about common-law rights. In doing so I will quote some Labor members of the state and federal parliaments who have argued vehemently for the removal of common-law access. I will make a few points, first. It takes an average of three years to get a case to court and the average cost of getting to court is $40 000. That has to come out of any award that is made. Common law tends to keep the focus on loss and not on the potential to return to work. We see the potential to return to work as an important element, particularly for people who have lesser injuries.

One of the things we found in our 1988 investigation was that when you could get injured workers back to work within six months you tended to not get psychological overlay problems. People who were able to get back to work within six months became fully productive contributors and were able to support their families just as they had been able to do before they were injured. That had an immense impact on their ability to function at home and at work and on their social lives. It was clear that where you could support a worker going back to work, even for lighter duties at first, you avoided problems with psychological overlay, which tended to drag cases out for years.

Another point I make in that context is that to take a case to court you have to prove negligence on the employer's part. That seems to be the wrong way to treat people who have been injured at work. They should automatically get the monetary support they need without having to prove their employers were at fault. Negligent employers will be dealt with under the occupational health and safety system. As I have said, the fines will increase dramatically.

People have to wait three years to determine whether they can prove negligence against their employers. If they cannot prove negligence, they do not get anything: once they run out of time, they get nothing. The other thing to bear in mind is that injured workers who get lump sum payments can no longer receive weekly benefits. If you use the table Mr Hartigan provided, you find that of all the lump sums paid, either as out-of-court settlements or as a result of going to court, very few are in excess of $300 000.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — How many are there?

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — Look at it and see.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — There were 208.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — You look at it and compare them.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — There were 208.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — How many of them were over $700 000?

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Very few.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — Exactly.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — How many, though? You don't know.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — The actual mean number is not relevant. What is relevant is the proportion of people who receive very small lump sum settlements. Because the opposition has pinned its claims — —

Hon. D. A. Nardella interjected.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — If you extrapolate out a lump sum payment of $300 000 to a 28-year old who would have worked until 65, you will see that it is in effect a small amount.

Once they get the lump sums they cannot go on weekly benefits; they can never get weekly benefits. Mr Nardella thinks $300 000 is a good settlement. I think it is a poor settlement.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — That depends on the negligence.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — The whole point is that you would have to prove negligence to get any of those payments. We are saying injured workers could get $300 000 without having to prove negligence. Are you telling me that is worse? How many lump sum payments are there over $300 000?

Hon. D. A. Nardella — 208.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — That is a huge number in real terms given the number of injured workers who put in claims! You would have to have rocks in your head, Mr Nardella.

The other point that needs to be made about those settlements is that claimants with similar injuries often get differing settlements, and that is inequitable. Again, that will change. Lump sum benefits are intended to provide ongoing support. I have had people come into my office who, two years after receiving a lump sum payment, have lost all the money because of unwise business or investment decisions and have therefore had to sign on for social security payments. The changes we are making will help those people because they will no longer get the full amount in one lump sum.

It is interesting to note that there are no common-law workers compensation provisions in South Australia, the Northern Territory, the United States of America, Canada and New Zealand. I mentioned earlier that it is also interesting to note the number of Labor members of Parliament who have also advocated the removal of common-law benefits — and I will deal with just two or three of them. They include Mr Rob Jolly, a former Treasurer, Mr Neil Pope, a former Minister for Labour, and even Mr Nardella who has not held a ministerial portfolio — —

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Under what circumstances?

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — I will tell you, if you will just listen.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Tell me, because I'm going to strongly refute it.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — Then you will be refuting something that is already in *Hansard*.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — The debate was on the victims of crime legislation, which you massacred and continue to massacre.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — During the second-reading debate on the Accident Compensation Bill, Mr Jolly said, as reported at page 1420 of *Hansard* of 17 July 1985:

> Initially there were some elements in the trade union movement which were opposed to removing the right of common-law action. However, the government was able to convince the unions that, on a no-fault basis, it is far better to have a weekly payment system for injured workers. That is far more equitable because it ensures that the long-term injured worker receives adequate protection over a long period ...
>
> No-one could seriously suggest that a common-law lump sum settlement of that order would be sufficient to compensate a quadriplegic ...

> A quadriplegic may obtain a lump sum settlement if he or she could prove negligence but that would not be the case if negligence could not be proven.

He was arguing that common law did not achieve the necessary results.

He also said:

> The whole approach to common-law action completely distorts the focus of rehabilitation.

That is a very important issue. He also said:

> Over the next 12 months the government will enter into tripartite discussion with trade unions and employers on ways of further reducing the right of common-lawn action through extending the table of maims.

We know that that did not happen, of course, because the unions would not allow it.

During the second-reading debate on the Transport Accident Bill Mr Jolly said, as reported at page 732 of *Hansard* of 30 September 1986:

> The government believes the benefits should be delivered to those persons who are seriously injured, regardless of whether they can or cannot prove negligence by another party.

He was talking about the general inadequacy of common law. Mr Pope, a former Minister for Labour, had this to say about the Transport Accident Bill, as reported at page 596 of *Hansard* of 17 September 1986:

> The situation is that only 1 to 2 per cent of common-law cases are actually judicially assessed. The rest are resolved in a bargaining and haggling process between lawyers, which the Cooney report described as being reminiscent of a street bazaar.

At page 597 of *Hansard* he is reported as saying:

> Also, despite the claim of the Law Institute, the common law tends to under-compensate.

He also talked about:

> ... the well-known tendency for the common law to be comparatively more bountiful in cases of less serious injury and to under-compensate in the case of the severely injured.

During the second-reading debate on the Victims of Crime Assistance Bill on 4 December 1996, Mr Nardella is reported as saying at page 1049 of *Hansard*:

> Back in 1973 parliamentarians recognised that the common-law system did not work, that it was an expensive way for victims of crime to try to get redress.

He was saying that the common law did not provide adequate redress.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — That's right — for victims of crime.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — You were talking about common law. Are you denying that you were talking about common law?

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Yes — for victims of crime. This is a Workcover bill, isn't it? It is a bit different.

Hon. ROSEMARY VARTY — Is it? Are you now saying it is not relevant? Of course it is relevant!

It is interesting to note that 37 per cent of the claims referred to in the table were settled for less than $100 000. As I said, that just shows that the common-law process has been most unfair to people who should have been adequately compensated.

I return to the preventive element I was talking about earlier. Workcover has 239 inspectors working under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Dangerous Goods Act. Of those, 183 are operational and the remainder are managers, technical specialists and support staff. By January next year the number of quarantine inspectors will have increased by 50 to 223 and will include 35 specialists in areas such as occupational hygiene, chemistry and engineering. That will be the highest number of operational inspectors ever. In addition, there are 10 information officers who work in the workplace.

I draw attention to the benefits schedule. Members of the opposition have talked about levels of benefits, but they have omitted to talk about the conditions that will now be covered in the benefits schedule under the table of maims. It is important to note that many of the conditions of particular interest to women are now not compensated for. The changes recognise the high workplace participation rate of women. In the past, women have been

severely disadvantaged in terms of Workcare and Workcover coverage.

That has now been recognised and the list extends considerably the number of conditions that apply specifically to women. We see that as very important in the overall context of equity and access to the workers compensation system. The Labor Party is the so-called champion of the involvement of women in the work force and in Parliament, although it has fallen down even with its so-called 35 per cent quota of women in Parliament, which is a great tragedy. The Labor Party has paid lip service to getting women into Parliament and in compensating women more adequately in the workplace.

Currently, there are 8693 claimants in receipt of benefits under the table of maims at an average cost of $13 600 per injury year. The new benefit is expected to provide benefits to 6620 claimants at an average cost of $25 600 per injury year. It is expected that coverage for non-economic loss will extend to a further 1650 claimants per injury year due to the inclusion of the additional injuries.

I shall deal briefly with weekly benefits. Clearly, the current benefit system has been inappropriate as it provides incentives to maximise incapacity and generate disputes. Mr Power cited a number of cases of injured workers who have come to his office. Government members also get just as many cases, but we are able to work with the authority to resolve the problems and help the injured workers to get through some of the difficulties they are experiencing. The new benefit structure will be simpler and it will ensure appropriately targeted benefits and the minimisation of disputes. It is worth pointing out that under the grandfather clauses the government has made a commitment to workers currently in the system that they will not be disadvantaged. Workers who have lodged claims and are either on, or are subsequently determined to have been entitled to, weekly payments at the commencement of the new provisions will continue to be paid their existing rates, but will be classified in accordance with, and progressively assessed, under the new classification requirements.

Current seriously injured claimants who are entitled to claim under common law, but have not yet done so, will generally retain that right for up to three years. People currently classified as seriously injured who can provide evidence of an income-producing project will be able to apply for a settlement under section 115, but will not be able to settle their outgoing entitlement to compensation for medical and like services.

There has been a deal of discussion about what the benefit level means and what is available to injured workers. It has been suggested that it is a lesser amount. I shall briefly explain what a weekly pension means in present-day values. I shall cite one case because it is typical of how one can extrapolate the benefits that flow from the legislation. A worker who is aged 25 years, who earns $650 a week and who has an accident and is incapacitated for life — that is, he or she has no capacity to work through to retirement age — will until retirement age receive a benefit based on 75 per cent of his or her pre-injury ordinary time earnings. If that is discounted to a lump sum equivalent and using a discount rate of 3 per cent, which is a reasonable figure, you will find it is equivalent to a substantial lump sum payment of $458 632. That must be taken into account when comparing the value of the statutory benefits available under the revised scheme and the value of the common-law payout. If you receive a common-law payout your right to a weekly benefit ceases. You do not have any entitlement to weekly benefits. It is fairer to calculate the payment based on impairment and capacity to work rather than being to forced to run the gauntlet of the common-law system where it is necessary to prove negligence.

This is an important piece of legislation. Its final form was worked through very carefully by all levels of the coalition government. I have much pleasure in supporting the legislation.

Hon. B. T. PULLEN (Melbourne) — Given that so many people have spoken in this debate I do not intend to trawl through all the issues again, because it is envisaged we will have a detailed debate during the committee stage. I believe no member in this house would vote for a scheme that he or she believed would not benefit injured workers. There is some common ground in the awareness of the impact legislation such as this has on the welfare of people who are injured at work and that of their families. However, the ability to understand how people feel about this measure is influenced to an extent by their life experience. To understand the feelings of workers who have been expressing anger and frustration with the government for introducing this legislation you have to relate to the kind of experiences many workers, particularly blue-collar workers, have in their workplaces. It is a different situation for people whose normal work does not expose them to physical danger. That is part of the

reason why some people have difficulty being sensitive to the real feelings of workers when such a measure is imposed on them.

I come from a family where a number of people worked in factories or out on the job. That has brought home to me how dangerous some working environments can be. My father was almost blinded after being hit in the forehead by a long piece of timber that somebody carelessly threw out of a second-storey window when he was out on a job. Although he recovered sufficient sight in one eye to continue working, he never completely recovered his sight. The accident occurred during the depression and it caused enormous difficulty for us for many years.

My uncles and aunts worked in factories in Brunswick and Coburg and they had little control over what they were required to do in the workplace. There was no understanding of such things as repetitive strain injury caused by the kind of work they did in boot and processing factories. People in those situations witness the results and feel the impact on people's lives; they feel the people legislating and controlling the workplace are gambling with their futures — workers then did not understand the situation as they do now.

I suspect honourable members who have had to work in dangerous environments better appreciate the problem. Members of the National Party who have been associated with farming would realise that people are sometimes placed in risky situations. I am sure Mr Bishop can testify to that, although he would not complain somebody else was negligent. Nevertheless, farming activities always present a danger and the possibility of an injury which can impair a person's performance for a long time, if not the rest of their life.

The reason so many people feel affronted by the changes contained in the bill is that many of them come from risky work backgrounds such as construction sites and farming workplaces. I have some experience of construction sites as a practising civil engineer. I witnessed people working against the clock for long hours because they had to meet construction targets. They were often under too much pressure to observe every last detail of safety. If a person is tired he or she can also make mistakes and be accused of personal negligence. Usually the people who are lucky enough to enjoy protection come from white-collar, fairly organised environments and do not appreciate why many workers, particularly blue-collar workers, feel so strongly about this issue. Those who support the workers in the debate have some appreciation, along with other members of their families, of the problem, and many employers who have supported workers understand it. I want members to try to envisage how people feel about the debate. Many people do not see it as an economic debate about the viability of organisations or in terms of Victoria's competitive edge in exporting to Asia. They do not see it in those comparative terms. They see it in human terms of how it will affect them and people like them, which provides some explanation of why the common-law issue is foremost in the minds of many Victorians.

I pay some credit to Mr Hartigan for his speech and approach. He attempted to address the historical context and to put some perspective on the limitations of common law. I accept that stance because of the tension between a no-fault system in an ideal world which could provide benefits and common law and the adversarial-type approach aimed at getting a secure approach for workers, which unfortunately has not been delivered.

Workers relate the legislation to their rights; they are not so stupid to believe common law is their salvation. They see, obviously, economic security and the regularity of properly worked-out weekly payments and the security that brings as crucial; however, they feel it should be their choice. Other members of society can make the choice whether their rights could be preserved or benefited by taking a case to law. Sometimes people make the right decision, sometimes they make the wrong decision, but it has been their right. Many workers are affronted because this right is being removed. It is not being removed to provide a superb alternative system; it is being removed for a system which is backtracking on benefits they previously enjoyed. It is not a case of people being offered a vastly improved no-fault system in order to forgo their choice to use common law to advance their position when they think it would benefit them instead of an administrative path via the Workcover Authority; instead workers are being offered a lesser system under the guise of no fault and the removal of their ability to challenge that system if they so choose by common law.

The debate is not just a theoretical one; it is not an either-or. For many people it is a matter of trying to maintain both choices. Like everyone else, workers want the security of several paths; they do not trust the bureaucracy and a totally administrated system, nor should they because many people are let down by such systems and find them difficult to work

through. Even without going to common law numerous workers, like many of us, benefit by getting legal advice and having somebody available as an advocate to support them when they are trying to make a claim and to get a fair deal. It is no wonder workers want the assistance of legal advice and the ability to hold that out as an alternative where necessary. The government has a big blind spot. Partly it seems to fear that the legal profession drives common law, and it particularly singles out Labor lawyers. The government believes the Labor lawyers cause all the problems because that is the group workers often go to.

I put most Labor lawyers that I know in the context of people who understand the degree of pain, suffering and difficulty workers experience when they are injured. One cannot operate a practice in this area of the law and continually meet people and their families who are in the distressed situation of having suffered an injury — often quite a serious one — and not appreciate the kinds of things that happen in the workplace. Members of the legal fraternity, including magistrates and others who deal with these issues, are aware of how important this legislation is to people and the difficulties inherent in it. I ask honourable members to recognise why people are so angry and concerned about the debate: the outcome is vital to them. I ask them to try to bridge the gap of understanding and to realise there is a disparity between the comfort of working in a cloistered environment and the reality of working in a far more dangerous environment. This is not theoretical. The figures coming through show higher than expected numbers of long-term claimants, particularly those characterised as serious injuries. The number of serious injuries is actually increasing.

I am trying to draw out the principles that should be involved when considering this question. I shall paraphrase what the Treasurer had to say when he said on more than one occasion what he believed to be the three driving principles behind the government's legislation. The first is to provide protection for injured workers. No-one could quarrel with that. The second is to maintain premiums for compulsory insurance schemes at levels which Victorian industry can afford and which will facilitate its being internationally competitive. I have a quarrel with that because 'internationally competitive' means the benchmark — irrespective of whether one is talking about common law or anything else — may be that of a country that does not have the same views about the necessity of protecting workers as we do. He appears to be suggesting that if we provide workers that protection in this country we weaken our competitive edge. That is not a fitting criterion. It is a factor to know about, but not a criterion or a goal. Does it mean that to have a competitive edge we must reduce the protection of workers to the level of our competitors? Will members of the government vote for the measure because the Treasurer says it is an appropriate factor that may influence Workcover policies? I think not.

There is a clear limit. Workers and the community are also cynical about that criterion because they know the benefits of such a competitive edge would not flow to them. They would see increased profits going to super executive salaries. In Australia the top 10 per cent are receiving considerably more of the cake. Their salaries are increasing while the bottom 10 to 20 per cent are getting less. It is no use shaking your head, Mr Hartigan. You are not arguing with me on this one. You are arguing with the ABS statistics, which clearly show that over the past 10 years the incomes of average Australians have declined and inequality has increased. It is not a matter of debate. Whether you talk to a right-wing or left-wing economist, it is not a matter of argument. In Australia the wealthy are getting wealthier and the poor are getting poorer. It is a fact. Because of the new forms of management workers are becoming more cynical when they are told they must do more to become more competitive and secure economic benefits for Australia. Irrespective of higher profits, managers are downsizing to increase profits and workers are being retrenched and are not receiving a share in the results of the highly efficient and productive companies. After seeing these reductions in opportunities and job stability, why would workers respond to the Treasurer's call for a lower level of spending on the workers compensation scheme and a change to workers' coverage to ensure that Australia is economically competitive? It should not be at the expense of the quality of the workers compensation scheme. That is not an acceptable criterion.

The third criterion of the Treasurer was to preserve the long-term viability of the scheme. The opposition agrees with that. However, the way to achieve it bears some examination. The question about the long-term viability of any program of government support is ultimately what the people of Victoria or Australia believe the outcome is worth, such as taxation, or the effort put into it. That choice has to be put to them democratically. It is not simply a financial matter of what is viable. It will be viable if

people are prepared to pay for it and say it is worth while. There is an element of choice.

The other point that is more pragmatic and pertinent is that the viability of a scheme such as this depends on workplace safety on the front end, so to speak — that is, the number of injured workers to be attended to in the first place. That goes to the heart of the management of workplace safety. That is a principle the opposition would have no disagreement about. Socially and economically members of the opposition want the minimum number of injuries and accidents in workplaces. That would mean the scheme would be easier to run, premiums would be lower and there would be less pain and suffering. Mr Hartigan is nodding. Perhaps I am getting through to him, and that encourages me to continue.

Serious injuries are still occurring. One would have to say that the shock Workcover advertising on television designed to encourage workers to be more careful is not too different from the TAC television advertising, which appears to be effective. People are taking notice of the TAC advertisements. Whether drivers are being more careful and not drinking and so on, I do not know, but some factors are working because the advertising campaign is producing results. Why is it not working with Workcover? I well know from my experience as an engineer something of the other factors beside motorists that affect road accident rates. On another occasion when I have more time I could give an example.

I carried out a survey of Northern Territory roads. I mapped all the accident spots and related them to the quality of the road and other factors. I found that accident spots increased if there was a pub nearby. So individual behaviour is the dominant factor. But with accidents and injuries in the workplace the environment is crucial. A worker is a cog in the wheel in a factory — it can be an unsafe factory — and is often required to work under pressure, dependent on the whole process and the way the management or the culture of the factory operates and how people are required to perform. There is not a lot an individual can do about it. I suggest that nearly every member in this place would know of a personal case where a family member or acquaintance has been in a situation where he or she has been unhappy about certain safety aspects. However, it is often not an individually controlled situation.

If we are to address the question of reducing the number of accidents in the workplace we need to adopt a collective approach. We cannot leave it to the individual in the same way we do with traffic accidents. It is not a matter of competition or enforcement; a degree of cooperation is required to reduce the number of workplace accidents. There must be cooperation between management and workers if we are to achieve the common goal of improved safety. Workers have to be involved. Government members cannot admit that the best way to achieve this goal is through the unions, shop stewards and the people the workers trust.

If we want workers to take on board the need to look after their own safety they have to be protected, because if an individual worker speaks out in some circumstances he or she will be personally affected if there is criticism of the foreman or superior. However, if a collective approach is adopted there is some protection for the individual worker. The collective approach helps people to stand up and say that they do not think it is a safe approach to adopt or that the regulations say this and it would be better to adopt a safer approach. It would take a brave person to stand up and do that without the support of other workers. Most people like to have a reasonable relationship wherever they work, irrespective of whether they are in charge. Many small firms work well because there is a family atmosphere and an attitude of give and take both ways, but when it comes to saying that ventilators are required because of the chemicals that are used it would be seen to be expensive. If a person were to raise that and say something should be done, because of the regulations he or she may not get the sack but the relationship between the employee and the employer would become clouded. It would be easier if a shop steward or an advocate were to come in and raise the matter.

Honourable members opposite have a problem about recognising the positive contribution of union action in that situation. In other countries a positive attitude is taken to cooperation between the workers and bosses of organisations. That is what is missing here. The government walks away from that every time it beats up on the unions and every time it puts workers down. The government reduces the capacity for cooperation to be achieved.

It is not surprising that despite targeted advertising we are not getting the same result with Workcover as with the TAC. The message given by the proposed legislation goes in the same direction because what people are saying about common law is more complicated. Workers should be able to choose the path they want to follow. For a minority

of workers, particularly those with serious injuries, the path that may be of benefit to them is not available. Generally speaking, the security of regular payments is better.

It is strange that the government does not send messages to employers who are careless and negligent that the community has a view about that. I say it is strange because it is the attitude taken by the government in most other areas of the law. The government makes it clear to a criminal or a person who offends that tough laws exist and the community will impose those penalties if that person offends. That has been the direction of the government in so much legislation it has introduced. For instance, the government makes it clear that if you commit an offence on the road a penalty will be imposed. In this case the government is sending a different message to employers who offend, who want to make a short-term gain because they are not in it for the long haul and who think people and standards are expendable. It is telling them they will be protected by a no-fault situation and will never have to worry about being penalised. That is a strange message to send. It will not reduce the number of workplace injuries. The wrong signals are being sent to employers who are doing the wrong thing.

The wrong message is also being sent to employers who are being responsible: it says to them that because of the way the scheme operates what they do individually will not make much difference in terms of the premiums that have to be paid and they will bear the pain for the bad guys even though they are the good guys. If people do not believe there is a reward or punishment relating to their actions or efforts that will reduce credibility in the system.

The common-law debate is more complex than the simple dichotomy presented by the minister. I suggest common law is an important aspect of a total system and that is why the response of people is so strong about protecting it.

Earlier I promised I would not speak at great length and I do not want to break that promise. However, I want to say what I stand for and what I think is good workers compensation practice. The Treasurer said there were three principles associated with this legislation. I have three different principles.

The first is that a fundamental approach must be taken to workplace safety so that it is clear in the minds of anybody who designs a scheme that safety in the workplace is reinforced so that the problem is diminished in the first place.

Second, it should in the end provide economic security for those people. Many studies, including the work done by the former Labor government and the 1984 report by the committee of inquiry into the Victorian workers compensation system chaired by Barry Cooney, have found that you need a system that gives genuine long-term security and weekly payments to workers. That is the best way to go. I am not arguing for a lump sum system.

Third, it is crucial for any good system to be seen to be fair. It is important for citizens to be given an element of trust and to be able to determine their own outcome by deciding whether they want to employ a lawyer and follow the common-law path. They are entitled to do that.

Most times I would advise them against it and advise them to take the security of the regular payment. If the system is working properly they should get a fair deal out of it, but it should be their choice after receiving proper advice in the way that anyone faced a difficult situation would obtain advice from experts, including legal people. Why should workers not have that right?

The proposed system fails on three legs. It fails because it does not stand up in a comparison with the benchmarks of a good no-fault system that would make it worth while for workers to consider putting aside the other options they could take.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — What benchmarks?

Hon. B. T. PULLEN — The benchmarks of other states, including South Australia.

Sitting suspended 12.02 a.m. until 12.32 a.m.

Hon. B. T. PULLEN — I add to my remarks the point that if in an ideal world the government were presenting a no-fault system that really was attractive to workers, workers might consider choosing it. However, that is far from the case. Any comparison with the systems in other states will show that what is being offered by the government is not as good in any sense as the commonwealth scheme or the schemes in South Australia and New South Wales.

The government is not proposing something that one could argue would make it worth while for workers to consider forgoing common law. As I said,

many workers and others appreciate the dangers in some workplaces. It is understandable that they feel affronted by the removal of their common-law rights and the choice they have been given.

The points I make are supported by work undertaken for the Law Institute of Victoria. Noted actuaries Cumpston Sarjeant Pty Ltd did a study of the proposed changes to the Workcover scheme, including an analysis, and a full copy of the report is available. Cumpston Sarjeant indicates that far from the government's claim that the proposed changes to the Workcover scheme will result in employers paying an extra $100 million to cover a blowout being correct, the real effect of the changes will be to slash benefits to workers, force up employer premiums and create a Workcover surplus of at least $250 million.

In relation to the claim that the new scheme will offer a better deal for workers Cumpston Sarjeant calculated that maim and impairment payments will decrease by 65 per cent from $120 million to $42 million and that the decrease will be distributed through the table. The table shows that some benefits for workers will improve and others will be reduced. The study found that overall there will be a reduction in workers' benefits of the order of the general decrease of $80 million.

For example, the current lump sum payment of $131 143 for the loss of a leg will be reduced to $78 743, the payment of $103 244 for the loss of a foot will be reduced to $68 244, and the payment of $61 996 for the loss of sight in one eye will be reduced to $41 998. Why would workers who are aware of such figures respond positively to the government's approach that in order to have a no-fault system — a scheme that offers a decrease in benefits — they should give up the choice of using common law?

As I said, I do not want to go over the ground covered by other speakers. In summary, the government is not offering a better package to workers and cannot expect workers to respond positively to what it is offering. Further, the process has not gone even close to offering the sort of dialogue that would warrant such a response. In 1984 the now Senator Cooney conducted a committee of inquiry into the Victorian workers compensation system and prepared a comprehensive report. No substantive report has been prepared in this case.

In conclusion, the benefits offered for moving to a no-fault system do not measure up to the rhetoric in support of such a move. The removal of common law is not being achieved by the offering of a responsible package of compensation to encourage workers to consider the change seriously and the crucial issue of having workers' safety in the workplace as the front end of the whole process is not being addressed in the proposed changes. Instead of fostering cooperation between workers and employers the changes will create a system of confrontation. Some government members understand that.

As I said, often members of the National Party have had a bit more experience than their coalition colleagues of the dangers of working in situations where accidents can occur. They understand the issues more than people who work in cloistered white-collar environments where the dangers are not so apparent. They appreciate that blue-collar workers often work in dangerous environments and are confronted by dangers that could crucially affect their safety. Workers, the general community, a significant number of informed employers and the Labor Party are totally justified in condemning the proposed legislation.

Hon. R. H. BOWDEN (South Eastern) — I rise to support this important legislation. It is a significant advance. It has been fully considered and is designed to improve benefits and make sure they are delivered to injured workers. Listening to opposition members one could be forgiven for thinking that care, concern and compassion existed only on that side of the house. That is not true.

Government members are conscious of the need to be caring and understanding. Many government members have gained considerable practical experience through managing and directing businesses and are cognisant of the importance of human factors and the impact of compensation issues on the work force.

The new system has been designed to improve the delivery of compensation to workers. Victoria has an economy in which manufacturing and other industrial activities are carried out and unfortunately a compensation system is necessary — an excellent system. The new system is a significant improvement. The legislation is simple, fair and clear. Importantly, claimants will have the opportunity of having their cases reviewed.

One of the key goals in preparing the legislation was to maximise the dollar benefits to injured workers. Another goal was to minimise the administration and legal costs so that the dollars available in the system could be properly directed to the important recipients — injured workers. Unfortunately, over a long period the common-law system has been inconsistent and in many cases has not delivered fair and predictable outcomes for people who have needed assured outcomes. Previous speakers have provided information in support of that proposition.

Victoria has a no-fault system. It is not necessary for injured persons to sue or to establish fault on the part of the employer. The legislation will overcome delays and eliminate a great deal of the stress that is suffered by people on both sides in common-law actions.

In the debate so far the emphasis has often been on the correct assumption that safety has to be at the forefront and improvements in safety are needed constantly. An emphasis on safety was at the forefront in the formulation of this and other legislation such as the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It was an important part of the total approach to the legislation.

There is no doubt that in addition to delivering significant and more predictable benefits to injured workers the bill will result in lower costs for business. That will be good for the economy and will help businesses maintain their work forces. I am aware of a number of instances in which the cost to small businesses of litigation in the common-law system has been outrageous.

Under the new system outcomes will be more predictable because the actuarially compiled and professionally prepared table of maims recognises pain and suffering and provides realistic compensation that is not too far distant from results achieved through common-law actions. The lump sum payment mentality will be a thing of the past and many people who should have been in a position to undertake rehabilitation at an earlier stage will be able to approach it in a positive frame of mind because they will not have to worry about it compromising a court case.

If a person's injury is required to be further adjudicated on a medical panel comprising appropriately qualified medical practitioners will decide that an injury is of a certain classification and that will be it — it will be accepted.

The legislation is an important move forward and a productive and positive change in the culture and practical application of compensation in the state. It delivers fairness and the ability to ensure review, where review is needed. It will deliver to workers a degree of predicability and remove the stress, inconvenience and unnecessary costs currently incurred by claimants. I support the bill.

Hon. T. E. EREN (Doutta Galla) — If Mr Bowden sympathises with and feels for workers I suggest he abstain from voting on the legislation. Otherwise his comments are hypocrisy of the greatest kind.

There are only two ways to describe the legislation: it is bad and it is outrageous. It is bad legislation because it punishes the defenceless, the innocent and the weak. It is bad because it gives a get-out-of-gaol-free card to every culpable, negligent employer in the state. The only reward for responsible employers who provide a safe working environment is to see their premiums rise. The premiums will not go to injured workers; they will simply support the fat cat bureaucrats of the VWA.

The plan to remove all common-law rights for injured workers represents the most savage attack on workers in the history of this state. Common law in relation to the law of torts is based on the Latin word synonymous with wrong — that is, a person who is injured because of the wrong of a negligent employer should have the right to bring an action for damages against that employer. That was decided in the famous case of *Donoghue v. Stevenson*, in which Lord Atkin stated:

> You must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure your neighbour.

When will the government get the legislation right? When the coalition was elected in 1992 Workcare was in operation. Workcare had been applauded as the best and fairest system of workers compensation ever to apply in the state. Naturally the government abolished Workcare because of its total hatred for workers and its desire to remove their rights and protections and put Workcover in its place.

The government claimed Workcover was the best thing since sliced bread and would bring great results for Victorian workers. How wrong it was. The reaction from the community, workers and professionals is that this is bad legislation, and that will be proved this Saturday at the Mitcham by-election. The government is now introducing

major amendments to the scheme and has done so every year for the past five years, each of which has left Victoria's workers in a worse position.

The current amendments are the most serious of all. The bill is a savage attack on employees, small business and the self-employed. It attacks the people who are improving and protecting the state, from factory worker to emergency service providers. It not only steals from Victorian workers their right to be properly compensated for injuries incurred because of someone else's negligence, it also steals their right to look after the welfare of their families by taking away the ability for a proper judicial assessment to be made on an individual case-by-case basis.

The bill will reduce the percentage of pre-injury wages workers can gain access to by basing the calculation on the base wage only, with no consideration of overtime or shift allowances no matter how regular or permanent a part they were of the worker's normal working life. The bill will also reduce those payments after only 13 weeks, which means Victoria will have the lowest levels of compensation payments in almost all of Australia.

The existing common-law provisions allow workers who are injured as a result of other people's negligence to receive fair and just compensation for their injuries, allowing them to keep their homes rather than having to sell them to feed their families. Those provisions allow them to ensure the security of their families. In many cases they allow families to properly care for those workers and to ease the pain and suffering caused by their injuries.

The bill is despicable in its intent. It will punish workers for being injured but will allow those who cause the injuries to escape unpunished. I am very proud that the Leader of the Opposition and Labor members in the other place, as well as opposition members of this place, have pledged that the legislation will be overturned immediately we are returned to government.

Labor will continue its tradition of safeguarding workers' rights and looking after their families. We will immediately re-introduce common-law access and a fair and equitable system of workers compensation.

Hon. D. McL. Davis interjected.

Hon. T. E. EREN — On that point, Mr Davis, not everything is judged on the bottom line. Workers deserve a fair go. We will introduce proper occupational health and safety standards and prosecute employers who put workers at risk by flouting those standards. Victoria's work force deserves nothing less.

I will explain how the legislation lets off culpable employers. Before I do that, I point out that the vast majority of employers are decent, honest people who care about the safety of their workers and would never knowingly or purposely put their lives or health at risk. Unfortunately, the changes punish decent and moral employers by impeding their competitiveness. They will get no reward for maintaining safe working environments and ensuring that potential dangers are eliminated or minimised.

On the other hand, competitors of theirs who flout the system and save on production or manufacturing costs by putting their workers in danger will be rewarded by not having to pay for the consequences of their actions. That will encourage rather than prevent dangerous work situations. Responsible employers will suffer as well as the employees who are injured working for their competitors. Some employers will be penalised for having good, safe workplaces while their competitors will be able to have unsafe workplaces without the fear of any legal consequences.

Employers who consciously decide that the safety of their workers is of no importance, will now get away with their apathy. Although some employers do not purposely cut corners or deliberately put their workers in danger, they do not go out of their way to improve workplace safety. Doing nothing at all can still make a workplace unsafe. The lack of legal sanctions for injuries caused by employer inactivity will not improve their mental attitude. Common-law responsibility for consequences is as much a deterrent for them as it is for those who are deliberately negligent.

I now refer to culpable employers. Workers are injured every day. Often those injuries could have been prevented if employers had taken proper care by installing safety equipment and maintaining it adequately rather than caring only about their bottom line profits. Every occupational group imaginable is now at risk because of the changes. The less scrupulous and more culpable employers will be overjoyed by their new ability to cut corners with impunity. Like other members of the community, employers must be held accountable for their actions. The legislation will give them

immunity from the consequences of workplace negligence: they will have open slather to negligently cause serious injury without suffering any repercussions.

By denying a worker who is injured because of his employer's negligence the right to sue for damages, the government is giving negligent employers the go ahead to continue operating unsafe workplaces. It will allow manufacturing quality control measures to slip or be eliminated. Manufacturers will now be able to produce and sell shoddy equipment because they will not be sued for damages for any injuries arising from the use of that equipment in the workplace. There are incentives to let standards slip, not improve them. They also know they will be able to get away with lower standards more easily because the government has slashed the number of health and safety inspectors.

The bill says that negligent employers will not have to avoid acts or omissions that cause workers to be seriously injured, and workers who are wronged by those acts or omissions will have no legally enforceable rights. Common law provides a safeguard. It means that if people are injured because of the negligence of others they can look after themselves and their families afterwards. The compensation they receive should give them the ability to carry on with their lives.

The government seems to hate workers so much that it wants to remove that safeguard. It wants to punish workers for being injured, even if their employer's negligence caused the injuries. Having no regard at all for the security and stability of injured workers or their families, the government wants to increase the punishment.

Under the current common-law system each case is judged on its merits and appropriate compensation is awarded. This compensation is tax free. The recipient can access the full amount and do whatever he or she needs to do to safeguard his or her future.

Under the proposals, compensation payments will be reduced, weekly payments will be cut after only 13 weeks to the lowest level in the country, and injured workers will have no guarantee of jobs to return to even if they recover sufficiently to be able to work again — and the miserable amounts of compensation they will receive will be fully taxed. That is why the Labor team will take the issue to the next election. The people of Mitcham will punish the government for introducing the bill by voting Labor on Saturday. I oppose the bill in every sense.

Hon. D. McL. DAVIS (East Yarra) — I support the bill with great enthusiasm. It is a long overdue reform that both parties should willingly and openly embrace. It is not my intention to speak for long because a great deal has been canvassed already. As well, I canvassed some issues in the debate in this place some weeks ago. The issue I will address is the one that has received the most attention both in the community and in this place, and that is abolition of common law claims and the introduction of a full, no-fault system of workers compensation.

It is a change that I support strongly. It has a long history in this country, and many people have fought for it over several decades. It is important to place on the record the wide range of people who support the change.

If one considers the history of the Labor Party in Australia one will note that a wide range of people have supported the change away from common law to a full and fair no-fault scheme. That support goes back to the days of the Whitlam government in 1972. Shortly after coming to power the Whitlam government commissioned the Woodhouse inquiry into accident compensation. It was a federal inquiry which supported, in the end, a no-fault scheme. Such a scheme would have compensated a person fairly on the basis of the injury and not on the basis of who caused it.

A range of other people have also supported the change, and in fact it was Labor Party policy going back to the early 1980s. In 1985, at the time Workcare was introduced, there was a push to introduce a full and clear no-fault scheme. However, that push was unsuccessful.

The same story has been repeated in other states. In New South Wales in the early 1980s a number of groups in the Labor Party, including a number of labour lawyers, strongly supported a no-fault scheme for workers compensation. It is on that point that I want to challenge many in the Labor Party, because this is basically an issue of justice and fairness.

The minister has commented on this issue following a number of questions put to him by the opposition, but it has failed to understand the significant and central issue that compensation should follow and flow on to people on the basis of their actual injuries,

impairment and disability rather than on the basis of their ability to establish fault.

Earlier today Mr Theophanous commented on a particular case of spinal stenosis. From the way he described the case there was little impact in terms of the workplace, and this condition often has more to do with congenital than traumatic issues. In those sorts of cases it is clear that the concept of fault is rather inappropriate and unhelpful in determining what compensation someone should actually be paid.

But importantly, I note also that someone significant in the labour movement, Marc Robinson — he was head of the coordination unit of Workcare under former minister Neil Pope — wrote a thesis on the removal of common law and the introduction of a no-fault scheme of workers compensation. In the late 1980s he was keen for that to occur in Victoria, but he was unsuccessful; he was rolled by the lawyers and others. Nonetheless, it is interesting to examine some of the material he produced in his thesis and some of the information he put out.

Marc Robinson is clear on the grounds for the removal of common law, and again this shows that the present system is unjust and unfair. He quotes Professor Atiyah, one of the most famous theoretical and practical lawyers who deals with a number of these issues. Professor Atiyah has drafted an interesting indictment of the fault principle in terms of accident compensation:

> Count 1: The compensation payable bears no relation to the degree of fault.

There is good theoretical work to suggest that this is true, including work which, after examining practical court cases, concludes that sometimes cases compensate unjustly high amounts and other cases determine unjustly low amounts.

> Count 2: The compensation payable bears no relation to the means of the defendant.

In other words, somebody who is very wealthy can often be compensated to a high degree, which may in some cases be dependent on his or her ability to influence the legal processes.

> Count 3: The fault principle is not a moral principle because a defendant may be negligent without being morally culpable and vice versa.

Often we hear arguments about morality, about fairness in compensation and about retributive issues based on someone having done something wrong to somebody and therefore deserving to be punished legally and financially. This is what we heard from Mr Eren earlier. But those principles do not stand up because that is not how the system works in practice. It does not compensate in a moral way, and it does not take from people who may be responsible for accidents and injuries in a predictable and sensible way.

> Count 4: The fault principle pays insufficient attention to the conduct or needs of the plaintiff.

> Count 5: Justice may require payment of compensation without fault.

The present fault system will often require the employer to be found guilty where the degree of fault is trivial compared with the actual injury and the other factors surrounding the injury.

> Count 6: Fault is an unsatisfactory criterion for liability because of the difficulties caused in adjudicating on it.

We know the legal difficulties that are faced. We know that the transaction costs and the activities of lawyers and others in the system make things difficult for people who are injured and prevent them from getting fair compensation.

In recent times the Industry Commission has looked closely at workers compensation and at employer care under a no-fault system. It has decided that the strict liability system that we have under workers compensation, in conjunction with a no-fault arrangement, is a much better way. The commission looked at it in the light of there being greater certainty that employers would be held liable for the actual costs incurred and greater certainty about the amount for which they would be liable rather than the wider variations sometimes found in court cases. The speed with which costs were to be assessed was an important principle, as were benefits paid.

It was interesting to examine some of the arguments made by Mr Eren on common law and the preventive effects. There are good theoretical reasons why we would imagine common law would have preventive effects, but there are also problems with that, and embarrassingly we find that those preventive effects do not work adquately. Again, the Industry Commission, in one of its major findings, concluded that:

> Common law is not a cost-effective means of promoting prevention.

In some cases it may actually lead to problems in achieving prevention. I will summarise a number of arguments that can be made against the idea of common law. Firstly, many of the awards are completely arbitrary. Secondly, there are great inadequacies with lump sum awards compared with the more favourable aspects of ongoing compensation that will be available under the bill.

The effect of common law on rehabilitation is not as well understood as it should be. Many people will recognise that when there is a common-law case pending the incentive for workers is not to be rehabilitated effectively and the incentive for employers in many cases is not to improve workplaces. Courts have found that attempts by employers to improve workplaces after workers' injuries are often admissions of liability. Therefore, there are disincentives flowing from the fact that we have a common-law system — perverse incentives may be a better way to describe them.

There are situations in workers compensation where adequate rehabilitation does not occur and where the determination of fault is ambiguous, and this is one of the most important aspects that has not been discussed. In most cases injuries in the workplace are handled adequately in a number of ways. In fact there are overlays of other aspects that may impact on those work injuries — for example, sporting injuries or previous work injuries — but it is difficult to separate out these things.

In conclusion, I refer to a comment by Mr Justice Michael Kirby in 1976, when he said about common law:

> The question is not whether no-fault entitlement will come. The question is how it will come, when and from whom.

Hon. Jean McLean — That is the important point.

Hon. D. McL. DAVIS — It is a very important point.

Hon. Jean McLean — He means it should be done for the good of the worker.

Hon. D. McL. DAVIS — Absolutely. I challenge the Labor Party to support the principle behind this proposed legislation, which is a fair system based not on fault but on justice and on the actual needs, impairments and injuries of injured workers.

Hon. S. M. NGUYEN (Melbourne West) — I oppose this evil legislation because it has divided society and does not support injured workers, who will become second-class citizens. The proposed legislation will not be supported if the Labor Party is returned to government because it is against the interests of workers and their families.

The so-called Workcover reforms are appalling proposals initiated by a government that has no solutions. The removal of common-law rights is the most fundamental attack on the rights of workers in the history of this state. Common-law rights are fundamental rights which date back to the Magna Carta and which were specifically envisaged as continuing rights by those who drafted the Australian constitution.

The government's plan to steal common-law rights from seriously injured workers will affect every family and occupational group, especially those who cannot speak good English. A migrant worker who does piecework at home might get a sewing needle-stick injury that causes pain; a cook or kitchen hand working in a restaurant might receive burns; a council traffic officer may be injured in a car accident; an outdoor worker may be crushed under a collapsed wall or a truck driver may be injured in a traffic accident.

Workers know that this government does not look after them and will betray them. It is a betrayal to take away the right to sue at common law so that a worker who has lost an arm or a leg or had his or her face torn off by the negligence of a culpable employer has no rights. It is a betrayal to set the payment for maximum benefits at the level that means if a worker loses both legs and half an arm he will still not qualify! It is a betrayal to reduce by 15 per cent the weekly benefits for workers who become seriously injured. It is a betrayal to have an occupational health and safety system that prosecutes six times fewer employers than are prosecuted in New South Wales and in which the maximum fines are almost $600 000 less. For example, employers were fined $15 000 after a worker was crushed in a fork-lift accident; $10 000 after a worker had four fingers amputated; $12 000 after a worker fell to his death when scaffolding collapsed and $15 000 after a worker was seriously burnt when a vat of boiling water overflowed. It is a betrayal to abolish the common-law rights of those

injured on roads simply because they were working at the time.

The opposition will move more than 100 amendments during the committee stage. It will not matter how long it takes; the opposition will ensure amendments are moved and debated because the community is waiting for this to happen. The Labor Party is united in its total opposition to the legislation and what it represents. Even though the legislation may pass, the fight will not stop. It will continue this Saturday in the Mitcham by-election and up to the next state election, when the voters will have their chance to protest.

The legislation is badly drafted and extreme in nature. It will turn the clock back to the bad old days. Under this legislation workers will have no protection because the government will walk away from them when they are injured. There is no need for the legislation. It is unconscionable and unprecedented that the government should cut the rights and benefits of injured workers without properly exploring other options and taking the hard decisions to attack waste and mismanagement.

The Victorian Workcover Authority has never been properly reviewed. It is extraordinary that the Kennett government is ramming through changes and slashing benefits after it has spent $6 million saying the scheme is working well. Recently the Victorian Workcover Authority commissioned Arthur Andersen to report on its operations. Injured workers' money was spent on propaganda by the authority. In fact the authority is taking the Premier's lead and hiring its own auditors. There must be a full and independent inquiry by the Auditor-General into the operation of the Workcover scheme before workers' benefits are slashed.

An article in the *Australian* of 31 October referred to the Queensland and Victorian schemes. It reported that the Queensland scheme more than halved its financial exposure during the past 12 months despite the failure of the Borbidge government to restrict common-law rights. The Queensland scheme actually had a 60 per cent turnaround, with its unfunded liabilities falling from $319 million to $126 million.

Over the past five years the Kennett government has bungled its management of the Victorian Workcover Authority. There has been a blow-out in the scheme's administration costs to $183 million in 1996-97. The Marsden report commissioned by the Law Institute of Victoria states:

> In Victoria, more than one-third of workers compensation claims go to conciliation, suggesting a significant abrogation of responsibility for effective decision making at the initial stages. If the quality of decision making is improved — and there appears to be sufficient room for improvement — the increased efficiency would result in lower costs. In addition, the resort to litigation, particularly in light of existing cost penalties, would be minimal.

The rehabilitation and accident prevention strategy has been a failure, as reflected in the massive increase in the number of serious and long-term injury claims. I refer to an article published in the *Age* of 20 May, which states:

> The CFMEU's safety officer, Mr Pat Preston, said it objected to the recent abolition of the authority's building construction industry division which had provided safety inspectors experienced in the construction industry.

I also refer to the *Age* of 21 May. Only four days after Justin O'Connor died of injuries sustained in a City Link accident, the Victorian Workcover Authority representative is reported to have said:

> A spokeswoman for the Workcover Authority said five safety inspectors had worked almost full time on the City Link project since work started 18 months ago.
>
> The spokeswoman said the highly experienced officers had carried out 280 inspections on City Link and the project's management had been responsive to any changes requested for safety.

Under the Workcover system workers have suffered while administrative and other costs have increased. In fact, the Workcover system introduced one of the toughest compensation regimes in Australia. It includes: the cessation of weekly benefits to the vast majority of injured workers after a maximum of two years, while most end within a matter of months; severely restricting access to common law in cases defined as seriously injured at above 30 per cent whole-of-body impairment; and disallowing journey injuries to and from work. In addition, the workplace must be shown to be a significant contributing factor before a claim can be even accepted.

The changes were introduced with brutal force and had a devastating effect. They led to lengthy delays

in the courts and in the new conciliation system while workers waited without payments to have their cases settled. Rehabilitation services were forced to shut as 5000 workers were removed from rehabilitation programs and 16 000 workers, including 3000 government employees, were dumped with little effort being made to find employment for them, resulting in an annual cost to the social security system of more than $55 million — a cost that must be borne by all taxpayers.

The Kennett government's changes have not necessarily been for the better for all employers because more than 80 per cent of employers, mainly in the small business and manufacturing sectors, have had their premiums increased each year since the introduction of Workcover — even employers who have not lodged a claim. The new premium structure is a savage attack on small business, where most jobs are created. Many small businesses pay at a rate of up to 8 per cent of payroll even if no claims have been lodged, yet many large employers are paying at a rate of less than 1 per cent of payroll.

Small business and the self-employed will be affected by the changes. It is common for small business operators to establish family companies with the operator as a director and employee for the purpose of the company structure. Such people will be severely affected by the changes.

The opposition is opposed to this legislation because it is another undermining of the independence of the judiciary. The bill removes the testing of critical fact evidence about how a worker received an injury, whether there was any contributory negligence and a whole range of matters that are properly determined by an independent judge.

The Kennett legislation gives judicial power to government-appointed medical panels, which will now decide questions of fact about contributory negligence and how injuries have been caused. That means government doctors will decide the medical condition of claimants and how they were injured — with no right of appeal. That is a fundamental shift in the system. It removes judicial discretion and places the power for testing evidence in the hands of medical practitioners.

The change makes the Premier's doctors both judge and jury of workplace assessments. The decisions of the government-appointed medical practitioners will be critically important. The government wants to squeeze more money out of injured workers. I oppose the bill.

Hon. E. J. POWELL (North Eastern) — I am pleased to contribute to the debate. Many honourable members have canvassed most of the issues involved in the legislation, which has been the subject of much discussion in the community. The main focus of community concern appears to be the abolition of common-law claims. That is a shame because the bill has many good aspects.

Any worker who is injured in the workplace has the right to fair and adequate compensation. The worker should not have to sue to receive compensation or to prove that the employer was negligent. An injured worker and the worker's family are placed under stress and need to know what their entitlements are so they can plan for the future immediately, not two or three years after a court has made a decision.

A number of examples have been given of Workcover claims. I can talk from personal experience. About 25 years ago my stepfather lost all the fingers on his left hand in an industrial accident. The machine he was using had no safety guard attached. He was offered compensation. However, the union came to him and said, 'We will go to court and get you more money'. He agreed and three years later the case was settled out of court. He received a lump sum payment of not much more than he was originally offered. After the proposed no-fault system and the assessment of impairment arrangements were explained to him — including the fact that decisions will be made by doctors and not lawyers — he believed the new system to be fair.

Mr Nardella obviously supports a no-fault system. In contributing to the second-reading debate on the Wills Bill on 20 November he spoke about divorce, which has little to do with this bill but which is relevant because of his comments about the no-fault system as it applied to that area of law. Mr Nardella said in the early years it was difficult for a married couple to get a divorce. He said he used to watch a show on television after *Epic Theatre* on Channel 7 called *Law Court*. The program showed what people had to go through. They had to disclose infidelity, which was the main reason for divorce in those times. He also said that the process was rough on divorcing couples, and I totally agree.

One of the interesting things about Mr Nardella's contribution to the debate on 20 November 1997 was his statement that:

> Many people did not separate and did not get divorces because of the trauma. Much has changed since 1958. In 1974 the federal Family Law Act provided that couples could divorce under a no-fault system. It is much quicker and less expensive.

That shows Mr Nardella's support for the no-fault system. He made another criticism of the common-law system in his contribution to the debate on the Victims of Crimes Assistance Bill, when he talked about the assistance that criminals get from the criminal justice system.

> People who use the common-law system discover that in the vast majority of cases the perpetrators of the crimes have no assets. They go through this bulldust system —

as Mr Nardella called it —

> to pick up their compensation after making their common-law claims for damages, but in the vast majority of cases there is no money at the end. The existing legislation, which this bill will knock off, recognises that.

He went on to say:

> Back in 1973 parliamentarians recognised that the common-law system did not work, that it was an expensive way for victims of crime to try to get redress, and that it was not the appropriate way for the society to recognise and compensate people against whom criminal acts had been committed. That recognition, which was provided through the 1973 legislation, was very important because the conservative government at the time understood and cared about victims of crime ...

As you can see, Mr Nardella is also critical of common-law rights. During the past few months we have heard from a number of peak organisations representing workers and solicitors, as well as media commentators and, now, politicians. But we have not heard much from the employers, who are key stakeholders in the system.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Apart from VECCI.

Hon. E. J. POWELL — VECCI, the peak employment group in Victoria, sent out an information sheet, which I would like to congratulate it on. When I spoke to VECCI I was told the information sheets were sent out to answer employers' questions so that they knew exactly what was going on. They were told the truth, rather than the distorted versions that they read in the media. VECCI also dealt with the unions and gave them the answers to the questions. The information sheets were inserted in the *Business Forum* of 20 October, which was sent to 7500 members. Another 200 to 300 copies were sent to other organisations, such as the unions and the media.

I will discuss some of the issues VECCI talked about, because they are relevant. VECCI is not a union group or a Labor Party group; it is an unbiased employer group that looks after employers. We need to look after employers as well as workers, which members opposite have forgotten about. The information sheet says:

> These proposed changes have attracted a lot of media attention largely as a result of misinformation from the legal fraternity (who stand to lose the most) and —

of course —

> unions. VECCI has long argued for changes to be made to the Workcover system with a view to keeping it viable and stable ...

We all have to agree with that. The information sheet goes on to say:

> As at December 1992 when the Workcover scheme was introduced, the scheme had an unfunded liability of approximately $4 billion and average premiums stood at 3 per cent of payroll. In short, the scheme was a financial disaster.
>
> The current Workcover scheme has been very successful in improving return-to-work rates —

that is vitally important —

> with the result that average premiums have been dramatically reduced. Victoria currently has the lowest premium rates in Australia. For example, NSW has a premium rate of 2.8 per cent; Queensland 2.15 per cent and South Australia 2.86 per cent.

I also point out Western Australia has a premium rate of 2.09 per cent and Victoria now has a premium rate of 1.9 per cent. It is also important to put on the record the discussions VECCI had about the abolition of common-law claims and the proposed changes.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — This is the bosses organisation, isn't it?

Hon. E. J. POWELL — They are the people who employ the workers so they have jobs.

> Despite assertions being made by the lawyers and the unions, the abolition of common law is not in any way abolishing the injured worker's right to adequate compensation. Workcover is a 'no-fault' system, and as such all workers are entitled to compensation provided employment has been a significant contributory factor to the injury. The proposed amendments do not change this fact. What it does is to remove the situation where a small minority of injured workers (approximately 3 per cent) can sue the employee at common law in order to claim a lump sum entitlement. The cost of common-law payments increased in Victoria from $18 million to $140 million in just 12 months (an increase of 780 per cent) and currently accounts for 20 per cent of all payments. Lawyers pocketed another $40 million in this process.
>
> The proposed amendments preserve the rights of the injured worker under the 'no fault' system while eliminating the huge and unnecessary legal and other transactional costs associated with common-law actions. Clearly therefore, the aim of the amendments is to reduce the legal costs associated with common-law actions while preserving the entitlements of injured workers.

In order to properly compensate injured workers as a result of the abolition of common law, the total amount of money available under the table of maims has been increased substantially from a maximum of $161 390 to $300 000. This will result in a more equitable distribution of compensation payments to all injured workers. That is, the total amount of compensation available to injured workers will be determined by the severity of injury rather than by the degree of negligence on the employer's part.

The information sheet outlines VECCI's position:

> VECCI supports the move to abolish common law as it does not believe that it is a cost-effective way of providing compensation to injured workers. Common law is an adversarial system which inhibits rehabilitation and return to work. It has no place in a 'no-fault' workers compensation scheme. The abolition of common law is clearly aimed at reducing the transactional costs of the scheme. Abolishing common law alone will immediately save $40 million in legal costs and that will not affect workers' rights to weekly benefits.

As can be seen, employers, who are key stakeholders in this, support the abolishment of common law and do not believe that will restrict an employee's right to claim when he or she is injured.

My husband and I have been employers for over 20 years. When you are an employer, especially in a small business, you form a special bond with your employees, especially apprentices, who start work with you when they are 16. You go through their 18th birthdays, their first girlfriends, their cars and their marriages. You do not want them to be injured, and if they are, you hope that the system will look after them.

Employers who allow unsafe workplaces will be fined for breaches of health and safety laws. We cannot have employers operating unsafe workplaces. The penalties will be increased from $40 000 to $250 000 for a company, and from $10 000 to $50 000 for individuals.

Finally, as a rural member of Parliament I will respond to the comments made by Mr Theophanous about voluntary firefighters. He said they think the legislation stinks. I am here to tell him that I have spoken to them, but I do not know whether Mr Theophanous has spoken to a voluntary firefighter in his life. I will read from a press cutting, which states that firefighters are not and never have been covered by Workcover — so the legislation will not affect them. The article, which is entitled 'CFA hits compo claim', was published in the *Herald Sun* of 3 November:

> Fears that volunteers would refuse to risk their lives fighting fires this summer because of new workers' compensation laws were angrily rejected by the Country Fire Authority ...
>
> Firefighters' union chief Peter Marshall claimed the Workcover changes would create a 'massive disincentive' for Victoria's 70 000 volunteers because they removed the common-law right to sue employers for negligence.
>
> But the Country Fire Authority branded the claims misleading and inaccurate.
>
> CFA Chairman Len Foster said the union's comments had angered volunteers and had the potential to jeopardise the volunteer system.
>
> Mr Foster said volunteers were covered by a separate workers' compensation scheme which was worth 'double the value' of Workcover.

'What they are trying to do is take a very well-respected group in the community and immerse them in a political fight ...

Those comments by the CFA chairman, Mr Len Foster, were substantiated by my electorate officer's husband, Mr David Bethell, who has been a volunteer firefighter for over 25 years.

He is a captain of the Wunghnu fire brigade. Wunghu is a small rural town in the electorate that Mr Baxter and I share. He is also secretary of the Victorian Rural Fire Brigade Association Region 22, and he states not only that volunteer firefighters are covered but that in an area where there might be a limited number of firefighters and the fire gets out of hand others can be put on as casual firefighters and if they are injured they are also covered. As can be seen, those comments misconstrue what happens with volunteer firefighters.

Workcover will now cover many injuries for which compensation is not at present available. The bill also increases weekly benefits, death benefits for spouses and dependants and a number of other benefits that will give Victorians in work the highest impairment benefits ever provided. I commend the bill to the house.

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — I strongly oppose the bill. On its return to office Labor will get rid of it. It is draconian legislation that the government has no mandate to introduce and no need for. It will have a detrimental impact on every worker in Victoria. The removal of common-law rights is a savage attack on workers. The arrogance and hypocrisy of this government are demonstrated in its sheer vindictiveness against Victorian workers through a theft of their common-law rights. This is appalling legislation.

If his feelings are hurt, if he does not like what someone says about him, the Premier can sue. However, workers who have their arms and legs cut off in accidents — it happens, and unfortunately it happens regularly — will not be able to sue their employers for negligence.

Workcover is there to look after workers. Workers do not go to work each day to end up injured. They go to work to help build the state and to earn money to raise their families. Whether they be truck drivers, clerks, retail assistants or storemen or whatever occupation they follow, they can get injured at work. People suffer serious injuries at work: whether they be amputations, crushed bones, back strain, stress or sexual harassment injuries, accidents occur daily. Workcover is there to protect workers, yet the government is taking away that protection.

Victorian workers are angry that the government has taken away their common-law rights and angry about the test for claiming the maximum benefits that we keep hearing members from the other side talk about. It is almost impossible to access the magical $300 000: you have to lose two legs and an arm before you get close to being eligible. Workers are angry that their weekly benefits have been reduced by 15 per cent. They are angry that the prosecution of employers is occurring less frequently — 76 employers were prosecuted for negligence this year. How many cases before Magistrates Courts were cases of negligence on the part of the employer? A hell of a lot more than 76! Workers are angry that they can be injured on the road but cannot sue under common law.

The opposition strongly opposes this legislation, as has been indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, and in the not-too-distant future we will seek to move more than 100 amendments to it in the committee stage. If the common-law system were managed effectively, the cost could be reduced by thousands of dollars, but the Workcover Authority has not gone through a proper process to examine that possibility. Government members talk about this magical $300 000, which is for an 80 per cent whole-of-body impairment. To be eligible for the $300 000 a person would have to be quadriplegic or almost on a life support system, and this is because of the changes relating to the AMA guide edition 4.

Another view that has been put about by government members is that benefits will be improved. Sometimes I hear some members from the other side saying, 'Oh, some people might miss out!'. If a person had a double-level disc prolapse under the current system — before 12 November this year — under the AMA guide edition 2, that would equate to 12 per cent impairment, and with additional entitlements a person with that type of injury could receive $21 500. Yet under the new system using the AMA guide edition 4 that would equate to only 7 per cent impairment. So how much would they get? Zip, zero, nothing, because they would not meet the 10 per cent whole-of-body impairment test.

Under the old system a disc injury would equate to 18 per cent impairment and, with other entitlements, the worker could expect to receive a payment of around $28 000 — nearly $29 000. Under the new

AMA guide edition 4 he sor she could make the 10 per cent but get only $5000. Under the old system, $28 000; under this system, $5000. People with serious knee injuries that could prevent them from climbing ladders, walking or kicking a football around the backyard with their children would be deemed to have about 25 per cent loss of use of the injured leg under the old system because of not being able to participate in those activities, as well as loss of quality of life. Under the new system it would equate to 15 per cent and the person would get only $15 000, compared with $27 500 under the old system.

I could cite a number of cases, but at the moment I will just leave it at that. That is an indication of what is happening under the new system. Claims that people could get $300 000 are not true because they will be wiped off the list. They will not reach the 10 per cent whole-of-body impairment threshold so they will not even get close to receiving any money from the system for the injuries they have suffered. It is a fallacy that has been put out by the government.

It is fine and dandy to talk about the wonderful increased amounts of money that are available, but what is the good of having this increased maximum payment if no-one can access it? It is just another attack on workers. To give an example of the blow-out of costs that will occur in relation to medical examinations, if somebody had a spinal injury and needed an assessment by a medico, this would be a lengthy and costly exercise. Under the AMA guide edition 4 the injured worker would have to be examined by the medico on more than 108 different movements to be entitled to compensation.

The opposition has raised a number of cases of workers not being able to sue their employers for sexual harassment or not being entitled to take common-law actions against their employers if such incidents occurred. I refer to an actual case that happened to a woman at her workplace.

The worker has suffered psychological injuries. She suffers from stress, anxiety and depression and in November her injuries were recognised as being compensatable. Over a period of years the woman had been the victim of sexual harassment in the workplace. Initially it began with remarks here and there and it escalated to a point where she was stressed and sought medical advice for the symptoms that were a physical manifestation of her state of mind. She suffered verbal abuse on occasion and physical abuse on others. She was continually reminded that her abuser was the hirer and firer. She was harassed to the extent of serious damage being done to her self-esteem and she was unable to deal with day-to-day situations. She confined herself to her home on doctor's advice. She could not return to work because of the stress she felt each time she walked into the workplace. When she spoke to senior management she was told that she should not make a fuss. She was told to ignore the person harassing her and it would all go away. That sort of situation occurs regularly in the workplace. If that is not a clear-cut case of an employer failing to provide a safe workplace I do not know what is! Not only did the management fail to respond, which contributed to the worker's ill-health, but it also showed appalling neglect in not carrying out its responsibilities. The worker is still off on benefits because of what happened to her in the workplace.

The passing of the legislation will send a clear message to employers that it is okay to turn a blind eye to discrimination in the workplace. Employers will believe they do not have to worry about aggrieved workers because no matter how poorly workers are treated they will not be able to sue.

Workers receiving benefits will not receive increases under the legislation. From 12 November workers who have been receiving 95 per cent of pre-injury earnings will have their benefits reduced to 60 per cent after 13 weeks if they are able to return to work and they will receive 75 per cent if they are totally incapacitated.

The legislation focuses on a worker's ability to return to work. The opposition is concerned that an employer will be able to come up with any type of job and say an injured worker is capable of doing it. A paraplegic or a quadriplegic who is able to hold a paintbrush in his or her teeth may be considered eligible to return to work and would therefore receive 60 per cent of pre-injury earnings. Death benefits will be increased, but that is largely due to pensions being payable to spouses.

The government has said the maximum payment for benefits will be increased to $850, which equates with a salary of $44 000 a year, but I do not know of any nurse, shop assistant, truck driver, TCF worker, vehicle builder or person working in the pharmaceutical industry — —

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — What about an employee at Shell?

Hon. M. M. GOULD — When shift allowances, overtime penalties and any other allowances are not paid I do not believe you will find any nurse, shop assistant or employed truck driver who earns $22 an hour. This is just a way for the government to build up its reputation and say how good it is.

I have an example of a worker who suffered an injury and whose benefit was reduced because overtime penalties and other allowances were not part of the benefit calculation. He was employed in the dairy industry for two years prior to sustaining a back injury. He had two bulging disks in the lower back there were determined to have been caused by repetitive heavy lifting. The job required the lifting of heavy crates weighing 25 kilograms. On investigation by a health and safety inspector, such tasks were found to contravene the occupational health and safety manual handling regulations. The worker who was injured was also one of the occupational health and safety representatives. He had served two provisional improvement notices in early August 1996, one of which was upheld by the government inspector. Unfortunately it was too late to prevent the worker's sustaining serious lower back injury, despite the obvious problems with the lifting practices.

Since his injury the worker has suffered physical and psychological problems. He now has a metal plate in his back and he is required to wear an obtrusive back brace at all times. The worker is aged 34 and he will have to be trained in another type of work because he will never be able to resume his former job. He is also unable to play the sports he used to play or to undertake many of his former activities. The worker has suffered financially because he has lost overtime and shift penalties as well as the capacity to move up the promotional ladder in his workplace. He cannot be trained to undertake other jobs within the establishment because of the necessity for him to wear a metal brace and because of his inability to do heavy lifting.

Under the current legislation he receives 90 per cent of his pre-injury average weekly earnings. The employer fought that decision but recently conceded that the injured worker should receive payments at the highest rate. For a long time he had to be content with receiving 70 per cent of his pre-injury average weekly earnings because the employer denied liability. The worker has been forced to sell many of his belongings and move to a cheaper place to live in order to make ends meet. What will happen to other workers in that category? That injured worker currently has the right to sue his employer for the problems that have ruined his life. However, if this bill is passed, he and workers in similar situations will not be able to do that.

I shall take up a point made by Mrs Varty during her contribution about how good it is for workers to get back into the workplace. The government says returning to work is the best thing that can happen to an injured worker. I shall highlight some circumstances experienced by injured workers who have returned to work to give members some idea of the trauma experienced by injured workers when they return to work.

I cite the example of a worker who had a production line job. The doctor recommended that, on returning to work, the employee should not undertake jobs involving the use of his right hand. In only a week the worker overused his left hand and developed a serious shoulder blade injury. Employers do not take any notice of rehabilitation programs or what doctors have to say.

I cite a further example of a worker in the food processing industry. He was given alternative duties which did not involve heavy lifting but which involved considerable pressure and which caused pain necessitating his taking further time off to recover. He has reported repeated problems with compensation payments not being credited to his bank account on specified days, requiring complaints to the pay office to rectify the problems.

Another example concerns a concrete room in a warehouse surrounded by cyclone fencing. All the injured workers who return to work at this particular establishment are sent into that room and spend their time sorting out damaged products. They are not allowed to leave the room for their breaks and are ostracised by and isolated from other workers.

Apart from the abolition of common-law rights, there are a number of concerns about the bill. Members of the opposition are concerned about the abolition of common-law rights but they are also concerned about the reduction in payments. The opposition refutes the government's claim that the bill will result in an increase in payments for injured workers. A number of workers will not be eligible for that because, based on their pre-injury average weekly earnings, payments will be far less than the $650 the government says is available. When shift allowances and penalties are subtracted, the flat rate of many workers is less than $650; therefore, they will be no better off.

The so-called management of the Victorian Workcover Authority and its ability to do its job properly is also of concern, but that will be debated in more detail during the committee stage. I strongly urge honourable members to oppose the bill.

Hon. R. J. H. WELLS (Eumemmerring) — I rise at just after 2.00 a.m. to speak on this important Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill. I seek leave of the house to incorporate in *Hansard* tables 1, 2 and 3, which I have provided to you, Mr President, and to other parties.

Leave granted; tables as follows:

Table 1: CASE STUDIES TO COMPARE BENEFITS UNDER EXISTING AND PROPOSED SCHEMES

The following case studies demonstrate the differences in compensation outcomes achieved at common law and through the new weekly and non-economic loss benefits.

A.

Settlement	Age	Pre-injury earnings
$150,000	25	$450
Date of injury	Date of settlement	WPI
25/8/93	27/9/96	27%
Injury Description		
Back injury - prolapsed disc		

New benefits: At 27% WPI, injured worker would receive $39,000 lump sum plus weekly benefits of 75% of pre-injury earnings ($335 indexed annually) until retirement which totals $335,323. Together, the lump sum payment and weekly benefits total $374,323 which far exceeds the settlement reached at common law.

B.

Settlement	Age	Pre-injury earnings
$407,500	51	$1,500
Date of injury	Date of settlement	WPI
13/12/95	27/3/97	75%
Injury Description		
Paraplegia		

New benefits: At 75% WPI, injured worker would receive $237,500 lump sum plus weekly benefits of 75% of pre-injury earnings (capped at $850 indexed annually) until retirement which totals $339,356 (non-indexed). Together, the lump sum payment and weekly benefits total $576,856 which far exceeds the settlement reached at common law.

C.

Settlement	Age	Pre-injury earnings
$646,118	30	$713
Date of injury	Date of settlement	WPI
16/4/93	1/9/97	90%
Injury Description		
Paraplegic with associated medical conditions		

New benefits: At 90% WPI, injured worker would receive $300,000 lump sum plus weekly benefits of 75% of pre-injury earnings ($535 indexed annually) until retirement which totals $457,738. Together, the lump sum payment and weekly benefits total $757,738 which far exceeds the settlement reached at common law.

D.

Settlement	Age	Pre-injury earnings
$490,000	17	$680*
Date of injury	Date of settlement	WPI
29/7/93	6/6/97	up to 80%
Injury Description		
Brain damage and fractured hips		

* deemed rate when worker would have completed school.

New benefits: At up to 80% WPI, injured worker would receive up to $300,000 lump sum plus weekly benefits of 75% of pre-injury earnings ($510 indexed annually) until retirement which totals $516,000. Together, the lump

sum payment and weekly benefits would total up to $816,000 which far exceeds the settlement reached at common law.

E.

Settlement	Age	Pre-injury earnings
$510,000	44	$660
Date of injury	Date of settlement	WPI
4/9/93	30/5/97	80%
Injury Description		
Electrocution causing burns, brain damage and paraplegia.		

New benefits: At 80% WPI, injured worker would receive $300,000 lump sum plus weekly benefits of 75% of pre-injury earnings ($495 indexed annually) until retirement which totals $298,000. Together, the lump sum payment and weekly benefits would total up to $598,000 which far exceeds the settlement reached at common law.

Source: Victorian WorkCover Authority

Table 2: DISTRIBUTION OF COMMON LAW SETTLEMENTS UNDER EXISTING SCHEME

Frequency Distribution of Settlement & Payment Amount			
	Settlement	%	%
$0	95	7.3	7.3
$0 - $50,000	182	13.9	21.2
$50,000 - $100,000	209	16.0	37.2
$100,000 - $150,000	189	14.4	51.6
$150,000 - $200,000	179	13.7	65.3
$200,000 - $250,000	147	11.2	76.5
$250,000 - $300,000	106	8.1	84.6
$300,000 - $350,000	77	5.9	90.5
$350,000 - $400,000	50	3.8	94.3
$400,000 - $450,000	33	2.5	96.9
$450,000 - $500,000	17	1.3	98.2
$500,000 - $550,000	2	0.2	98.3
$550,000 - $600,000	9	0.7	99.0
$600,000 - $650,000	8	0.6	99.6
$650,000 - $700,000	3	0.2	99.8
$700,000 - $750,000	0	0.0	99.8
$750,000 - $800,000	1	0.1	99.9
$800,000 - $850,000	0	0.0	99.9
$850,000 - $900,000	1	0.1	100.0
over $900,000	0	0.0	100.0
TOTAL	1,308	100.0	
MEAN	$172,828		

- The table shows that out of the 1,308 claimants who received common law settlements, only two recipients have ever received more than $700,000 in compensated damages.

- The average common law settlement is $172,828.

- Over one third of claimants (37%) settled for under $100,000. Over one-fifth (21%) received settlements for between $0 and $50,000. For a seriously injured worker who will never work again, these payments are not adequate to compensate for lost income and medical expenses until retirement.

Source: Victorian WorkCover Authority

Table 3: CASE STUDIES OF DEATH BENEFITS UNDER EXISTING AND PROPOSED SCHEMES

Example 1:
45 year old worker earning $680 with one dependent spouse and three dependent children, aged 7, 10, and 13. All children remain full-time students until age 21.

Current Benefits:	New Benefits:
Lump Sum: $134,430 plus $14,040 for 7 year old $9,100 for 10 year old $5,790 for 13 year old	**Lump Sum:** $148,750 for spouse $8,750 for each child *Total: $175,000* **Pensions:** $57,018 for spouse $24,752 for 7 year old $19,448 for 10 year old $14,144 for 13 year old *Total: $115,362 (plus indexation to AWE)*
Total Death Benefits: $163,360 Plus entitlement under Wrongs Act (Max: $500,000)	**Total Death Benefits: $290,362** **(plus pension indexation to AWE)** Plus entitlement under Wrongs Act (Max: $500,000 indexed to CPI)

Example 2:
30 year old worker earning $450 with one dependent spouse and four dependent children, aged 6, 4, 2 and 6 months. All children remain full-time students until age 21.

Current Benefits:	New Benefits:
Lump Sum: $134,430 plus $82,590 for the 4 children	**Lump Sum:** $140,000 for spouse $8,750 for each child *Total: $175,000* **Pensions:** $37,773 for spouse $83,655 for the 4 children *Total: $121,388 (plus indexation to AWE)*
Total Death Benefits: $217,020 Plus entitlement under Wrongs Act (Max: $500,000)	**Total Deaths Benefit: $296,388** **(plus pension indexation to AWE)** Plus entitlement under Wrongs Act (Max: $500,000 indexed to CPI)

Example 3:
47 year old worker earning $900 with two dependent spouses. One spouse has one child aged 16 years (first family) and the other spouse has two dependent children, aged 8 and 5 (second family). All children remain full-time students until age 21.

Current Benefits:	New Benefits:
Lump Sum: $134,430 plus $35,510 for the 3 children (The Court would determine how this sum is to be allocated between the dependants in the 2 families.)	**Lump Sum:** $74,373 for **each** spouse $8,750 for each child *Total: $175,000* **Pensions**: $37,732.50 for **each** spouse $79,560 for the 3 children *Total: $149,175 (plus indexation to AWE)* First Family receives: Lump Sums: $83,125 Pensions: $49,432.50 *Total:* *$132,557.50* Second family receives: Lump Sums: $91,875 Pensions: $105,592.50 *Total:* *$197,467.50*
Total Death Benefits: $169,940 Plus entitlement under Wrongs Act (Max: $500,000)	**Total Death Benefits Paid to Both Families:** **$324,175** **(plus pension indexation to AWE)** Plus entitlement under Wrongs Act (Max: $500,000 indexed to CPI)

DAMAGES STILL AVAILABLE UNDER THE WRONGS ACT 1958

- The Government has also retained the existing right of dependants (who may not be spouses or dependent children) to seek damages under the *Wrongs Act 1958.*
- The current maximum damages that a court can award remains at $500,000.
- However, unlike previously, this maximum amount from now on will be indexed to CPI.

Source: Victorian WorkCover Authority

Hon. R. J. H. WELLS —Today I have heard the greatest hypocrisy I have ever heard in this place. Clearly, the opposition is opposing for the sake of opposing. To this point in the debate, which is at the end of the second-reading stage, a time when all members have had the chance of covering in broad perspective the important issues, trends and mores of the bill, it has become clear that members of the opposition have done little homework on this matter. They have been unwilling to engage in real debate with the government on matters of pre-eminent importance to all working people, regardless of what they do with their hands or heads.

As in other debates dealing with subjects of great importance, we have heard members of the opposition use emotion and quote other people's opinions. They have been unwilling to deal with the real issues. We have been led by most of them to believe this bill is only about common law. They claim common law defends Victorian workers. Fact 1 is this: last year there were 31 000 applications for accident compensation. Some 1000 of those proceeded to application stage for common law. A maximum of 3 per cent went to common law while 97 per cent did not.

The claim by the Leader of the Opposition that the bill will destroy democracy in the workplace is clearly wrong. In the case of 97 per cent of people, his claim is absolutely wrong. Of the remaining 3 per cent, only 3 per cent of cases went to court while the rest of the cases were settled outside court. After about two or three years of agony for the injured workers, those cases were settled through horse-trading deals between lawyers from both sides. Would it not be far better for these matters to be settled through statute law with printed, previously known compensation levels that have come under great scrutiny?

I have had and continue to have a degree to do with accident compensation in the workplace. All too often injured people will settle at the door of the court and take what they think is a large sum of money that they may not have had before. They do so in ignorance because they have no idea of the amount of money they will need in the future.

I turn to fact 2. We are told by the opposition that Labor is opposed to common law. That is not the case in history, and the opposition has isolated itself from its colleagues on this matter. In 1985 the Cain government in its first draft made no reference to common law; it tried to get rid of it totally. It gave in to union pressure, which I suspect is happening to the opposition tonight, and the Cain government introduced a limited common-law payment system for pain and suffering but nothing for economic loss.

It was not until the first Kennett government in 1992 that common-law payment for economic loss was added against the advice of many in industry and across the state. The opposition cares not to mention that. We know now from history that it is better that it should be removed because of the agony, the unfairness and the sums concerned are less than under the new system and because the weekly benefit system will be better for nearly all who suffer injury and obtain a financial settlement. In that regard it is interesting to note that in 1984 the Cooney Labor report said just that, in 1985 Treasurer Rob Jolly said that and in 1988 the then federal Minister for Social Security, Brian Howe, said exactly the same thing. However, this opposition is out of date and out of touch.

Fact 3 is that the common-law payments are inadequate. Table 2, which I have incorporated in *Hansard*, points out that since 1992, 1308 claimants have proceeded to common law. Of those only two achieved sums greater than $700 000 as settlements and 58 per cent received between nothing and $100 000. The average was $173 000. Apart from the $700 000, none of those figures is likely to be adequate to assist a person who sustains a serious injury. I shall quote from former Treasurer Rob Jolly in 1988, when he said:

> Initially there were some elements in the trade union movement which were opposed to removing the right of common-law action. However, the government was able to convince the unions that, on a no-fault basis, it is far better to have a weekly payment system for injured workers. That is far more equitable because it ensures that long-term injured workers receive adequate protection over a long period.
>
> No-one could seriously suggest that a common-law lump sum settlement of that order would be sufficient to compensate a quadriplegic for the rest of his or her life. A quadriplegic may obtain a large lump-sum settlement if he or she could prove negligence but that would not be the case if they could not prove negligence.

I invite the opposition to respond to their own former minister's comments in the next stage of consideration of the bill. Without that they cannot mount a credible case. I cannot see where the opposition would oppose a superior no-fault system.

We heard earlier an eloquent speech by Mr Hartigan who established that statute law is clearly superior to common law. He also established that statute law is more precise, more predictable and in the arrangements proposed by this government certainly more generous. There is no question about that from all the evidence alluded to by other government speakers. I compliment them as a body of men and women on their preparation. They went through it and built a body of support for the government's proposals that has not even been considered by the opposition. I hope in the committee stage the opposition will attempt to respond to those comments.

I turn to the other major area of the bill — death benefits. There are many other small areas that I do not have time to deal with. It was interesting that Miss Gould touched on the subject of death benefits but she could not really find anything to say about it that was sufficiently opposed to it. She faded away and left the subject.

Table 3 quotes three models showing that death benefits under the proposals will yield $80 000 to $150 000 more for a family than under the old common-law system based on the actual figures obtained in the past. The Wrongs Act, which the government has kept in place, makes it possible also for a family to sue at common law for the loss of a loved one. In the past the average was $123 000 for each settlement achieved. We have already had comments from people in industry who are pleased with the increased death benefits. I suggest the opposition consider the matter fairly because that alone is a significant improvement over the current system. There is no question of if, maybe, but or possibly, depending on the lawyers at the door of the court. In this case what will happen is laid out in black and white in statute law.

I should have said earlier when discussing general benefits that table 1 demonstrates the extra benefit to be had by injured workers under the bill compared with the current act.

Five models are listed showing the extra benefits that will be received by people under statute law. The sums are considerable and range from $90 000 to $300 000 extra for those cases. When one examines those figures one sees the opposition is out of date. One wonders how it could dare to argue the case it has tried to argue. One wonders about the basis of the argument of members opposite: either they are disingenuous in opposing the proposals, have not done their homework, are out of date or, as so often is the case and the reason why the ALP is so often out of government, they are acting as lackeys to extra-parliamentary forces, particularly the union movement, which is telling them what they should do.

When the dust settles the scaremongering in which the opposition and the union movement have indulged will be seen to be unfounded. We must have informed discussions of these matters, and the opposition has not provided that in this place on this bill. That is why I have incorporated in *Hansard* some of the facts and figures of the Victorian Workcover Authority based on performance to date so that people may consider the real proposals in the bill. The opposition has neither served the Parliament nor the people of Victoria well in the way it has skirted around reality and raised other issues but avoided the real ones.

This bill is a step forward. We may yet find further improvements in the future, but there is no case that statute law is always superior. There will be a lot of support across Australia for the proposals in the bill, and I look forward with confidence to its future success.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — This is one of the most appalling and pathetic pieces of legislation the government has introduced. It has been introduced by the minister who prides himself on being a bookkeeper and one of the high-powered operators in the Kennett government. What does the minister provide in the bill for injured workers and others in the Victorian community? He provides a continuation of a system that is bereft of any humanity or consideration for injured workers.

The bill is designed to cause further harm to injured workers. The minister has introduced a proposed set of changes that include increased premiums to employers totalling $100 million, decreased benefits to injured workers of some $63 million and a continuation of the shifting of costs of the Workcover system to the national system in the amount of approximately $50 million a year.

In the five years in which the minister has had responsibility for this area he has had to come back to Parliament every year with changes. He has never got it right. His track record is appalling. Now he has introduced one of the most complicated pieces of legislation that any Supreme or County Court has ever had to deal with, according to the judges. The bill contains the sixth round of changes from a minister who has failed injured workers and

employers and in his duty to put in place a system that works.

The minister is forcing through changes that will increase premiums from 1.8 per cent to 1.9 per cent. What a terrific record that is! During the five years the government has been in office it has had control of both houses of Parliament, but the minister stuffed the system up from the very beginning — from October 1992. In addition to increasing premiums from 1.8 per cent to 1.9 per cent he has added superannuation to the scheme. There are no bounds to the minister's changing the legislation for the worst.

There has been an effective 7 per cent increase in premiums. He has reduced lump sum payments by 63 per cent. He has increased the levy by 11 per cent to gain $100 million. Ultimately the cost for employers will be an extra $150 million. The minister has failed dismally in an area in which he prides himself as having expertise.

The proposed legislation confirms that he is the worst minister who has ever dealt with workers compensation. The bill continues to perpetrate mean, uncaring and disgraceful actions on injured workers. Worse than that, it ignores the plight of injured workers by being absolutely insensitive to them. I have visited the electorate of the minister and talked to some of his constituents.

Hon. W. A. N. Hartigan — That must have been a joy for them!

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — No, Mr Hartigan, it was not a joy for them at all because they told me and Mr Walpole some of the saddest stories I have ever heard. I beseech Mr Hartigan to talk to injured workers. The system the government is seeking to implement will not deal with the problems inherent in a crook and broken system. From its inception it was based on being vindictive towards injured workers, and the bill continues that vindictiveness. If that were not the case Mr Hartigan and the minister would talk to injured workers and understand the plight they are in because of the government's legislation.

As I said, the constituents told us very sad stories. I refer to a couple of them. On 1 March last year Val was diagnosed with a chronic and unusual condition. He was sick for a while before he left work. He went off for a month before the illness settled down. The specialist was to be seen in three months. The employer terminated his employment and he learnt about the termination only because of his superannuation scheme. The specialist was seen six months later. HIH Insurance was the insurance company. Val lodged a claim with the employer, which rejected the claim outright. Workcover sent Val to a trauma surgeon with no expertise in the area. He should have been sent to a urologist.

He went to court in May of that year. It is now 14 months since he was forced to leave work. Val had to go to the Department of Social Security to survive. Workcover sent DSS the wrong certificate, so he got a bill for $14 000. Throughout the period his benefits were cut off. Val has five children and a mortgage. He has had to take out an extra loan to keep his home. The car registration is due and the tyres need to be replaced. Val is not in a good way.

In another case the employers and claims agent have held up payments time and again. They stopped payments for six weeks without giving any notice or reason. In 1994 they had the payments stopped all together. In 1995 the person concerned went to court and got the payments back. The person involved said, 'I had to go to the poor box to live for the first time to put food on the table'. There are other extremely sad cases.

Kerry is the wife of an injured worker. She said to Mr Walpole and me, 'All people want is someone to stop playing God with their lives'. Her husband has been seriously injured and she is having trouble because of the lack of support from Workcover. She cannot send her children to school camp and they cannot play sport because they do not have the money. She said, 'At the moment they are taking not just my husband's life away but my children's'. In reference to Workcover and the present system she said, 'They do not realise it hurts'. She also said, 'If we were on the dole we would have more rights'.

One of the telling things about the system at the moment is that the Workcover Authority is so corrupt it is prepared to pay $10 810 for Kerry's husband to have treatment at a gymnasium at a cost of $360 for 12 months and a travel allowance at the rate of 28 cents a kilometre for 53 kilometres, a total cost of $10 810, when all the injured worker requires is $373 for a gym walking machine. He did not want to rip off Workcover and go through those hassles so he spent $373 he did not have to buy a walking machine. That is the type of situation that injured workers are faced with.

The other telling aspect about Kerry's husband's case is that he cannot sleep on a normal bed. He

needs a special bed and Workcover will not buy him one. The family has tried time and again. This bloke the minister says he cares about has to sleep on the floor because he is not able to sleep in an ordinary bed.

I will not go through a number of other relevant cases. However, a person at the meeting who was suffering depression said, 'We don't ask to get injured'. That is a simple but critically important statement — they certainly do not go to work to get injured.

The current scheme is abysmal. The investigation of and the report on the scheme carried out by government members was not done in depth. If it had been it would have dealt with the areas in Workcover where most of the troubles and problems occur. It would have dealt with the disputes that occur in the conciliation system and with the insurance agents that time and again result in injured workers having to constantly claim loss of wages. It would have dealt with the prevention of serious injuries and the way the legal system treats and protects the rights of injured workers.

However, that was all put in the too-hard basket because the government did not want to go down the path it went down in respect of the Transport Accident Commission because the Workcover Authority would have had to appoint a CEO who cared about injured workers and who was bright enough to understand the issues involved in respect of injured workers and workers compensation. To do that the VWA would need a CEO and a minister who could deal seriously with the problems inherent in the current system.

The VWA cannot do that. It is not able to follow the example of the TAC, which dealt with medical issues and cost blow-outs and actually managed cases. The TAC does not manage claims, it manages cases, because the cases are real people. That is the thing honourable members on the other side do not want to hear about and are not able to deal with. It is a crying shame that we have had a long lead time in which the real issues have not been dealt with. Honourable members have only to look at pages 4, 5 and 6 of the transcript of James McKenzie's speech to the Law Institute of Victoria on 21 July 1997 to see that that is the case.

I also want to talk about the position the opposition has adopted on common law. My position on common law — I was quoted in the lower house with regard to victims of crime — has been taken out of context. The system that was developed through the victims of crime legislation, before the government emasculated any support for victims of crime, started from 1973, when it was recognised that common law was not working in that specific situation. A situation in which injured victims of crime are forced to sue criminals who have no assets differs vastly from a situation involving employers and employees. Victims of crime should have access to an easy system of compensation for pain and suffering. They do not have it because the government took it away.

The situation with family law cases Mrs Powell spoke about was inappropriate to mention. In 1974 divorces were taken out of the common-law system because it was inappropriate for that type of dispute. That system did not provide for payments. There were other damages associated with divorce proceedings, so to mention all that in this context is absolutely wrong. I am gratified and flattered that members opposite read my speeches in *Hansard*, but they should be put in context.

One of the most telling aspects of the debate is that government members have not put up a valid case to show why common-law rights should be removed from the system. The position adopted by government members is flawed, because they have not seen the actuarial report commissioned by the Victorian Workcover Authority. Mr Hartigan said he had not seen it, and we have not been able to get a copy. When we asked for a copy of the report during the briefing the officers were not able to provide one — and they still have not provided one.

As Mr Hartigan declared, government members have taken on trust the Workcover Authority figures, which have been put before the house. I do not trust the Workcover Authority people; they are a pack of incompetents. The number of injured workers who have been re-victimised by the Victorian Workcover Authority, the minister and the government is appalling. It is wrong to take the authority's word on trust. Members opposite believe the Workcover Authority knows what it is doing, but that is absolutely false because it does not. The Workcover people are a pack of idiots.

The authority's agents and insurers do not know how to assist injured workers in any way, shape or form. If they did, they would actually have a system that works — or they would at least be able to advise the minister on appropriate measures to fix it up. The system should care about injured workers, but instead we have a system that throws injured

workers off benefits at every opportunity. Those involved take every opportunity to further hurt workers who are injured!

I will say more during the committee stage. The opposition vigorously opposes the bill. It opposes the 10 per cent threshold, which is an artificial barrier designed to knock out something like 63 per cent of all claims. However, we cannot check that because the minister and the Victorian Workcover Authority, whose assurances government members hang their hats on, have not provided the figures. They do not know how many people will be knocked out because of the 10 per cent threshold.

The minister recently increased the threshold for hearing loss claims to 7 per cent to knock out all the shonky claims. What is he doing? He is increasing it to 10 per cent without any justification, and that will knock out the vast bulk of people with hearing loss. He has not justified the increase because he cannot — just as he cannot justify the rest of the amendments in the bill. It is disgraceful, and honourable members who support the bill should be ashamed of themselves.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am of the opinion that the second and third reading of the bill require to be passed by an absolute majority.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 33

Asher, Ms	Hall, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr (*Teller*)
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr (*Teller*)
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs
Furletti, Mr	

Noes, 10

Eren, Mr (*Teller*)	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr
McLean, Mrs (*Teller*)	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr

Motion agreed to by absolute majority.

Read second time.

Committed.

Committee

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I welcome the chance to address some of the major points of disagreement that have emerged during the debate on the bill and again clarify the primary objectives of the amendments to the principal act. I repeat that the government's motivation for the amending legislation is driven by two primary concerns. The first is workplace safety and a determination to provide greater protection for all Victorian workers. The second is to ensure that the long-term financial viability of the scheme is protected, aggregate benefit levels are maintained and premium rates remain competitive.

I presume we have bipartisan agreement on the need to maintain, on the one hand, a comprehensive and generous system of statutory benefits and, on the other hand, a stable, fully funded and competitive scheme. That vision has been possible only because Workcover has succeeded in its most fundamental mission of preventing injury and achieving a return to work after injury. I proudly point to the record that since Workcover began claims have been reduced by 40 per cent and return-to-work rates have improved by 30 per cent. Workcover's culture of safety and return to work has been progressively embraced by all Victorians. I hope we have bipartisan agreement on that point.

The suite of measures contained in the bill has been developed in keeping with the objective that has driven the government from day one — to achieve and maintain a system that is both fair and affordable.

Much of the debate has been dominated by issues of compensation, particularly in respect of common law, and the new impairment table. In restructuring the benefit system the government carefully costed its proposals to ensure that in aggregate benefits to

workers are not reduced. I note that the Workcover Authority's advice to Mr Theophanous confirms that position, and I am disappointed that during the course of the second-reading debate he again characterised the bill as Workcover cuts, or worse.

Employers have been called upon for an increased funding commitment by way of a broad remuneration base and an increase in average premium rates from 1.8 per cent to 1.9 per cent of payroll to ensure long-term viability and to meet the common-law run-off commitments.

The bottom line is that the reduction in benefits to workers from the elimination of common law has been made up in increased statutory benefits in the areas of weekly payments, impairment and death benefits. The savings in legal and medical report costs from the elimination of common-law claims, together with the increased premium receipts, will be used to stabilise the scheme and to establish an appropriate funding margin.

The most common response from the critics, and particularly from members of the opposition, has been along the lines of, 'The scheme isn't broke, why are you so hell-bent on fixing it?'

Hon. D. A. Nardella — You haven't been listening!

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Yes I have. My first reaction to that is that I would have preferred to have avoided the pain, but a number of concerning issues were beginning to emerge which could not be ignored, including the inescapable problem of underlying costs running ahead of premium income, and I was not prepared to allow Victoria to go the way of New South Wales.

My second reaction was that the residual elements of a common-law system, with its basis in fault and the need for legal process, sat uncomfortably with a no-fault system founded on the ongoing relationship between employer and employee and the need for predictability and equity in scheme outcomes. Then there was the realisation that weekly benefits could more properly be structured on the basis of work capacity rather than impairment level, and that is why the issue of serious injury for weekly payment purposes was again reconsidered.

We added to that the view that non-economic losses could be more fairly, comprehensively and predictably determined under a system of medical impairment rating rather than under the outmoded incapacity concept of loss of industrial use in the table of maims and the subjective and immeasurable concept of pain and suffering applicable under the current arrangements. Finally there was our continuing concern to ensure that disputation, legal process and litigation be reduced at every turn.

A range of measures in the bill, including those relating to medical panels, conciliation and the Workcover advisory service, are designed to achieve those ends. Therefore, although the government acknowledges that many of the changes are far reaching and sensitive, I assure the committee that they were framed after extensive research, consultation and much debate, and with the responsibility we all share as members of this chamber to ensure that Victoria's system remains viable and effective in the years ahead.

I will turn to the issue of common law because that has been at the centre of the debate. It must be acknowledged that at its root common law is fundamentally incompatible with the maintenance of the employer–employee relationship that lies at the heart of successful injury prevention and return-to-work efforts.

That principle also explains why the fundamentals of the bill are not applicable to the transport accident scheme. There is rarely a direct relationship between the parties to a motor vehicle accident. The person being sued is not the person responsible for helping the motorist to be rehabilitated and return to work. That is the fundamental difference between the schemes. Workcover common-law claims pit employer and worker against each other in adversarial and drawn-out legal processes built on the need for blame.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! We have had a long day, but we have a lengthy committee stage ahead of us. As I understand it, the minister is trying to respond to issues raised in debate. Throughout this committee I intend to be consistent and try to allow those who wish to comment to do so without undue interruption. I again ask honourable members to observe the protocol I would like observed and allow others to make contributions without interruption.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Common law actively discourages managing workplace injuries and returning workers to meaningful work. It certainly

does not reinforce the employer-employee relationship because it simply cannot do so.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I will come to that, Mr Theophanous. The decision to replace common-law entitlements with enhanced statutory benefits has been misrepresented. There are falsehoods or at best misunderstandings that have been raised in debate on this issue, particularly in public debate. It is necessary to compare common law with the combination of weekly benefits and the new impairment benefit.

The maximum benefit under the new system can be more than $1 million — that is, the accumulated amount of weekly benefits plus the $300 000 impairment benefit. I cite a couple of examples. I ask the committee to consider the case of a 25-year-old male worker earning $650 a week who becomes a quadriplegic and cannot work. That person will get weekly payments until age 65 equivalent on a present-value basis to a common-law sum of slightly more than $458 000. In addition, he would get a $300 000 impairment benefit, a total of more than $750 000 plus all medical and care costs paid for life, all without having to fight his case through the courts over a number of years and paying substantial legal fees without any guaranteed outcome.

What he might get at common law depends on how good his lawyer is, whether he can prove negligence and whether he was in part negligent. From many directions I hear the claim that only common law can cope with the individual circumstances of a profound injury. But that ignores the fact that weekly benefits are available on an individual earning basis until retirement age.

In addition, there is an individual assessment for permanent impairment for determining non-economic loss compensation, which can be contrasted with the lottery element of common law — a terrifying prospect where profound injury is concerned. For example, is it right that a 30-year-old welder who suffered a fractured wrist, ankle and heel with some back injury but little or no permanent disability received $500 000 while a 39-year-old welder who suffered a fractured spine and skull with possible residual brain damage received just $67 500? That is what the common-law right has given those people.

Is it right that a 48-year-old man whose leg is amputated below the knee got $700 000 while a 43-year-old with a far more disabling amputation of his arm above the elbow got $445 000? The retained component of common law was meant to be for the most profoundly injured, to look after them for the rest of their lives. Workers are being told they can get $1.1 million at common law. How, then, do we account for the fact that under common-law settlements one-third of workers have received less than $100 000, two-thirds less than $200 000 and 98 per cent less than $500 000?

I ask the committee to bear in mind also that these settlements are for non-economic losses as well as lost earning capacity. It has been said — and I heard it said several times tonight — that an injured worker who cannot take action against a negligent third party is somehow disadvantaged by the legislation. Those workers do not need to sue because they are already protected and adequately compensated by statute. It is as simple as that.

Nor is it hypocrisy that the Victorian Workcover Authority continues to be indemnified by third parties even though the workers cannot recover damages. Recoveries by the authority are used to reduce the cost of the claim and therefore the impact on the employer's premium and to ensure that the negligent third party is held financially accountable, which is entirely just to all parties. This is to say nothing about sanctions that also exist against third parties under health and safety laws and other criminal laws.

Lawyers have been passionate in their support for the concept that a common-law settlement finalises a claim and gets people off the drip-feed of a pension system. Common law allegedly enables people to generate their own income for the rest of their lives. How, then, do opposition members explain the flood of applications for social security from workers with common-law settlements? Honourable members may know that 484 workers received Workcover common-law settlements between October 1995 and December 1996. By July this year — that is, at most, 22 months after settlement — 40 per cent of them had applied to the Department of Social Security for basic income support.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — Where did you get the figures from?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — From the Department of Social Security. A social security rule stipulates that if you have had compensation with a lost earnings

component, you cannot get social security for a period known as the preclusion period. Of the 484 workers, 148 had a preclusion period calculated. In other words, it is guaranteed they will go back to social security as soon as the period is over unless they are like the 29 whose preclusion periods had not finished but who were already being paid social security benefits. Basically, that means they were destitute. Thirteen of those people had received more than $150 000 at common law, which is why I am not persuaded by the argument of the self-insurers that a common-law settlement enables workers to get off the system. What they mean is to get off 'their' system, but what about the safety net of the public purse? Common law may have some short-term attractions but it is not the long-term solution for society at large.

As to weekly payments, and in particular in cases of serious injury, all stakeholders including employers, unions, lawyers and doctors agree that the serious injury classification had driven up costs and disputes in the system. They had actually become a barrier to return to work. The government's intention in introducing the category of serious injury was always clear. It is intended to help the profoundly injured, but the message workers heard was that somehow any other injuries that fell below the threshold were not considered to be serious in their impact.

Of course every injury is serious for the worker who sustains it. Therefore, for workers' natural feelings of loss because of injury to be recognised, they need to have their injuries classified as serious. The threshold for the seriously injured classification is the 30 per cent impairment test. That has been progressively diluted through the creative initiatives of professional groups. That is not challenged. It is a matter of record that, despite various attempts, it has not been possible to contain serious injury classifications within the intended confines.

The second difficulty with the serious injury classification is that it arguably mixes two different concepts — incapacity and impairment. Weekly benefits replace lost income, and income is lost through an incapacity for work. If the capacity to work is diminished or does not exist, the workers compensation system provides the worker with income support — but there is no direct or necessary relationship between incapacity and impairment.

Fortunately, a high level of impairment can be compatible with a high work capacity, and our paralympians are a case in point. The greatest need of people with high impairment levels is adequate medical and care support to assist them to get on with daily living, and the scheme is designed to provide that.

Opponents of the changes have been mischievous in arguing that the impairment benefit of $300 000 would not support a quadriplegic. That $300 000 was never intended to support the quadriplegic. Rather, it is compensation for having lost the use of part of the body and for the loss of enjoyment of life and so on — that is, for non-economic losses.

A quadriplegic who is able to work full time in employment equivalent to that which he or she was doing before the injury, and many are, will have the cost of all his or her medical and care needs, house modifications and so on met through the compensation scheme — for life. However, if he or she cannot work, income will also be replaced at 75 per cent of pre-injury earnings until retirement age.

As to the changing attitudes to work capacity, the new benefit categories will refocus attitudes. Instead of concentrating on what a worker can no longer do — in other words, his or her incapacity — the emphasis will be on what the worker can still do or will be able to do — that is, his or her current work capacity. Employers and insurers will be expected to keep their attention fixed firmly on maintaining or improving work capacity through sound injury management practices.

Injury management is nothing new. The principles are well known, with the early return to work being the expected outcome. Most importantly, employers must be involved from the outset. Occupational rehabilitation should be workplace based, employers must keep workers' jobs available for at least 12 months, and all parties — workers, employers, medical treaters and case managers — must be involved in the development and implementation of and commitment to return-to-work plans.

I refer to interstate comparisons, particularly between weekly benefits. Workers have been told that Workcover's weekly benefits will now be the lowest in Australia after 13 weeks of incapacity. That is simply wrong. Firstly, the 13-week step-down will occur after 13 weeks of payments, not incapacity. A worker who has attempted to return to work but who has been unable to remain there will get 13 weeks of payments at 95 per cent of pre-injury earnings. Secondly, and most importantly, to be fair one must examine the totality of the statutory

benefits available to make any credible comparisons. Let us see how Workcover benefits compare with other states and what will happen in Victoria.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Yes, come on!

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I am coming on. A worker who cannot work and who is unlikely ever to work will be able to get benefits until retirement age. A worker who can work and who is back working to the fullest of his or her abilities, but not at the pre-injury level, will get benefits until retirement age. A worker who can work but has not got back to work will get benefits for 104 weeks. All benefits will be paid as a percentage of pre-injury earnings. The benefits will not in any way be reduced or stopped because the worker also gets a non-economic loss benefit.

What happens elsewhere? A worker in New South Wales receives his or her current weekly wage for the first 26 weeks, which then drops to a flat rate of $256 a week plus dependant allowances. In the ACT the same thing happens, but the rate is $266 a week. A worker in Tasmania can get weekly benefits that in the end total $139 550. But then they stop, no matter what the age of the worker.

A worker in Western Australia can get a total of $104 800, but if he or she gets a payment under the table of maims, which has the same maximum — that is, $104 800 — any weekly benefits received are deducted. Then there is the Queensland worker. Not only is the total of his weekly benefits and the table of injuries benefit generally capped at $110 430, but as soon as he accepts the table payment his weekly benefits cease.

What does that mean in practice? I cite the example of a single, 40-year-old male worker earning $500 a week who suffers an injury. Let us suppose that he has a permanent impairment of 30 per cent that stabilises 18 months after the injury and that he cannot work again. Given the changes in the bill, in Victoria he would automatically get a $45 000 impairment benefit. In New South Wales he would get an impairment benefit of $30 000, and a payment for pain and suffering — possibly $15 000. In Queensland, though, as soon as the injury stabilised at 18 months he would get a table of injuries payment of $33 129 and his weekly benefits would cease immediately.

In Queensland his aggregate weekly benefits would be $25 651, in New South Wales $339 653, and in Victoria $488 400. The Victorian benefits will be 19 times as much as Queensland's and nearly half as much again as those of New South Wales. How can it possibly be claimed that Workcover will have the lowest benefits in Australia?

As to compensation for non-economic losses, the change to the new non-economic loss benefit system based on permanent impairment represents a significant advance for injured workers. The present table of maims has changed little since 1914 and has an implicit incapacity component — that is, loss of industrial use. That is because historically workers got either weekly payments or lump sums under the table of maims for being unable to work as a result of injury — but not both.

As I noted earlier, weekly payments are the appropriate way to compensate for incapacity. The process for claiming compensation under the table of maims is also essentially adversarial. It involves the production of extensive medical evidence — by both sides — and it requires the worker to maintain a level of incapacity to maximise his benefit, which is then negotiated between the lawyers for the opposing parties. That is to say nothing about the completely subjective and arbitrary assessment process for any associated pain and suffering.

The new system of non-economic loss compensation will be based strictly on medical impairment. As I have said, impairment and incapacity are different concepts. The new system will assist workers to get on with being healed and returning to work, secure in the knowledge that significant impairments will be compensated in straightforward, transparent and predictable ways. The only question to be answered is a medical one, which is what the worker's level of permanent impairment is, not what loss of industrial use arises as a result of the injury.

Impairment will be independently assessed by a medical practitioner who has been trained in the appropriate assessment methods. Should the assessment be disputed, the medical question will be resolved by independent expert doctors on a medical panel, not by lawyers or a court. The maximum benefit of $300 000 is the highest of any jurisdiction in Australia and is payable as a whole-person impairment level at 80 per cent or more. The next highest in that regard is Queensland, where the benefit is $220 000 if the impairment is over 50 per cent; otherwise, the maximum is $110 000. The chamber should remember that in Queensland all weekly benefits paid are taken off that sum. In the other jurisdictions the maximums range from less than $100 000 to just on $200 000.

Only three other jurisdictions, Comcare, South Australia and the Northern Territory, cover the full range of possible impairments.

It is estimated that up to 30 per cent more injuries and diseases could be compensated for for the first time in Victoria under the new expanded impairment system. Last week, topically, we were given the example of a Victorian firefighter fighting in New South Wales alongside a New South Welshman who loses a foot a leg or is rendered paraplegic. The Minister for Conservation and Land Management was accused of being totally misleading in saying that Victorian firefighters were better off.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — On a point of order, Mr Chairman, I seek direction from you. I am not quite sure about the process, but could you provide the committee with direction as to whether it is appropriate for a minister to read a complicated speech, which has obviously been prepared by the Victorian Workcover Authority, into *Hansard* in a way that we would expect to have the second-reading speech read in? We have already had the second-reading speech in *Hansard* and we do not need another second-reading speech. I ask for some direction in relation to whether it is appropriate.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! It has been the custom in the house to allow ministers in particular to read second-reading speeches for the sake of accuracy, and even lead speakers for the opposition party are often given a deal of leniency in the reading of speeches for the purpose of ensuring accuracy. In this instance, as Mr Theophanous said in raising the point of order, it is a complex piece of legislation. Many speakers have raised issues which it is appropriate for the minister to respond to, so in this instance I think it is appropriate, for the sake of accuracy, that the minister be allowed to read the comments into the record.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — The allegation was that the Victorian firefighter would be worse off than the man across the border. In fact, for the losses named, the following is the case under the new system: loss of a foot in New South Wales, including pro rata pain and suffering, $97 500, Victoria, $104 904; loss of a leg, New South Wales $105 000, Victoria $112 973; paraplegia, New South Wales $171 000 or, if the common-law election were taken, a maximum of $226 650, Victoria, $237 500.

As a final note on benefits, concerns have been expressed that the bill removes the right of a volunteer emergency worker to recover damages at law. Let me give the unequivocal assurance that it does not do that.

In respect to death benefits workers were also told before the bill was introduced that there would no longer be compensation for death if the right to sue at common law were abolished. How anybody could contemplate such a situation is extraordinary. I heard that from Miss Gould in this chamber. That allegation has been silenced now that people have seen that the new statutory death benefit is in fact generous, but I acknowledge that it could never be generous enough to compensate for the loss of a human life. In addition to the new statutory arrangements, dependants of a worker whose death was work related retain access to damages under the Wrongs Act to a maximum of $500 000.

Let us look at what the new system of death benefits provides. A 45-year-old worker earning $680 a week with a dependent spouse and three children aged 7, 10 and 13 years who will be students until they are 21 is tragically killed at work. Under the existing system his family would have received $163 360 in total benefits, equivalent to 4.6 years of his wages. Under the new system of death benefits in the bill they will receive $290 362 or 8.2 years of wages.

Take the case of a 53-year-old worker earning $1500 per week with a dependent spouse and two dependent children aged 15 and 17 years, both of whom will remain full-time students until age 21. His family would have received $146 010 or just under two years of earnings. Now they will get $324 175, or just over four years of earnings.

The lump sum and pension components of the new death benefits system can clearly be demonstrated to be a far superior system for the dependants of deceased workers than the existing arrangements, and again these changes will bring Workcover to the forefront in this area to the benefit of Victorian families.

I turn to some of the other areas of specific criticism. Last year the government amalgamated workplace health and safety functions with the return-to-work and compensation functions of the Victorian Workcover Authority in order to get the biggest possible impact on workplace health and safety performance. I recall and am happy to acknowledge that honourable members opposite gave their support to that undertaking. As a result of the

amalgamation the administrative costs of the authority have naturally increased but are still some $3 million less than the cost of the separate organisations prior to amalgamation. There has been no blow-out or inefficiency of the authority, and the Arthur Andersen report confirms that. This is again symptomatic of how ill informed much of the criticism about Workcover has been.

Since the amalgamation there has been a substantial increase in the level of assistance and supervision of Victoria's workplaces in relation to health and safety activities. For example, the number of hours actually spent in workplaces has increased by more than 60 per cent and the number of compliance notices has increased by more than one-third. There is certainly no reluctance to prosecute employers who breach health and safety legislation where that is necessary. To show we mean business, in this bill we have increased the maximum fines under health and safety laws for companies from $40 000 to $250 000 for indictable offences and for individuals from $10 000 to $50 000 for indictable offences. I hope those provisions will be supported by every member of the Legislative Assembly.

In respect of pre-existing injuries and diseases the employers, especially those who engage casual labour, believe their premiums can be unfairly affected by workers who take on a job and shortly afterwards claim that the work has aggravated a pre-existing injury of which the employer was not aware and which was not disclosed by the employee at the time of employment but for which the worker subsequently obtains compensation. In this bill we have put in provisions which will safeguard both the workers and the employers in this regard.

If, and only if, an employer in writing advises a prospective worker of the nature of the proposed employment and asks the worker to disclose all pre-existing injuries or diseases of which the worker is aware and which the worker could reasonably be expected to perceive could be affected by the proposed employment and the worker fails to do so or makes a false or misleading statement, any aggravation of the pre-existing injury or disease is not compensable. This is not discriminatory. It does not breach the commonwealth's Disability Discrimination Act nor the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act.

If the worker does not disclose any prior injury or disease, the disentitlement to compensation arises not from discrimination by the employer but from the operation of the Accident Compensation Act. However, if the employer uses the information to reject the employee's application for employment or offers less favourable terms, the employer must be sure to do so within the requirements of both the commonwealth and state acts. Not only is it not discriminatory but it offers positive safeguards to the worker. This was a question raised with me by Mr Theophanous on two separate occasions.

A worker may not be fully aware of the requirements of a job, nor may an employer be aware of how any limitations on the worker's capacity may affect his or her ability to do the job. With that information, the employer will be able to put in place effective strategies to prevent further injury and allow the worker to safely undertake work. The provision makes sure employers and workers think in advance of how to prevent injuries and how to manage pre-existing disabilities.

On the question of notice of injury, another feature of the bill is the requirement that a worker notify an employer of an injury within 30 days of becoming aware of the injury. Again, there are safeguards for the worker if this is not reasonably practicable and to ensure that this requirement does not unfairly prejudice the employer or result in a serious injustice to the worker. Employers in a number of cases continue to receive Workcover claims from workers long after they have stopped working for the particular employer in circumstances where it would have been much better for all concerned to have the injury notified so any appropriate remedial action could have been taken.

The positive benefits of this provision are that it encourages good health and safety practices and gives employers and workers the opportunity to monitor the occurrence and types of injuries. It allows the employer to put effective prevention and risk management strategies in place to address any emerging trends and to ensure early rehabilitation action takes place for the worker when necessary.

In respect of the AMA guides, almost exactly one year ago Mr Theophanous took me to task for having retained the use of the second edition of the American Medical Association guides in the act. I have taken his advice. After all, as he told the chamber last year, the second edition is:

> ... just not as capable of being used to gain the fine-tuned measurement that you get with later editions of the AMA guides. Moreover, the second edition has a number of inconsistencies and certainly a number of shortcomings associated with it, particularly

in relation to how back, neck and pelvic injuries are assessed.

He asked me to look at the matter and take it on board. I have done so after receiving expert advice from the medical panels. Moreover, I shall be using my powers under the act to approve a suitable training course for those who will be using the guides. Unless an independent medical practitioner has passed the approved training course, he or she will not be recognised as a person who can undertake impairment assessment.

Honourable members opposite now claim to be unhappy with the result of the move to the fourth edition. I think the reason for their unhappiness arises largely from the very deficiency Mr Theophanous found in the second edition. The fourth edition addresses the inconsistencies and shortcomings of the second edition in measuring back, neck and pelvic impairments. By including the fourth edition we will allow assessments to be made using the most up-to-date medical methods rather than using the second edition, which is now 14 years out of date.

Mr Nardella spoke on the 10 per cent impairment threshold. He was the last speaker to mention it. The government has been criticised for imposing a threshold to screen out impairments of less than 10 per cent. The threshold allows for some imprecision in measurement; for the fact that impairment ratings can in practice be rounded to the nearest 5 per cent; for the inevitability at low levels of impairment of non-work-related impairments being included; and for the inevitable pressure that will be placed on any threshold wherever it is set.

Honourable members should bear in mind also that impairment assessments are being used to assess compensation for non-economic loss. Such loss suffered by the individual with a minor impairment will generally be minimal. Exceptions have been made for injuries that are total losses and clearly assessable, such as amputations of fingers and toes. They will be compensated under the 'no disadvantage test' of section 98E. The policy of a 10 per cent threshold was endorsed by the now Leader of the Opposition, Mr Brumby, when he voted on 20 May 1988 for an identical measure for the Comcare scheme when he was a member of the House of Representatives.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — How much more have you got?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It certainly will not be 4 hours, Mr Theophanous. Mr Brumby said he did not vote for a complete abolition of common law although the commonwealth parliamentary records show undeniably that he did.

Honourable members interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! As I said once before, we have had a long day and we have a long committee ahead of us. Honourable members heard my ruling. I asked that honourable members on both sides of the chamber desist from interjecting when others are speaking. I will be consistent in that ruling and I will not allow constant interruptions of the speaker.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — In respect of the 10 per cent impairment threshold, I make the point that it was good policy in 1988 and we believe it remains good policy in 1998 and beyond. I remind the committee that under the TAC scheme, which has been quoted on many occasions during the debate, a 10 per cent threshold has been in place since its inception.

The bill removes causes of disputes by altering the dispute-resolution processes to enhance their capacity to provide speedy resolutions of issues between workers and employers. Cases cannot be taken to court until a certificate is issued by the conciliation officer when he or she is satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken by the claimant to settle the dispute. If the conciliation officer requests either party to produce documents or other information and it is not produced it cannot be relied on later as evidence in any court proceedings. The bill defines 'genuine dispute' as meaning there is an arguable case to support denial of liability. It also extends the powers of conciliation officers to give directions to pay weekly payments for a longer period of arrears and to give general directions in relation to medical costs. I hope those changes are welcomed by all members of the committee. They are directed at the primary principle of reinforcing the relationship between employer and worker.

There was some criticism of the changes to medical panels, but their role is to be extended by the bill. Medical panels are used in Australian jurisdictions and very widely in the USA to resolve disputes on medical issues. In Australia medical panels are used in the Western Australian, Queensland and New South Wales schemes. The benefits they provide are their high levels of medical expertise, their independence and the opportunity for

multiple-member panels to ensure consensus opinion. The decision to make their opinions final and binding has been made so that the expensive and litigious use of duelling medical experts can be avoided. While the decisions are final and binding, the medical panels must act in accordance with administrative law and the principles of natural justice.

In respect of payment by instalments, honourable members may recall the government in its amendments last December introduced a provision into the act that table of maims payments, if more than $5000, would be paid by monthly instalments over five years. That principle continues to apply in this bill, but as the maximum non-economic loss benefit is being doubled, the new payment provisions will allow an initial lump sum payment with the balance by instalments. The government's reasons for moving to a system of payment by instalment remains unchanged from last year. Although lump sum compensation is attractive to workers and provides their lawyers with fruitful grounds for recovering costs, it actually acts against the workers' long-term interests. Pursuing the lump sum becomes an end in itself and keeps the worker focused on the loss, rather than on recovery, rehabilitation and return to work. That is particularly so with the table of maims payments, which incorporate elements of incapacity — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Again I am on my feet and this time it is the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition who are yelling at each other across the chamber. I have asked members on both sides to allow the person on his or her feet to speak without interruption.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — That is particularly so with the table of maims payments, which incorporate elements of incapacity, a system honourable members opposite want to retain. Workers can become fixated by the loss caused by the injury and actually lose much more, such as the long-term financial benefits of a return to work and, even worse, damage their relationships with family, friends and workmates.

The new system compensates for permanent impairments. These impairments will stay with the worker for the rest of his or her life and therefore it is appropriate that the compensation for them be paid in a way that reflects the permanence of the loss. However, because these instalment provisions could affect some people's social security entitlements, I undertook not to proclaim the amendment until I had an agreement from the Department of Social Security that it would treat instalment payments no less favourably than lump sums — exactly the same position I put to the Parliament last year. The Victorian Workcover Authority and the Department of Social Security have been negotiating these changes over the past year. I met the Minister for Social Security, Senator Newman, about them as soon as the present reforms were announced. I am pleased to be able to say that Senator Newman has written to me supporting the favourable social security treatment of periodic payments of compensation for non-economic loss.

Because these changes will require amendment to the Social Security Act and because this in turn depends on the federal government's legislative timetable, sections 98B and 98D will not be proclaimed until the social security changes are through. Until that occurs and the new instalment provisions are proclaimed payments will be made in the form of lump sums. I strongly reaffirm the government's intention to proceed with instalment payments because it believes that will be in the long-term best interests of injured workers.

Finally, the purpose of the bill is to ensure Victoria's Workcover scheme remains the best workplace safety, return-to-work and workers compensation system in Australia. I believe the bill achieves that. I hope my comments will assist the committee's consideration of the next clauses.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! I invite Mr Theophanous to move amendment 1 standing in his name and to also canvass amendments 2, 3, 4 and 5. I understand some agreement has been made, so the committee would take for granted that the vote on amendment 1 tests amendments 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

1. Clause 2, lines 9 to 16, omit sub-clauses (1) and (2) and insert —

   "(1) This Part and sections 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11(1), 12, 14, 15, 16(2), 19, 20 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39(2), 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 60, 61, 62, 63, 67, 70, 73, 75, 76 and 77 come into operation on the day on which this Act receives the Royal Assent.".

I am breathless after the minister's performance and his reading of his speech. It was pathetic. I have never heard a minister read a speech like that on a

clause of a bill when he did not even have an intention of going into committee. We would not be in committee but for the opposition's desire to move amendments.

Hon. M. A. Birrell — That is the case every time.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is not, actually. We do not always go into committee.

Hon. M. A. Birrell — That is exactly the point I was making. You said we would not be in committee.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Why don't we start on the amendments rather than making frivolous comments back and forth across the chamber!

Hon. M. A. Birrell — Powerful opening, Theo!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Let me begin by talking about what amendments 1 to 5 do. My introductory remarks will be made in the context of those amendments. After all, under the standing orders I need to speak to my amendments. Amendments 1 to 5 change the time frame for the operation of the legislation. Amendment 1 removes the proposal the government has put for a range of sections to come into operation on the day the bill receives royal assent and for a number of other sections to come into operation on 12 November 1997. Amendment 1 lists that range of amendments to the principal act as coming into operation when the bill receives royal assent.

Amendment 2 changes the date on which sections 565 and 566, the superannuation provisions, come into operation. It concerns the amount employers have to pay in additional payments as a result of the inclusion of superannuation in the legislation. As a result the impact on small business and on other businesses would not come into effect until July 1998 — next financial year — as opposed to January 1998 and will give businesses time to plan for the additional premiums they are being asked to pay. Given that small businesses in particular have been hit hard by this government under Workcover legislation, the introduction of the experience rating system means 30 per cent of businesses — mostly small businesses — around the state will suffer increases in their premium rates.

Despite the charade the minister put us through earlier, workers will not receive the benefit of any higher entitlements or better benefits. The minister made selective comparisons but workers will not be better off under the proposed legislation. When the minister made his comparisons he omitted to mention some of the comparisons. In the selective speech produced for him by the Victorian Workcover Authority he omitted to say that in the case of the commonwealth the maximum amount payable, not for 13 weeks but for 45 weeks, is not $850 as it is in Victoria but $1014.60. Not only that, people in the commonwealth scheme receive their normal weekly earnings, which is very different from the pre-injury average weekly earnings provided for by this government. Further to that, Mr Nardella — —

Hon. M. A. Birrell — You are meant to talk through the Chair, and you know that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mr Nardella is not interested in a prepared speech.

Honourable members interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! I ask members on both sides of the chamber to settle down.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The minister and the government do not like to hear the comparisons that do not support their case. However, the fact is that under the commonwealth weekly payments the maximum is $1014.60. Not only that, there is a minimum — —

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Can Mr Theophanous remind the Chair how these comments relate to the commencement provisions we are discussing and clause 2?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am happy to remind the Chair. My amendments would change the operation of the bill all together. They would affect the weekly payments under my amendment 1, which applies a new set of weekly payments throughout the bill and changes the operation time of the weekly arrangements, including the move to 13 weeks payment rather than 20 weeks and the changes in the level of payments both for serious injury claims and other weekly benefits.

Amendment 2, to which I have just referred, relates to the payments employers make. I am simply drawing a comparison. There is no argument for employers to pay the additional amount, given that the benefits applicable in Victoria are so much lower than those in some other schemes across Australia. I am developing that argument as part of my amendment, which should be supported.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! I thank Mr Theophanous for that explanation. All members should be aware that the committee is dealing with specific clauses and amendments. Further clauses specifically deal with levels of benefits and tables, and the committee can deal with them later. Although it will be appropriate to mention some of those issues now it will be inappropriate to develop longwinded comments. The committee debate should be strictly on clause 2.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The minister made many comments under the same clause. The general point that should be made about the commencement of the legislation is that it commences a new regime that puts Victoria, and the benefits paid to Victorian workers, in a worse situation. The reason is that under the commonwealth scheme not only are payments for 45 weeks at more than $1000, but a minimum payment of $280 is payable with an additional payment for dependent spouses. Under the commonwealth system workers will not be paid $50 or $70 because they happen to be working part time or under some other crazy arrangement as happens under the Victorian Workcover scheme. The same applies in a range of other schemes. In New South Wales the first 26 weeks is paid at $1086. You did not mention that in you comparison with New South Wales, Minister; nor did you mention that in South Australia workers receive $1337.80 for the first 52 weeks. Those comparisons were not made when the minister came up with his ridiculous figures and tried to say Victoria's scheme had the best benefits in Australia. He forgot to mention those facts.

Under the South Australian scheme after 52 weeks a worker is entitled to 80 per cent of average weekly earnings to a maximum of $1295. Minister, the one you should have compared Victoria with is South Australia. Do you know why? South Australia does not have common law. Why did you not compare the commonwealth or South Australia? In fact, the commonwealth still has limited common law, but South Australia, where there is no common law, was the proper state for comparison. The maximum payment is $1337 for 52 weeks. Then the payment drops to 80 per cent with a maximum of $1295. After 104 weeks it becomes 80 per cent of the difference between NWE and what the worker is deemed capable of earning in suitable employment. It is absolute nonsense that the minister did not make a valid comparison. It is, again, part of the deception of this government.

Amendment 3 changes the time frame for the introduction of clause 25. That clause provides for the introduction of the fourth edition of the AMA guidelines for the assessment of impairment. I was interested in the minister's comments about the fourth edition of the AMA guide. He said he listened to what I had said. Perhaps he will listen again. Some aspects of the fourth edition are an improvement on the second edition, and that is what I ask the minister to examine. I do not understand why the minister has decided to specifically exclude the chapter on the assessment of pain and the use of the psychiatric tables in the fourth edition. The minister has decided to exclude those two aspects. The psychiatric tables in the fourth edition are replaced for purposes of non-economic loss. The relevant table is entitled 'Clinical guidelines to the rating of psychiatric impairment' and it was prepared by the medical panel in Melbourne in October 1997.

No explanation has been given of why one set of guides is used on some occasions and another set of guides is used on others. If the fourth edition is appropriate why carve it up into various bits and pieces? Why take out pain and suffering and psychiatric assessment and put together a hotchpotch to try to get a system that delivers the least to workers, as is always the aim of the Victorian Workcover Authority and this government?

Hon. R. M. Hallam — How is that consistent with your argument that we should simply defer the introduction? I am happy to have a debate on the AMA guide, but the effect of the amendment is to defer implementation.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The intention is to defer implementation until such time as you give an explanation of why you are using only part of the AMA guide.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Are you saying you will not get the explanation before 31 December 2000?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The purpose of the amendment is to delay the implementation of the bill, as the minister said, until 31 December 2000. The reason is that it would allow a proper assessment of which sections of the AMA guide should be used and which should not be used. Given that the minister is unable to give an explanation about why he has used some sections and not others, the opposition intends to persist with the amendment. Amendments 4 and 5 are simply consequential.

The other aspect is that significant sections of the fourth edition of the AMA guide disadvantages workers. The opposition is not convinced that a proper argument has been put for the use of the guide. It is also concerned about the hearing loss claims. Amendments 1 to 5 seek a deferral of a range of provisions of the bill, which would effectively defer the introduction of the legislation.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I will respond in the sequence in which Mr Theophanous has offered his amendments. By way of preamble I indicate that the government thought very carefully about the process of introduction, and the dates for the various sections of the legislation to apply were chosen quite deliberately.

As Mr Theophanous pointed out, 12 November is the date on which the bill was read for a second time in the Legislative Assembly. The government deems it appropriate that certain sections of the legislation commence effectively from that date. In doing so it has honoured its commitment that there will be no retrospective removal of benefits. That is why that date was chosen. Those amendments also provide a date of commencement for some clauses, which are specifically included in the listed amendments Mr Theophanous apparently wants to delete — so I am a bit mystified by that. In any event, we chose 12 November to meet our commitment that there would be no retrospectivity in the removal of benefits.

The application date 1 January largely concerns the inclusion of superannuation in the definition of remuneration. I would have preferred to have that apply from 1 July and therefore coincide with the point of application at which the increase in the premium applies — the lift in premium from an average of 1.8 per cent of salary to 1.9 per cent.

The problem is that we had a cost increase to address. The committee is considering these amendments for a variety of reasons — we do not need to canvass them again — because the underlying cost of the scheme had outstripped the premium income so we had to address the issue of costs. A decision was taken that, at least to the extent that it was addressed by the expansion of the definition of remuneration, it should apply from 1 January.

But we have made it clear that the computations of that increase will be made available to each of the employers who requests them, and the authority will be prepared to reconstruct the premiums for the second half of the year so at least no-one is disadvantaged to the extent that he or she is not able to anticipate that in the premiums for the second half of the 1997-98 financial year. I make the point again that if I had been given the choice I would have preferred to have that apply from 1 July.

I admit to being mystified about what Mr Theophanous is trying to achieve on the changes in the application date for the shift from the second edition to the fourth edition of the AMA guides. I am not being coy. It is a fact that Mr Theophanous advocated the shift from the second edition to the fourth edition.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — I advocated having a look at it, an inquiry. Read exactly what I said.

Hon. Bill Forwood — We did, and you were right.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — I asked that you examine it.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — We came to the conclusion that the fourth edition is much more up to date than the second edition. As it happens I had had that view for some time, but had been unable to persuade some of my colleagues and certainly unable to persuade some of my friends in the medical profession.

Hon. Pat Power — You are not suggesting that Theo swung the numbers, are you?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — No, but I am suggesting that the evidence that came from the review process, including the advisory committee, was that we should shift to the fourth edition.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Did they suggest it for pain and suffering, too?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Yes.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — And you rejected it.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — No. The pain and suffering is included in each of the chapters.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Why didn't you include the chapter?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Because the chapter that includes pain and suffering does not allow an assessment based upon impairment. There is a

component of pain and suffering in the impairment assessments in each of the other chapters. If you look at it carefully you will find that while you might be concerned about that on the surface it is not a continuing concern.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The advice I have is that it reduces benefits.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — This is a bit like duelling gunslingers — you get your advice and I'll get mine. But on balance the decision was taken that we should go to the fourth edition. I am surprised that your response to that is simply to seek to defer the date on which we do it. If you have some criticisms about the application — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — We are not saying do not ever go to it, but get it right.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Let me go back one step. If you are saying you are not satisfied with the totality of the fourth edition, let's have that debate. But I do not see how we can get to a reasonable outcome by simply deferring the application date of that decision.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Only sections of it could apply.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — We canvassed that, for what it is worth. We looked at it very carefully. It was decided that if we did that, one of the gauntlets we would have to run is exactly the one that is being offered now. If we had chosen bits and pieces of the fourth edition, I can hear what your criticism would have been, Mr Theophanous.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Why don't you include the rest of it?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — That's right. So we chose to bring in the fourth edition in totality and to expand it in a couple of areas. We looked at the application dates very carefully indeed — they were chosen after careful consideration — and it is on that basis that the government is unable to accept the suggested amendments.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — There is not much difference between all the sections applying at the time of royal assent and the sections you want to bring in applying from 12 November. Royal assent will presumably be given within a matter of days. It is pretty mean spirited and mean minded to want to apply the changes to workers from 12 November, which is an earlier date and before the legislation receives royal assent, but I suppose it is typical of the mean spiritedness with which this government approaches such things. I do not know how many workers are affected by it, but I would not have thought it would break the bank to allow the change to apply to workers up to the point of royal assent, as happens in many other circumstances.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 3

The CHAIRMAN — Order! In moving amendment 6 standing in his name, I invite Mr Theophanous to canvass amendments 7, 8 and 9, each of will be tested by the success or otherwise of amendment 6.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

6. Clause 3, after line 3, insert —

'( ) In section 5(1) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, in the definition of "partial incapacity", after "**partial incapacity**" insert 'or "**partial work incapacity**" '.

( ) In section 5(1) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, in the definition of "total incapacity", after "**total incapacity**" insert 'or "**total work incapacity**"'.'.

We had to use a little bit of imagination in drafting the amendment because the bill pulls the seriously injured category and the totally and partially incapacitated categories together into two categories under 'current work capacity' and 'no current work capacity'. That presents significant problems for workers. The changes are underhand and are being introduced through the backdoor. The definitions are included in clause 30, so we could have had this debate later.

You could ask how you get to the point of talking about the dual categories. Given the changes in clause 30, we could have had the same debate on amendments 56 to 59 standing in my name. Clause 30 inserts in section 5(1) the definitions of 'current work capacity' and 'no current work capacity'. I will quote those definitions because they are relevant to what we are talking about here. Proposed section 5(1) reads:

> "**current work capacity**", in relation to a worker, means a present inability arising from an injury such that the worker is not able to return to his or her pre-injury

> employment but is able to return to work in suitable employment.

Why would you use 'current work capacity' to apply to a worker who is unable to return to work? It does not make sense. The definition refers to an injury:

> ... such that the worker is not able to return to his or her pre-injury employment' ...

Why would you call that a current work capacity? I could understand it being called a current work incapacity.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Read on.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I read it several times while we were putting together these amendments. The problem is that the second definition is described as 'no current work capacity'. It reads:

> "**no current work capacity**", in relation to a worker, means a present inability arising from an injury such that the worker is not able to return to work ...

Both definitions refer to a worker not being able to return to work, but they both contain the words 'work capacity'. The problem we have — it is a serious problem — is that we have received legal advice that says the term 'current work capacity' can apply to virtually anybody.

By way of example, you could be a paraplegic unable to move from the neck down, but because you could put a pen in your mouth and type on a computer you could be considered to have a current work capacity. There is a big difference between 'capacity' and 'incapacity' in a legal sense. If you define an inability as a current work incapacity, you are looking at the injury, whereas the two new definitions, notwithstanding the reference to injuries, are about having some capacity to work.

That presents a serious legal problem because it means the Victorian Workcover Authority can say, 'We believe person X has a current work capacity because he is able to lie in bed and answer the telephone'. The definitions are insidious and do not apply in the ways the previous definitions applied. The previous definitions referred to serious injury, partial incapacity, and total and permanent incapacity.

The amendment seeks to introduce a more sensible approach. Instead of definitions that make no sense, we propose definitions that make some sense. We propose to describe one definition as 'partial work incapacity' and the other definition as 'total work incapacity.' Most people would understand that if you had a partial work incapacity you would be able to do some work but not necessarily all work. It also makes sense given that the previous definition referred to partial incapacity.

We would have been happy to accept the addition of 'work' to the term 'partial incapacity', because it would have rounded off the definition and given it a focus. However, we think the term 'current work capacity' is insidious and a perversion of the English language because it is not what the definition talks about.

We are talking about the exact opposite; we are talking about incapacity. The definition refers to a current inability. The opposition is very concerned about that definition. Amendments 6 to 9 all relate to the same matter; they attempt to insert the definitions of 'partial working capacity' and 'total working capacity' in the bill. They are far more sensible definitions than those the government has suggested. Given the numbers in this chamber, the amendment will probably be lost, but I seek an explanation from the minister about the definitions that will apply and whether a circumstance will exist where the Victorian Workcover Authority uses the literal meaning of 'current working capacity' to exclude workers from receiving payments.

The definition of 'no current work capacity' could be used to harass workers. The use of the word 'current' in that context is a real problem. How long is 'current'? Is it 5 minutes or one week or will workers be constantly put through the mill to determine their current work capacity? The opposition believes the definitions are insidious. We are talking about total incapacity, and I do not believe there is any argument about the fact that that means a worker cannot work.

Hon. Pat Power — It is also community language.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is correct, and it is what the community understands.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — One of the comments offered almost as a throwaway line by Mr Power goes to the very issue considered by the committee in the review process. I do not apologise for this change. I suggest to

Mr Theophanous that he is reading something into this which is absolutely and totally unintended. The very clear message from the consultation process and the discussions undertaken by my backbench committee was that we should try, so far as possible, to move away from the notion of incapacity. Mr Theophanous mentioned that there are currently three classifications: serious injury, partial incapacity, and total and permanent incapacity. The view of all the commentators was that we should try to move away from that and cast the description in a positive rather than negative way. The decision was taken quite deliberately.

The intent of this change is for workers and the rest of the community to focus on their capacities — that is, the positives rather than the negatives. I suggest that it is in the best interests of injured workers that this change in terminology be adopted. The government wants injured workers to think positively about their future rather than to be hung up with some sort of tag implying that they are lesser human beings.

The application of the law in so far as it relates to the terminology will be no different from that which applied earlier. The government has deliberately taken a decision to move to a positive description rather than a negative one. I say earnestly to Mr Theophanous that that was done for the very best of intentions.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I certainly appreciate the genuineness with which the minister responded on why the government has opted for the terminology it has. I raise this issue in the context of my experience with workers who have been injured. While we may feel it is more decent language to describe it in the terms the government is proposing and while we may feel injured workers will feel less marginalised or isolated in the general community, it is naive to think that the way injured workers are described will in any way alter their experiences. I say that on the basis of having had some traumatic experiences not so much with injured workers but with the loved ones and families of injured workers. The psychological trauma of being an injured worker has nothing to do with the description we or anybody else might use to describe that injured worker.

I share Mr Theophanous's concern about this. I am not suggesting for a minute that the government is being patronising in seeking to use this language. I accept the government's intention. Thinking of the people with whom I have had contact, I believe they will be made to feel even more uncertain than they currently do if the definition is changed.

While I do not have any difficulty with the minister saying the legal consequences of the different terminology will be nil, all honourable members know of the experiences injured workers will go through. Some employers will simply throw these definitions at them in a taunting way. They will say to injured workers that they have a current work capacity because they can use one hand and can answer the phone or lick stamps.

I am emphasising the reason members of the opposition feel so strongly about this, and I suspect Mr Theophanous will call for a division on this matter because it is so important. Changing the terminology will not add in any way to the sense of comfort or wellbeing of injured workers.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The question of whether the opposition decides to divide is an issue it has to resolve. Mr Power, perhaps I am naive and you are right that this will have no effect on an injured worker's self-esteem. Perhaps you are right that it will have no effect on the attitude of the community to that injured person. However, I hope you are not right because we are talking about addressing exactly the same circumstances but from the other side of the spectrum.

We are discussing the reciprocal of the previous description. To describe someone as partially incapacitated is another way of saying that they have a capacity. The government's view is that we should be taking it from the positive rather than the negative perspective.

As a matter of fundamental principle it has always been our intention to do what is humanly possible to get people appropriately rehabilitated and successfully back to work. In many cases that depends just as much on the state of mind as on anything else.

Hon. Pat Power — That is unrealistic.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Perhaps we are wrong and you are right, but I cannot see any downside in the change of terminology, and we see a positive upside.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I accept that the minister believes he is doing this with the best of intentions to put a positive description on

workers who are injured, but I return to the central point which is a primary concern, and that is the definitional issue. The minister well knows that definitions in legal jargon operate both on the basis of how they are defined in the act and on the ordinary meaning attached to those words.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I certainly don't deny that. We have had several experiences, so I can't deny that.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Absolutely, and that is the problem because, Minister, in your second definition, even more than your first, you have the notion of no current work capacity. In ordinary language, what does that mean — absolutely no current work capacity?

You could not say of people classified previously as seriously injured — over 30 per cent on the AMA scale — in ordinary language that they had no current work capacity. You could not say of, for example, a person without limbs in a wheelchair that he or she has no current work capacity. It is just not true. It is not logical, and the legal advice we have had suggests that this is dangerous and has an effect I am sure you do not want it to have.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — You know I don't!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Maybe, maybe not; I do not know. But lawyers have a way of being able to manipulate words. It is not only the labour lawyers who do that but also the insurance company lawyers. They have just been handed a significant weapon with this change of definition. I think they understand it, but unfortunately you do not. I hope we will not come back to this place with examples of workers who might have suffered more than the 30 per cent incapacity on the AMA scale being forced out on the basis that they do not meet the 'no current work capacity' definition. There is a problem with this provision and the opposition remains unconvinced by the arguments.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! The Chair is about to put amendment 6, which the committee understands also tests amendments 7, 8 and 9. Mr Theophanous, given that we have spoken about amendments 56, 57, 58 and 59, do we take it that amendment 6 is also a test for those four?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes.

Committee divided on amendment:

Ayes, 10

Eren, Mr (*Teller*)	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss (*Teller*)	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr

Noes, 32

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr (*Teller*)
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R. (*Teller*)	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Amendment negatived.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

10. Clause 3, lines 27 to 32, and page 4, lines 1 to 6, omit paragraph (c).

The opposition feels strongly about amendment 10, which seeks to omit paragraph (c), which is a bizarre provision to include in legislation. I wonder whether doctors' professional ethics will allow them to accept the responsibility that the provision will thrust on them. It is a wonder they have not asked, 'How do you expect us as medical practitioners to judge whether an injury was caused by a person's employment?'. How could a doctor know if he was not present when the injury occurred? He would not know whether a back injury was caused by a crane at the workplace or by someone with a cricket bat. It is absurd. It is overkill for a worker to be placed in the situation of having a medical practitioner make that decision without his having any recourse to the courts.

It is another example of the government's war with the judiciary. Whenever the courts hand down a decision that it does not like, the government looks for a mechanism to stop the courts making similar decisions in future. There is only one way to establish how an injury in a workplace was

caused — hear all the evidence from both sides and then make a judgment. It will not be established by having a doctor try to ascertain how it occurred. It is not a doctor's role to do that.

I ask the minister to explain how, in the example I gave, a doctor could decide whether the injury was caused by a crane at the workplace, which is what the worker said happened, or by a friend hitting him with a cricket bat while the two of them were playing cricket off the job. How could the doctor ascertain how the injury was caused?

The provision will allow medical panels to decide questions of fact about contributory negligence, which is not the place of such panels to decide. They must decide how a worker was injured, and there is no appeal mechanism. It is a fundamental shift in the system. It removes judicial discretion and places the power of testing evidence in the hands of medical practitioners. It is an erosion of the right of individuals to seek redress through the courts.

The opposition cannot support the clause as it stands. We have received no explanation for the amendment. It is overkill. We know the system of medical panels has not been working but this clause will probably cause even more legal argument. On the last occasion the minister attempted to amend the legislation in a similar way the courts overruled him. In several judgments they have said the question of whether there is a medical question is a matter for the courts.

The minister is attempting to remove that situation. He is having a second grab. He is saying, 'We will extend the definition of what is a medical question'. When the courts talk about whether the question is a medical question they will have to include the causes of the accident in the medical question. This is a further attempt to overcome what the courts have already decided is appropriately a matter for the courts and to say it should be dealt with by medical practitioners.

The minister may want to comment on whether my interpretation is correct and explain how he expects doctors to make decisions about the causes of accidents.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — By and large I have no argument with the comments made by Mr Theophanous. I do not know that his explanation is too far removed from the intent of the legislation. However, he should remember that we are talking about the definition of 'medical question'. This is a subset of an expanded definition of 'medical question'.

Although Mr Theophanous has gone to some length to say a medical practitioner is an inappropriate authority in this context, I remind him that medical practitioners make most of the decisions about workers compensation. The first point of consultation is with a medical practitioner. He gives the worker a form that says, 'Yes, you are entitled to workers compensation'.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That is on the basis of the injury.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — We long ago established that a medically qualified practitioner determines what is a medical issue.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — I have no argument with that.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I do not dispute it or apologise for it, but the government is trying to deal with an issue that has been a problem for many years — duelling experts in the courts. The government does not agree it is appropriate for a court to determine a medical issue.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — We are not arguing about that.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Then I think we should leave the discussion where it is, because this falls within the definition of what constitutes a 'medical question'.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You are expanding the definition, you are asking medical practitioners to deal with non-medical questions.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — That is your version. The government does not accept that.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Explain why it is not.

Hon. D. A. Nardella interjected.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Every initial certificate asks the same question. Mr Nardella should remember that the important word is 'or'. Proposed new section 5(1)(b) states:

> ... whether a worker's employment was in fact, or could possibly have been, a significant contributing factor to an injury or alleged injury.

Hon. Pat Power — One is a question and the other an invitation.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I also accept that, Mr Power. Assume for a moment that a doctor attends a claimant who has had a heart attack at work. Does anyone suggest for one moment that he is unable to attest to the fact of the injury? There would be plenty of circumstances in which a medical practitioner would be prepared to not just give a medical opinion but also determine the facts. The government thinks the issue of what constitutes a medical question should be determined by a medical practitioner on each occasion.

The government's view is that returning to the courts at the first sign of that being challenged should be avoided because that will take us back to going around the same mulberry bush that has dominated workers compensation for many years. The government makes no apology for saying that issues involving medical questions should be determined by medical practitioners.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The minister is not being entirely honest in the way he has presented his argument because the opposition has said from the outset that it is not disagreeing when it talks about a medical question. The real problem here is that the opposition believes this goes beyond a medical question.

I put two scenarios to the minister on that issue. The first is the one I have already put — the question of whether the employment was the contributing factor or whether the injury happened outside the employment hours. I do not know how a medical practitioner could determine that.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I described one circumstance where he most certainly would.

Hon. M. M. Gould — Your example was the doctor treating the worker at the work site.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — That is not so far removed from the real world.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — But there are not too many doctors who are treating workers in the workplace, and certainly not before they are injured. They may treat them after they are injured.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — After they are injured in the workplace — that is the circumstance I have precisely outlined.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I do not understand the circumstances. Some treating doctors may visit the workplace, but I do not understand what that has to do with what we are talking about. I gave you an example of somebody who was injured in the workplace. The question is whether the worker is telling the truth about whether he was injured in the workplace or after hours. I am asking the minister who determines that question. Does a doctor determine that? If the answer is that a doctor determines it the situation is absolutely absurd, because a doctor has no capacity to conduct an investigation along those lines.

Secondly, Minister, you used the example of a person having a heart attack at work. Let's say a worker does have a heart attack at work. The question about the contributing factor of the workplace is, as you are well aware, complex. It is not only a medical question, because the cause of the heart attack will depend to a large extent on work practices. If the work practices were such that the worker was required to exert himself unduly and as a consequence suffered a heart attack, how could the medical practitioner determine the extent to which the on-the-job practices contributed to the injury without investigating those practices and how they came about?

Hon. D. A. Nardella — What about the rules of evidence?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Mr Nardella, the problem is that at the very least one would have to say it was both a medical question and a question of other matters of fact. You would have to say that the evidence of the medical practitioner may assist in determining the facts, but you could never say you could rely entirely on that evidence to determine them. That is the problem we have with the provision.

This is part of the Workcover Authority's wish list. The minister agreed to it without considering the severe legal consequences, including the consequences it will have for individuals' rights. Most fair-minded people who think about these matters from the common man's point of view would agree that it would not be a simple medical question because other issues of fact would be involved.

Unfortunately in this example and in other examples I gave the medical practitioner would be invited to speculate about whether work practices had contributed to the injury. I do not think a medical

practitioner acting alone would be in a position to make that judgment.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I believe the issue is important, based on my personal knowledge of workplace injuries. Some of the most horrific workplace accidents occur in railway shunting yards. The provision seems to say that the question of whether a worker's employment was a significant contributing factor to his injury is a medical one.

I acknowledge that in accidents as horrific as shunting accidents, the cause needs to be assessed, as does the question of negligence. I do not believe it is possible for any medical doctor, after treating the injured worker, to pass an opinion on whether the worker's employment was a contributing factor.

We would all acknowledge that medical practitioners are highly trained and that once they commence their practice and get some experience under their belts they are competent to assess injuries, identify illnesses and so on. But I am not aware of any doctors who have, as part of their training, been exposed to and therefore gained any knowledge of how work is carried out in a shunting yard.

If an electrical worker is injured as a result of touching high-voltage powerlines, a medical practitioner would be able to say, 'This person has been burned as a consequence of coming into contact with high-voltage lines' — but again, I do not believe any medical practitioner would have the industrial background or training to enable him or her to satisfactorily respond to what proposed paragraph (b) would require.

Similarly, if a furniture worker is cut while handling glass, a medical practitioner can say the worker has a severe laceration that required stitches and so on. But unless the medical practitioner had real-life experience of handling glass and of how an accident such as that might occur, how could he or she answer a question about whether the worker's employment was a contributing factor to the injury? I understand what the government is seeking to achieve, but I do not believe — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — He has to speculate. He wasn't there.

Hon. PAT POWER — No, I do not believe it would be possible for a medical practitioner to make the kind of assessment that is implicit in the clause.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — To help the committee through the divide between the issues to be determined as a matter of fact and the issues to be determined as medical questions, I refer to section 82(1) of the principal act:

> If there is caused to a worker an injury arising out of or in the course of any employment and if the worker's employment was a significant contributing factor the worker shall be entitled to compensation in accordance with this act.

Opposition members interjecting.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Two questions are involved. The first concerns whether there is caused to a worker an injury arising out of or in the course of any employment. Let me go back to the example I used of the employee who had the misfortune of suffering a heart attack. There is no doubt in this case that it occurred during the course of employment. The fellow is on the floor of the factory. There is no question; that will be determined as a matter of fact. If there is a challenge it will be determined firstly by the insurer and ultimately by challenge, presumably in the court.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — How?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It is a question of whether it happened as a result of employment. In this case I would have thought it was fairly clear. It is a question of fact. However, the second leg after the words 'if the worker's employment was a significant contributing factor' is the issue that will be determined by the medical practitioner.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — How?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Very simply — by making a judgment whether the worker's employment was or could possibly have been a significant contributing factor. The government says the second leg of the question will be most appropriately determined by a medical practitioner rather than the courts. The problem is that until now the only time a medical opinion has not been challengeable by a court is in circumstances where the court itself has sent the issue to be determined by a medical panel. We are expanding that to the circumstances we have described. However, it is only in the second leg of the test that it is determined whether there is an entitlement to compensation. It is not determining whether the injury arose out of or during the course of employment. That is a question of fact.

Hon. Pat Power — Unless it gets to that point!

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It does not determine it. It is an issue of fact and is not a medical issue at all.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — That is determined by the parties to the dispute. We hope there is no dispute, but if there is, it is determined as a matter of fact. Then the medical question kicks in and that revolves around whether employment was a significant contributing factor.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I want to pursue the example the minister has given because I believe questions about it will be asked regularly. I thought I heard the minister say that the question of fact was not a medical question. In other words, if there were a dispute of the type I suggested, that would not necessarily be a medical question. It would be a question of the employer saying it did not happen in the workplace and the worker saying it did. That is not a medical question.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — No, it is not.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — To take it one step further, in the minister's example of a person who has a heart attack, what happens if a dispute arises between the employer and the employee as to the nature of the work practices that occur in that workplace? In other words, the employer says his workers are given regular rests every half an hour or something of that nature and on that basis most people would not suffer heart attacks — they would not be working the way the committee is currently working, all through the night!

Hon. R. M. Hallam — We could ask whose fault that was.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am sure, but there would be different views on that. The question I ask is: in the circumstance where a dispute arises about the nature of the work practices, who determines the question of fact? Is it the medical practitioner who says that, on balance, the heart attack was the result of the worker's employment or does the medical practitioner make a kind of dual report that says if the employer's version of the events are correct it would not have been a significant contributing factor but if the worker's version of events is correct it would? How would that be resolved?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I can only go back to the original explanation I gave. Before I do, let us recall that all these issues are being resolved now. We are finding our way through this. We believe the courts have been called on to determine issues that are truly medical questions. We are not trying to remove the question of determining facts from the courts. We are trying to have medical issues determined by medical practitioners, which advances the system we have now. All I can do is give you the two legs of the test. Firstly, whether the injury arises out of or during the course of employment. That should be determined as a question of fact.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That is a question of opinion.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Maybe it is a question of opinion and maybe it has to go to a court every time. We hope it does not. That is happening now. The second leg is whether the worker's employment was a significant contributing factor, and we say that is where the medical opinion should be sought.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The minister has not dealt with the example I posed. I am not doing this for fun. As you know, Minister, many people will read this debate, particularly the debate about injuries, because they seek guidance on the committee's intention. I have asked a simple question: when medical practitioners are faced with two versions, and I am happy for you to get advice if you are not sure — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Why would we be faced with two versions?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — If the employer says workers have regular breaks every half hour in the workplace and the employee says that is not correct and he or she had not had a break for 3 hours, in the first circumstance the medical practitioner's view might be, if they broke every half hour, the employment was not a factor, and could not reasonably have been a significant contributing factor. However, the employee's version may be correct and he or she may not have had a break every half hour. I will give a concrete example involving repetitive strain injury. If the employer ensures that appropriate breaks and work practices are in place workers will not suffer from RSI. If a dispute arose about work practices someone would have to determine it sooner or later. Do we give some guidance to the courts? Will the minister give some guidance in his answer?

I am asking a simple question: if a dispute arises between the employer and the employee about the work practices that led to the injury, does the medical practitioner make that decision or is it a decision made by the courts about the facts? I do not know how I can put it more plainly than that. If the minister does not want to give guidance — —

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — That is one thing on which we agree — I do not know how I can make it plainer. I go back to the twin test of whether compensation becomes an entitlement. On the question of whether an injury arose out of or during the course of employment, that is not determined by a medical opinion; it is a question of fact. If it finishes up in the courts, the question of whether the employment was a significant contributing factor is a medical issue and shall be determined by a medical practitioner.

If there is to be a dispute about the circumstances of a case, the question of how it will be determined will revolve around whether it relates to the first or the second issue. I should have thought the circumstances described by Mr Theophanous relate to the second issue, in which case the matter will be resolved by a medical practitioner. He will give an opinion in exactly the same way — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — So he will decide on the work practices. Who is telling the truth?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — He will make a decision about whether the worker's employment was a significant factor. That is the law.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — How will he determine whether the worker is correct in saying, 'I did not have half-hour breaks. I had a break every 3 hours', or whether the boss is correct when he says, 'No, I give my workers a break every half an hour'? How can the medical practitioner give his opinion on that issue?

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — He uses a lie detector.

Committee divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 32

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr (*Teller*)	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr (*Teller*)	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Noes, 10

Eren, Mr	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs (*Teller*)	Pullen, Mr
McLean, Mrs (*Teller*)	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to; clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

11. Clause 5, page 7, after line 8, insert —

'(4) In section 5(A)(1) of the **Accident Compensation Act 1985**, omit "calculated at the worker's ordinary time rate of pay for the worker's normal number of hours per week.'.

Amendment 11 seeks to insert into clause 5 a new subclause 4. Section 5(a)(1) of the Accident Compensation Act is about the worker's pre-injury average weekly earnings, the basic definition that will determine what a worker will get. The opposition has some concerns about the way workers' wages are calculated under the government's proposals. I mentioned earlier that when considering interstate comparisons the minister indicated that we should compare Workcover with Comcare and the South Australian scheme since they are the two schemes where there is either no common law or very limited common law. In the case of Comcare the normal weekly earnings are used, and they include a range of other award rates. In South Australia the worker's average weekly earnings are used, which again includes aspects of employment not included in the Victorian scheme.

In Victoria average weekly earnings are calculated at the worker's ordinary time rate of pay for the normal number of hours worked per week. It does not include overaward or other payments. As a result many workers will receive significantly less

than the tables suggest. To make ends meet, people will work overtime. That is particularly true in a lot of industries where the injured workers are shift workers. However, it is also true in a range of industries on the shop floor where often the base rate of pay is not much more than $300 a week. Therefore workers seek to increase their payments by a variety of means. Working shifts is one way, overtime is another, and so on. Even if they are being paid at 95 per cent of pre-injury earnings, let alone 75 per cent after the 13-week drop, injured workers could finish up with not much more than $200 a week. The opposition does not think that is fair. That is one of the reasons that a number of workers will not receive much more than social security payments under the government scheme.

The opposition says that if you remove common law, as the bill proposes, you should increase the weekly benefits. One way of increasing the weekly benefits so that the workers are not trapped in the way that they are is to change the definition. I know we have had this argument before on other legislation, but the opposition believes the argument now has more force because common law is being removed and therefore workers' rights are being taken away.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I have some sympathy for the proposition Mr Theophanous puts. I acknowledge that in some circumstances the real earnings, including overtime and so on, may be substantially more than the ordinary time rate of pay and the normal hours per week would suggest. A number of things must be said: firstly, we are looking at the amendments against a background of having to address the system's cost. Secondly, we had to take into account the anomalies that arise when you go to average weekly earnings as opposed to ordinary time. That is not as simple as it sounds because it may depend upon the season or a particularly busy year for the company.

Anomalies are built into the notion of having overtime become part of the computation. The government thought the best way of addressing that was to stay with pre-injury average weekly earnings on the current basis but to increase the cap to 125 per cent as opposed to 100 per cent. That was part of the rationale.

The concept of pre-injury average weekly earnings based upon ordinary time rates of pay and normal hours per week is hardly a new concept. It has been around since 1985. It was actually the mechanism employed under Workcare. I hope we find a better mechanism in the future. I have some sympathy for that. Given the circumstances, we thought the most appropriate way to address the matter would be to raise the cap rather than to become involved in a computation based upon overtime.

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — In his response the minister spoke about the difficulties with different seasons and the fact that rates of pay might vary throughout the year. However, clause 5 provides for the inclusion of superannuation benefits. When employers calculate superannuation benefits they will have to take into account shift allowances, overaward payments and overtime penalties. They are already adding an extra benefit, but the workers will not benefit from it because of the average weekly pre-injury earnings. The opposition argues that superannuation benefits should also be paid for injured workers.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — The minister said he would examine this in future. I am sure there will be further amendments some time next year. Will the minister be prepared to revisit this issue on the understanding that he said he not only has some sympathy with it but also that there may be other mechanisms to revisit this particular provision?

A number of injured workers have told me that they survive because they can earn higher pay rates through shift allowances and penalty rates. My first full-time job involved a permanent afternoon shift. It had a penalty rate of 15 per cent and a lot of overtime. Obviously fluctuations occur during recessions and times of economic difficulties but generally overtime is spread over a 12-month period.

The minister might consider a longer period if the consultations deem that to be appropriate. If the minister considers there should be a further averaging out to take into account seasonal factors, a time frame of 18 or 21 months may be more appropriate. I instance fruit pickers, who experience peaks and troughs over a 12-month period. There may be a drought one season and a bumper crop the next. There should be an averaging-out formula that takes that into account, particularly when one considers the decrease from 13 weeks to 75 per cent of earnings. It should at least be 75 per cent of what the minister calls real earnings. That is what the average should be based on.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — Again I make the point that I have some sympathy

for the views being expressed by opposition members. I make the point to Mr Nardella that there is no such thing as a simple averaging formula because of all the vagaries he nominated. If the period of averaging is extended to capture the peaks and troughs, in most circumstances it will also go back to a lower wage base. In seeking to establish the averaging formula process you have to be a bit careful that you do not throw out the baby with the bath water.

The government looked at it very carefully. I suspect that the issue would be very high on the priority list in every review of workers compensation in every jurisdiction because I acknowledge that it is a sensitive issue. The commitment I am prepared to give is that as a matter of course it will come back for review in a future context. I also point out that it was carefully considered in the review just undertaken.

For all the reasons we have discussed in the committee tonight it was determined that the most appropriate way to address the issues and to capture the complications we all acknowledge as significant was to use the existing base but increase the cap. I suspect every other jurisdiction has a cap, although they may use different bases.

The government's conclusion was that the best and fairest way to address the concerns would be to shift the cap rather than try to find a perfect formula.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I understand what the minister is saying, but that assists injured workers who earn higher salaries or wages. It is now higher than it was — it is $850.

Hon. Bill Forwood — It is 125 per cent.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — Yes, but it is $850 a week. The efficiency and productivity rhetoric means in part that people on low wages will remain at a lower level of wages.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I acknowledge that.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — Labourers and unskilled people rely on their penalty rates or overtime. Those payments are absolutely critical for them. I know because I was once a trades assistant. The minister knows that a base rate of $350 means a real wage of $450 a week after overtime and penalty rates are included. The 75 per cent figure is an unreal calculation, especially for lower paid workers. It builds in a massive disadvantage given all the tests that have been put in place to determine the level of injury and whether a person is eligible to remain on Workcover. That is a real factor.

Averaging out will be difficult and there is a whole range of other factors. Another option might be a two-tiered system. Although even that would be difficult, I put it on the table in respect of lower paid workers who may be the only breadwinners in their families and for whom this will be a massive disadvantage.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I will make a couple of points by way of clarification. I am not suggesting for a moment that the increase in the cap is the solution to the problems we are talking about. I am saying that from all the investigations the one thing we concluded was that there is no such thing as a perfect formula to try to capture the pre-injury real earnings. I give a commitment to again look at it very carefully.

I suspect our solution is always more likely to be to increase the percentage of pre-injury earnings than to change the definition of what pre-injury earnings are. I suspect that at the end of the day we will get the relief the opposition is looking for by shifting the percentage rather than by shifting the base on which that percentage is calculated.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I am sure the minister would acknowledge, although perhaps not necessarily agree, that the bill is controversial because people believe that as a consequence of its passage certain categories of workers may be worse off than they are now. I do not dispute that there are administrative difficulties in establishing average weekly earnings, although I would argue that in the great majority of cases it would be possible to average out the average weekly earnings of even a seasonal worker without necessarily disadvantaging that worker.

As Mr Nardella pointed out, it is of concern that the community will believe that lower paid workers will be significantly disadvantaged by the measure. Workers who are comfortably remunerated by definition do not need to have the add-on contributions that lower paid workers need just to make ends meet. Accepting the minister's suggestion that the most likely scenario is that the percentage will be increased, and notwithstanding that that is better than nothing, it seems there is still the problem of lower paid workers receiving payments that do not reflect their previous average weekly earnings.

The minister is to be commended for giving an assurance that the issue will be monitored and may be one of the first things revisited. It is not possible in the committee debate tonight for the opposition to accept this as a solution, given its commitment to the broad community, and especially lower paid workers. I think it would be possible for the government to say especially to lower paid workers that their payments will be predicated on their average weekly earnings.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 6

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — On behalf of Mr Theophanous, I move:

12. Clause 6, omit this clause.

The opposition strongly opposes clause 6 because it is extremely discriminatory. It will exclude those on the commonwealth Work for the Dole program from being covered by Workcover. The clause is outrageous and discriminates against unemployed workers who are forced to work for unemployment benefits. The commonwealth program does not specify young people but the bulk of those involved will be young people. The jobs available for people working on the dole will be low-skilled, menial, labour-intensive jobs that are known to cause injuries.

The opposition strongly criticises the government for even considering including a clause designed to exclude from workers compensation coverage a group of people who will be working in Victoria under a commonwealth program. The employers will not be covered and will not have to ensure that workers on the program under their direction are covered by Workcover or follow appropriate work practices or that the jobs are done in a safe and appropriate manner. It is a huge concern to the opposition. We ask the minister to seriously reconsider the clause because of its discriminatory nature.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The government cannot accept the opposition's amendment because it would delete a very important clause of the bill. I go back one step and reassure the committee that people participating in the commonwealth Work for the Dole program will not be disadvantaged.

I have a letter from the Honourable David Kemp, federal Minister for Schools, Vocational Education and Training, dated 16 September 1997, which states:

> The commonwealth government has been advised that it is unlikely that projects operating under the Work for the Dole initiative will establish an employment relationship at common law. The commonwealth's view is that there should not be an employer–employee relationship established between either the commonwealth or a host organisation and the participants.

The letter continues:

> The commonwealth recognises the need for protection for all participants in the Work for the Dole pilots but not as employees. The alternative to workers compensation coverage for participants is to provide equivalent accident and liability insurance.

The most important line states:

> The commonwealth intends to purchase accident and liability insurance for all participants.

The commonwealth is stating that an employer–employee relationship will not be established in the scheme so workers compensation will not be involved, but the participants will be protected under an accident cover taken out by the commonwealth. The government has been asked to include in the bill a clause acknowledging that, but it has taken it one step further and said that the clause in the bill will not operate until the government is satisfied that the commonwealth has done what it has undertaken to do.

The government has a concern that is slightly different from the one just expressed by the opposition. If we assume that the commonwealth has offered protection, proceed with the bill and exclude protection under workers compensation and the commonwealth does not provide cover, our Victorian employers would be subject to claims at common law.

The government has two sides of the coin to protect. The government has considered the issue very carefully and resolved that the best way around it is to establish to its satisfaction that the commonwealth has covered Work for the Dole participants in Victorian pilot projects. If it is established that that is the case then, and only then, will the government proclaim this part of the bill.

I make it clear that no participants in the scheme will be exposed. The government is also concerned to ensure that no employer in the scheme will be exposed, and that is the way it has determined to get around the issue.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — What levels of protection for participants in the Work for the Dole program will the government accept instead of the current protections under the act?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I will read directly from the letter. It states:

> The alternative to workers compensation coverage for participants is to provide equivalent accident and liability insurance.

Hon. M. M. Gould — For the state of Victoria?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Yes.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The equivalent to what applies in Victoria?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I am sorry, Mr Theophanous, I read an extract from the letter in your absence. I will not go through it again. However, I can give the committee a commitment that no-one involved in the scheme will be exposed as a result of anything in the bill. The government will not proclaim that part of the clause until it is satisfied that both employers and employees are duly covered.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 7

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

13. Clause 7, omit this clause.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 8

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Mr Theophanous to move amendment 14, which will test amendments 15 and 16.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

14. Clause 8, lines 5 to 25, omit sub-clauses (1) and (2).

The opposition has some concerns in relation to the sporting aspects of these provisions. It seeks to omit subclauses (1) and (2) of clause 8. Amendment 15 would simply make a numbering change, and amendment 16 would insert 'included' and omit 'disregarded' in proposed section 5A(12), which concerns the calculation of a worker's average weekly earnings. The provisions in clause 8, when taken together, seek to do something we think is a bit mean spirited. Proposed section 5(1)(h) refers to:

> ... remuneration paid or payable to a person within the meaning of section 16(1) engaged by an employer to participate as a contestant in a sporting or athletic activity in respect of the services provided by the person while the person is —
>
> (i) participating as a contestant in a sporting or athletic activity; or
>
> (ii) engaged in training or preparation with a view to so participating; or
>
> (iii) travelling between a place of residence and the place at which the person is so participating or so engaged ...

We understand people who are involved in sporting activities as part of their employment will not be covered as a consequence of the changes. We think that is a bit mean spirited. Take, for example, members of Parliament who play tennis on the Parliament House tennis court. My interpretation of the changes is that while they are playing they will not be covered for workers compensation. I am not sure whether they would be covered when walking over there with racquets in hand. Is that correct?

Hon. R. M. Hallam — No.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Perhaps you can tell us what the amendment does, Minister, if it is read in conjunction with clause 8(3), which inserts proposed section 5A(12):

> For the purposes of sub-section (1), if at the time of the relevant injury the worker is a person within the meaning of section 16(1) engaged by an employer to participate as a contestant in a sporting or athletic activity and the relevant injury is not received while the person is —
>
> (a) participating as a contestant, engaged in training, or travelling ... any remuneration paid or payable for those activities is to be disregarded in calculating the worker's average weekly earnings.

Why would you want to disregard the payment of remuneration for a sporting or athletic activity that might be carried out by a worker in the course of his or her employment? I understand how you work out the pre-injury average weekly earnings of a worker,

but why would you not include remuneration received as a result of that kind of sporting activity if that were part of the remuneration the worker actually received?

I am sure many people in the community who receive that type of remuneration for various forms of sporting activity. I believe the change also means some sportspeople who might receive remuneration from various employers would miss out as a result of that being disregarded in the calculation of average weekly earnings.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — My understanding is that the effect of the honourable member's amendment would be to maintain the status quo. That is, the legislation will continue to cover all injuries of professional sports persons who also undertake non-sporting related employment with the same employer, perhaps by getting involved in promotions and the like. From our point of view that maintains an anomaly in that sportspersons not undertaking non-sporting work — say, promotional work — are not covered. The bill is designed to overcome that.

The present provisions are, in our view, anomalous in their treatment of sporting contestants. Some people who undertake other paid work for their sporting clubs will be covered for sporting injuries, whereas those who do not do additional paid work for their employer will have no coverage at all for their sporting injuries. The provision is designed to remove that anomaly, and it supports the government's policy that sporting injuries should not be covered by workers compensation. What we have here is a difference of policy.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Isn't that what I said — that sporting injuries would no longer be covered and that the removal of that subclause would actually bring things back to the status quo, where sporting injuries are covered?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — What you are trying to do is bring it back to the status quo.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Where sporting injuries are covered.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — No, the effect of your amendment would be to maintain what we regard as an anomaly — that the only sporting injuries covered are those where the person involved does other work for the same employer.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — But you want to get rid of all sporting injuries.

Hon. Bill Forwood — No, it applies only to professional sportspeople, not to you or me if we play cricket for the parliamentary cricket team.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I understand the explanation given by the minister relates to my amendment 14. My amendment 16 seeks to include the remuneration paid or payable to an employee who participates as a contestant in a sporting or athletic activity and whose injury is not received while he or she is a participant or engaged in training, or travelling to and from the activity. We are talking about an injury that actually occurs in the workplace.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Doing promotional work.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Well, it refers to a worker. My understanding is that it does not have to be a professional sports person, it can be any worker who is engaged to participate as a contestant.

However, whether we are talking about a professional sportsperson or someone who is engaged by an employer to participate as a contestant in a sporting or athletic activity, if the relevant injury was not received while the sporting activity was taking place, why should the remuneration paid as a result of the sporting activity not be included in the allocation of weekly earnings?

To cite an example, if someone is being paid $340 a week to work for, say, a soccer company but the employer says it wants that person, in addition to his or her normal duties, to participate as a contestant in a sporting activity, the minister says if there is an injury that is not sustained on the sporting field the remuneration received for the sporting component of that person's activities will not be included in calculating the earnings. That aspect seems quite unfair to a person in those circumstances.

Although the minister is correct in saying that the government's decision to include clauses 1 and 2 removes an anomaly, it does so only by removing the right of sportspeople to obtain benefits.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — Mr Theophanous's amendment relates to section 16 of the Accident Compensation Act, which deals specifically with sporting contests. In so far as the honourable member is looking for a change in the

way the remuneration base is calculated, I point out that we are talking only about persons engaged to take part in sporting contests — professional sportspeople.

Mr Theophanous has a view that his proposed changes relate to a sector of the economy which is much broader than that. In any event, the effect of the changes reinforces the fact that the government does not believe workers compensation is appropriate for professional sportspeople, particularly those engaged to take part in sporting contests, but it does not want to knock over people who also take on employment for the same employer in another capacity.

In that context, where a compensation entitlement is disputed it shall not include the compensation related to a sporting contest. It will relate only to the employment relevant to our earlier discussions. I recognise that that sounds complex, but I assure the committee it is designed to remove an anomaly and it is consistent with the government's policy decision that workers compensation should not be extended to include professional sportspeople.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — Although the minister's interpretation is correct, the opposition does not agree with him because many people who work for clubs do so as a result of their sporting capabilities. Although they may work with a club as bartenders, their real job is to be out on the field training seven days a week and perhaps contributing to the club's success in that way. The bill provides that if those people are injured on the sporting field they are not entitled to anything.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Yes, they are. We presume it will be under their contract.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — You just said you don't include professional sportspeople.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Okay, but they will have a contract with the club. We are talking about professional sportspeople. Are you suggesting we should cover James Hird's knee under workers compensation?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — No, but that is not what this is all about.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — That is precisely what this is about.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — But it is also capturing the sort of example I am giving. It means that the person who works for the Northcote City soccer club in the bar and also plays for the club, if injured, would not be able to claim whatever remuneration the club gives him. He would be entitled to benefits based only on the remuneration paid for working behind the bar.

The trouble is that the breakdown of the person's remuneration might well show that he is getting $200 or so for working behind the bar and $400 or $500 for his work associated with being a sportsperson for the club. Therefore he will not be covered whereas he was previously. Many big companies have teams playing in various sporting activities, and somebody pays the team members remuneration — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — But they do not employ them to take part in sporting contests. That is a different circumstance completely. That was my point to you earlier, Mr Theophanous.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — But in the example I gave the committee, the person behind the bar has a double employment. That person is employed to do both. The government wants to create consistency by reducing the rights of workers. In the time I have been in this place I have never seen this government create consistency by increasing rights.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 9

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

17. Clause 9, lines 16 and 17, omit proposed new paragraph (da) and insert —

    '"(da) establish and fund an independent WorkCover Advisory Service and an Industry Ombudsman;".'.

I am not sure what the government has in mind in seeking to fund a Workcover Advisory Service, or on what it will advise. Perhaps the minister may explain that in his response to the amendment. However, I am sure that the Victorian Workcover Authority badly needs something similar to an industry ombudsman. Honourable members may be aware that there is an insurance ombudsman and a banking ombudsman. Insurance companies involved with workers compensation contribute to the office of the insurance ombudsman to help defray the establishment and ongoing costs.

In relation to Workcover, insurance companies could fund an industry ombudsman and use the ambit of that ombudsman to cover Workcover. The opposition believes this position will be additional to an advisory service. It is an attempt to be pro-active and positive. The opposition is not suggesting the industry ombudsman would be someone to which a worker would have recourse because he or she was not satisfied with decisions about the level of benefits or anything like that. It is purely about process, complaints, maltreatment or mistreatment. It is a positive suggestion and I would be interested in the minister's attitude to it.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The effect of amendment 17 would be to add the word 'independent' in the description of the Workcover Advisory Service and then require the establishment of an industry ombudsman. The description of 'independent' would not add much, because the government intends the Workcover Advisory Service to be independent. It will be accessible to employers and employees. It is designed to make the process flow.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — How will it be made up?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I am not sure because that has not been resolved, but we will get the best people we can. The service is designed to ensure the conciliation process is user friendly and it will be established with the best intent and will in the world, but I do not see it as having the function of an industry ombudsman, which is a new concept and is not one that attracts me. I will consider it, but I do not see the traditional role of the Ombudsman as being similar to the role we have planned for the advisory service.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — We also say they are separate.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — The government will consider them separately. I am not persuaded of the need to put in the description of 'independent' but I will consider the concept of an industry ombudsman. I am happy to consider further any suggestions Mr Theophanous may make as to how it can be established.

I am advised that the Victorian Workcover Authority has written to the Victorian Trades Hall Council for input on the advisory service, which is an indication of its bona fides and determination to make it work. I would welcome Mr Theophanous's suggestions as to how it can be expanded and enhanced.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to; clauses 10 to 12 agreed to.

Clause 13

The CHAIRMAN — Mr Theophanous will move amendment 18, which will test amendments 20, 21 and 22.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

18. Clause 13, line 23, after "dispute" insert "or until the expiry of 28 days after the referral for conciliation has been lodged".

The purpose of the amendment is to have a dispute process in place for the processing of claims. It will attempt to overcome delays in the compensation scheme. The amendment reinstates the 28-day period in which conciliation can occur. The scheme operates to ensure that after 28 days from when the matter was referred to conciliation it can be brought before the court. Clause 13 effectively removes the 28-day provision and gives the conciliation officer free rein to take as long as he likes to determine whether the claimant has done everything possible to settle the dispute.

I do not see why the minister has seen fit to make this change. Section 49(b), which relates to certain proceedings referred for conciliation, states:

(b) until the earlier of—

(i) the issue of a certificate by a Conciliation Officer stating that all action in respect of the conciliation of the dispute has been taken; or

(ii) the expiry of 28 days after the referral for conciliation has been lodged with the Senior Conciliation Officer in accordance with section 55.

The minister is putting in place of those two criteria the single rider that until the conciliation officer has issued a certificate he must be satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken by the claimant to settle the dispute. That, in effect, removes the catch section where, if the conciliation officer has not done his job properly, automatically after 28 days there is deemed to be a dispute.

I do not understand how that provision will improve the process. I should have thought it would make the process somewhat worse because it means individual conciliators can simply stretch the

process without being concerned that automatically after 28 days a dispute is deemed to exist.

Amendment 20 would delete the clause that repeals section 55(4), which compelled senior conciliation officers to issue a notice and to specify a date — that is, the 28-day argument — when the conciliation process would be conducted. Amendment 20 would restore an obligation. As with the abolition of the 28-day rule this clause will cause delays, confusion and chaos. If the referral goes astray there is no process by which it can be brought to the attention of the claimant. This provision rewards incompetence and time delays. It leaves workers with little acknowledgment of or information on the progress of their claims. When coupled with the abolition of the 28-day rule it means conciliators are entitled to do nothing in whatever time frame they wish. It is not a sensible provision.

Amendment 21 seeks to omit proposed new subsection (9A), which states:

> If a party refuses or fails to produce any document or provide any information requested under subsection (9), the document or information cannot be tendered as evidence by that party in any proceedings under this Act which relate to the dispute.

I do not understand why the government seeks to insert the provision, which means that if an employer or employee does not produce a document that document cannot be tendered in evidence at a later stage. That could mean that in individual circumstances the discretion of the judge to determine what evidence is admissible could again be removed by this clause. It will mean that all parties will spend resources providing all the medical documents and material at the conciliation stage. It will lead to disputes about failure to produce documents, whether there was a failure to produce and whether documents can later be produced. This clause adds to the confusion caused by the other clauses I have mentioned.

Amendment 22 seeks to substitute 10 weeks for 24 weeks in section 59(7). It states:

> A conciliation officer may direct payment of weekly payments during a period that is before the direction is given, but that period must not exceed 10 weeks.

The government's proposal would have that period not exceed 24 weeks. We do not have any problem with that except that the opposition seeks to delete the figure 24 and insert 10, and to ensure that period is not exceeded. I am trying to deal with a number of amendments simultaneously, which makes it somewhat difficult in one respect, but we can test that number now. The clause will make the process more cumbersome and less workable.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — We will have to agree to differ on these amendments because the government sees the bill as improving the conciliation process whereas the opposition's amendment seeks to maintain the status quo and at the same time pick up the expansion in powers in the granting of unlimited weekly payments. The honourable member's amendment would remove the efficiency and cost-containment measures relating to the dispute-resolution process and pick up those which I acknowledge as being significant in improving the process. The amendment would result in disputes continuing.

We have heard criticism about the suggestion that we include a time frame of 28 days for the conciliation officer to determine whether a dispute is in existence. I know where Mr Theophanous is coming from. He says that unless the conciliation officer has resolved the issue within 28 days, the matter should be taken to court. That simply provides an escape clause if somebody wants to abuse the system.

The government thinks it has found a better way around the problem Mr Theophanous has described by saying that the conciliation officer must issue a certificate if he or she is satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken by the claimant to settle the dispute. The clause says he must issue — he does not have a choice. That is a better way of dealing with the problem than simply putting a time line on it.

As to the opposition's concern that the production of evidence subsequent to the conciliation process would be some sort of retraction of rights, I point out that the government looks at it differently. Here is another circumstance in which the conciliation process could be ambushed — simply by denying the conciliation officer access to the medical evidence, knowing full well that it will be trotted out at the 11th hour in the subsequent court action.

We are simply coming at it from different perspectives. The opposition says its amendments would improve the conciliation process; the government says it would not and the bill would result in a better outcome. In any event, about the only thing we can agree on is that we both want the

conciliation process to work better than it does now. We are debating how that might be achieved. The government cannot accept the amendments.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I understand the reasoning behind getting rid of the 28-day time limit. The problem is that I am not satisfied, given the performance of the conciliation service and having seen some of the corporate plan that we discussed sometime ago, that it is meeting its time lines, which is not exactly encouraging. It is encouraging that some performance targets have been set, but the service is nowhere near reaching those targets.

The opposition is concerned that the government may be closing one loophole but opening another. The conciliators themselves will know that they are not under pressure to make the litmus-test decision about whether they are satisfied. They will not have to be satisfied within 28 days; they could take three months.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Yes.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They could take six months.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — They might take two days.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Well they might, but there has been discipline imposed to try to have them done within 28 days.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — No. There is a chance for the entire process to be frustrated by simply assuming that that must go on at the expiration of a certain time.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I suppose the objective test will come when we see whether things improve or get worse as a result of the changes. Having put the opposition's concerns on the record, I again ask the committee to accept the amendments.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I refer to section 49(b) of the Accident Compensation Act, which the amending legislation will get rid of. The section that refers to the expiry of 28 days after the referral for conciliation has been lodged was amended by act no. 7 of 1996 — that is, it was amended recently. Is the minister saying that the 28-day expiry provision has not worked and that that is why he is taking it out?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — No, I am simply saying the government thinks it has come up with a better mechanism to ensure that the conciliation process works, rather than putting a time limit on the process.

Again I go back to the clause we are speaking of, which says that when the conciliation officer is satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken by the claimant to settle the dispute, he or she must issue. The government's view is that in general terms that is a better mechanism for ensuring that the system works, rather than simply imposing some sort of arbitrary time line.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I am concerned about the possibility of delaying tactics and procrastination. I understand what you are saying, but — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Delaying tactics by whom, Mr Nardella?

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA — By the insurance agent, for instance, who may have knocked off payments to an injured worker and may be procrastinating his way through the processes.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I will just remind the honourable member of what we are talking about. I again read clause 13(1), which substitutes section 49(b):

> until the Conciliation Officer has issued a certificate, which the Conciliation Officer must issue if the Conciliation Officer is satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken by the claimant to settle the dispute — —

Hon. Bill Forwood — He has been stuffed around by other people.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It does not make any difference.

Hon. Bill Forwood — It doesn't make any difference so long as the claimant has done his bit.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Then the conciliation officer has to issue the certificate. I think that addresses the concerns Mr Nardella has raised.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 14

The CHAIRMAN — Order! I invite Mr Theophanous to move amendment 19, which I understand also tests amendments 23 and 24?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — Yes, I will deal with these together, again for expediency. I move:

19. Clause 14, omit this clause.

Amendment 19 seeks to remove clause 14, which is about costs. The relevant section, section 50(1), says the court:

> (a) must award costs, including costs directly relating to a referral to conciliation (other than the costs of the Authority, authorised insurer, employer or self-insurer), against the party against whom a judgment or decision is made ...

It will now read:

> must award costs against the party against whom a judgment or decision is made ...

The words 'including costs directly relating to a referral to conciliation' will be removed.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Yes.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The removal of costs directly relating to conciliation is another unfair burden on workers. Remember, we are talking about what happens when a worker wins a case, not when he or she loses. We are talking about a worker who has been through the conciliation process and been to court and who is seeking to recover costs as a result of winning the case. Until now those costs have been paid by virtue of the application of section 50(1)(a) of the principal act.

This is another example where every bit of cost cutting involves an attack on workers. A worker goes to court, wins the case but cannot get the costs. Until now workers have been able to get the costs. I do not understand why this sort of mean-spiritedness is necessary in our community, particularly given some of the other horrendous aspects of the legislation. Most people would think that in a case as basic as this perhaps Victorian Workcover should be up for the costs when it loses.

Hon. M. M. Gould interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It would probably seem fair to most people, I suspect, but it obviously does not seem fair to the government.

Amendments 23 and 24, which I am dealing with as well, propose changes to clause 18, which inserts proposed new section 59(9) as follows:

> If the dispute is, or includes, a dispute as to the liability for the payment of compensation under section 99 in respect of an injury and the Conciliation Officer is satisfied that there is no genuine dispute with respect to such liability, the Conciliation Officer, unless sub-section (8) applies, may give a general direction or further direction to the Authority, authorised insurer, employer or self-insurer, to pay subject to and in accordance with section 99 the reasonable costs and services specified in that section up to a total of $2000 in respect of the relevant injury.

The opposition is proposing the omission of 'up to a total of $2000'. This relates to medical costs, and we are saying that a medical cost is a medical cost. If a worker is injured and has to spend a considerable amount of time in hospital and the cost is far greater than $2000 I should have thought it would be in the interests of expediency where it is an established thing and the conciliator understands that it is a medical cost — I am sure the conciliator would be competent to determine that — that he should make the decision about the medical cost and get it out of the way. There is no need in this circumstance to put a limit on the amount; it just has to be a medical cost as determined by the conciliator. That would help considerably.

In relation to medical costs and to the other aspect of costs, which I have discussed under amendment 19, where there is an attempt to erode the right of workers to receive costs when they win court cases, the opposition is seeking a response from the minister in relation to both of those matters.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I could simply repeat the comments I offered the committee in my last contribution, because what Mr Theophanous is describing is just more instances of complication in conciliation, and the government's view is that we should be doing whatever is possible to make it work. One of the things we believe to be imperative to make it work is to remove the level of litigation that is currently involved. We want it to be, as I said, user friendly. That is why we do not support having legal representation at conciliation.

On the other hand, if the parties want to take legal representation, pay for it and get agreement from the other side, that is up to them. I would correct one thing Mr Theophanous said. He said that when the worker goes to court and wins the case he cannot get the costs. That is not true.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Cannot get conciliation — that's the clause we are dealing with. Let's not play with semantics.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I am not playing with semantics; I am making it very plain. The government sees a fundamental difference with costs in so far as the conciliation process is concerned.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Okay. Our alternative is to provide a free advisory service to all who seek it. This is the fundamental difference.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — But it has worked up until now.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Okay, and that is your argument. I started off by talking about that earlier and you criticised me. Your response is, 'It's worked okay, so don't fix it'. That is the thrust of your argument.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The problem is it has worked okay but it has benefited a few workers along the way and therefore you are going to knock it off.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I know it is becoming late in the following day but I think that is a bit unfair. I have staked my reputation on the conciliation process; I have supported that from day one. I fought like hell to get it into the system on the basis that it would be fair to both parties involved and that we would get a simple, easy and effective resolution process.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — On the rare occasions when I have complimented the minister I have done so over the conciliation process.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — Okay. Let us understand it is not aided and supported by highly paid legal representatives in the process. All we are saying is that the courts will no longer grant costs incurred in representation and conciliation, and it is done quite deliberately. I do not apologise for it. It is just that we disagree on an issue of policy.

Let me make this point: all the clauses of the bill we have been discussing have been designed specifically to make the system work better for both the injured worker and the employer.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — It is a pity you have to change it.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to; clauses 15 to 20 agreed to.

Sitting suspended 6.58 a.m. to 7.47 a.m.

Clause 21

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

25. Clause 21, line 22, after "21 days" insert "after the reference is made or such longer period as is agreed by the Conciliation Officer, the County Court, the Authority, authorised insurer or self-insurer".

Amendment 25 has the effect of changing section 68(1) of the Accident Compensation Act 1985. Together with amendment 26 it would result in section 68(1) of the Accident Compensation Act providing:

> A Medical Panel must form its opinion on a medical question referred to it within 60 days after the reference is made.

In effect, we are removing the provision in the act which says:

> ... after the reference is made or such longer period as is agreed to by the Conciliation Officer, the County Court, the Authority, authorised insurer or self-insurer.

I do not know whether the minister understands the opposition's intentions here, but if you extend the number of days from 21 to 60 you do not also need a provision that allows you to extend it beyond 60 days. That is what the government has done by simply making the change to 60 days but leaving in the words 'or such longer period as is agreed by the Conciliation Officer, the County Court, the Authority, authorised insurer or self-insurer'.

If the government is not moving to 60 days it does not need an extension beyond 60 days; it is superfluous and unnecessary. The minister may want to comment on how he sees the section

operating and whether the provision to extend beyond 60 days will be implemented.

Amendment 27 deletes clause 21(4) of the bill, which inserts proposed subsection (4) in section 68 of the act. It states:

> For the purposes of determining any question or matter, the opinion of a Medical Panel on a medical question referred to the Medical Panel is to be adopted and applied by any court, body or person and must be accepted as final and conclusive by any court, body or person irrespective of who referred the medical question to the Medical Panel or when the medical question was referred.

The opposition objects to this provision on bases similar to those it has identified in the past. Principally, it concerns the fact that the medical panel decision is final before any court. This strengthens those provisions. The opposition indicates its strong objection to the maintenance or further strengthening of this proposition over the power of medical panels and courts.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The government does not apologise for strengthening the position of medical panels; again, it presumes to resolve this matter on the question of a difference in policy. The government has taken the deliberate decision to ensure that medical issues are determined by medical panels rather than being referred to a court.

I take on board the honourable member's comments about the extension in the time in which the medical panel must form its opinion from 21 days to 60 days. The original change was to ensure that we had a practical reference process. I acknowledge it should be rare that we would need the additional authority to let it go beyond 60 days on the agreement of the conciliation officer, the County Court, the authority, authorised insurer or self-insurer. It gives the system some added flexibility.

The government would still hope to have the medical opinion determined within 21 days. I would certainly hope to have it in 60 days, but we do not want the process frustrated past the arbitrary deadline. Given that in some of these instances the decisions are very intricate, sensitive and require the empanelling of several panellists, it is an important process. It is given more importance by the amendments brought to the committee. Our position is that we give the panel every opportunity to meet the newfound responsibilities asked of it. It was on that basis that we moved from 21 days to 60 days. I shall keep an eye on that. I cannot imagine that we would require the additional time. It is designed to give the medical panel process additional flexibility.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 22

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

28. Clause 22, omit this clause.

This restricts the circumstances in which the dependants of deceased workers can bring actions against employers. Section 82(2) of the principal act states that where a worker dies:

> ... the worker's dependants shall be entitled to compensation in accordance with this Act.

I am uncertain how one can have something that is not in accordance with the act but is subject to the act, or vice versa. Will the minister clarify why it was deemed necessary to insert the words after 'entitled', which seem to be redundant, as a consequence of the words, 'in accordance with this act'? It does not make sense to me.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I am advised that clause 22 of the bill is consequential and is simply designed to indicate how classes of payments would be covered in the case of a death of a worker. I am somewhat bemused by the amendment that would omit the clause. Since there are no proposed opposition amendments to the provision that inserts the new death benefit the purpose of the amendment is unclear. My advice is that clause 22 is simply consequential on an earlier amendment.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 23

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

29. Clause 23, omit this clause.

Clause 23 deals with the disclosure of pre-existing injuries of workers when applying for employment. That is the reason the opposition strongly opposes the clause. Without going into the reasons it outlined in the second-reading debate in any depth, the opposition's objection stems from the fact that, notwithstanding the example the minister gave during his contribution during that debate that in rare circumstances the clause will assist workers

applying for employment with benevolent employers, in the vast majority of cases employers will run away at 100 miles an hour as soon they know prospective employees have been involved in workplace accidents or suffered injuries.

I do not know if the minister understands this, but the opposition believes that the consequences of the clause will not only be discriminatory but will also result in getting fewer people back to work, which is one of the prime objectives of the legislation. Employers will not want to take on people with pre-existing injuries, even after retraining. There are circumstances in which people would not want to disclose, even for reasons of embarrassment — —

Hon. R. M. Hallam — They do not have to disclose. There is no rule of law that says they have to disclose.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — If a person has an injury and does not disclose that person takes the risk of not being compensated.

Hon. Bill Forwood — That's not true. If it is a new injury they will be compensated.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, but if it is an injury to an existing condition that person will not be compensated. That is the risk the government is asking workers to take. I cite some examples. If a male had suffered an injury to his reproductive organ or his testicles it might not be the sort of thing he would want to disclose to a potential employer. If a woman had suffered an injury and required a breast implant that might not be the sort of thing she would want to tell an employer.

However, under the proposed legislation unless they told their employers about those injuries they would not be eligible for any compensation if they suffered an aggravation of those injuries. The provision is a disgusting, petty, mean-minded and discriminatory approach to people who have conditions they may not want to tell anyone about.

Consider another example. Would every person who had had a heart attack want to give an employer his or her medical history? At the end of the day it would be doubtful that the employer would put on such a person. The legislation could make every person who has had a stroke unemployable because those people will have to divulge that fact to prospective employers, and no employer will take the risk.

I ask the minister whether if he were an employer he would put on somebody who had suffered a stroke and bear the risk of that recurring and having his premiums increased as a result. On that basis the opposition strongly opposes the clause.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I do not intend to canvass the background to this feature of the proposed legislation because we have talked around it on a number of occasions and debated it in this chamber. I simply make this point: members of Parliament took a quite deliberate decision as legislators to impose a specific responsibility on employers in the state concerning the safety of their employees. We said to employers in the real world, 'From here on in you shall be responsible for your workers. You will be required to maintain a safe workplace and you will have this statutory authority'.

At the same time we also said to employers that in recognition of that responsibility we would do what we could to restrict the responsibility to those areas where it was reasonable for them to have some influence over the conditions. I well remember the debate that took place at the time about the exclusion of travel claims under workers compensation. That was driven by exactly the same philosophy.

In this case it strikes me as being a bit tough to say to employers, 'We have just told you that you have to accept the responsibility but the employee is not required to disclose a previous medical condition that will have a direct impact on that responsibility'. We have to agree to differ.

The government is saying that if an employee has an existing medical condition which he or she would expect to be relevant to the employment then the employee has the choice of either declaring it or not declaring it. There is no mandatory requirement. But if the employee chooses not to declare it — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — They have to lie. They have to make a false disclosure.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — That is the second or third time you have said that.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — It says that in the bill.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — No, it does not. I did not accept it the first time you said it and I certainly do not accept it now. All it says is that if the employee chooses not to disclose the pre-existing medical

condition he or she cannot rely on that for a claim of aggravation of that condition. That seems to me to be a relatively simple proposition.

Hon. D. A. Nardella — It does say that.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — We have to agree to differ.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — In reality a person who has had an injury will be forced not to disclose it if that person wants a job. That is what you are forcing previously injured workers to do. It means that they will then not be covered by the legislation. I worked in the construction industry. If you went to an employer in that industry and said, 'I have a crook back', 'I have busted my arm' or 'I have had these injuries', you would not get a job. That will be the effect of the clause. I understand what the government is doing, but the effect is not fair because it will discriminate against workers who have been injured.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — Just to clarify one point, it does say:

> If ... the employer in writing ... requested the worker to disclose all pre-existing injuries ...

What happens if the employer asks in writing, 'Do you have any pre-existing injuries?'. When asked the question by an employer a prospective employee will have to answer it. He will not be able to just leave it blank. If he did the employer would ask the question again. In effect he has to say, 'No', which means he has to tell a lie if he wants to get a job. People will be injured and will not be eligible for compensation. It is a sad state of affairs that we have come to this.

Committee divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 31

Asher, Ms	Hallam, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr (*Teller*)
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr (*Teller*)	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs
Furletti, Mr	

Noes, 9

Eren, Mr	Power, Mr
Gould, Miss	Pullen, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Walpole, Mr (*Teller*)
Nardella, Mr (*Teller*)	

Pair

Baxter, Mr	Nguyen, Mr

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 24

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Mr Theophanous on amendment 30, which will also test amendments 31 and 32.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

30. Clause 24, omit this clause.

These three amendments are about an increase in the hearing threshold from 7 per cent to 10 per cent. It is another example of reducing benefits of workers. There is no logic to it except to say, 'Here is another cost-saving exercise'. Can we look forward next time to the minister proposing 15 per cent, 20 per cent or whatever?

I ask the minister a specific question because obviously we are going to disagree on this. It is not clear to me whether the way the provision is worded a second claim would be allowed once someone had got to the 10 per cent threshold. Perhaps it can be clarified by the advisers whether if a person gets to the 10 per cent threshold and makes a claim, has a deterioration and makes further claim, the further claim can be dealt with in smaller denominations of less than 10 per cent or can be dealt with only in 10 per cent blocks. On one reading of the act it is necessary to reach the 10 per cent threshold and then get another 10 per cent. The wording suggests it is necessary to get another 10 per cent block before another claim can be made. Can that be clarified?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — My advice is that we are not sure, Mr Theophanous.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — What is it that you would like, Minister? Make a decision.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I am not sure what the preference would be. I had not thought about it until you raised it with me.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The current situation is that a person gets to 7 per cent and if that person's hearing deteriorates he or she is entitled to incremental claims — it does not have to be in 7 per cent blocks. I would have thought it was a fairly simple and straightforward thing to say that the intention is not that it be in 10 per cent blocks. I do not believe that would have been the government's intention, and that would probably clarify it.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It certainly was not my intention, but in view of the inquiry I am not sure that I can clarify that given the way the clause has been drafted. I will clarify that to my satisfaction, and I can give the committee my assurance that that was certainly the intention of the clause.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I thank the minister for what he said. The opposition intends to divide on the clause because it objects to the increase from 7 per cent to 10 per cent.

Hon. D. A. NARDELLA (Melbourne North) — I ask the minister why there has been an increase from 7 per cent to 10 per cent. We had this debate when the threshold of 7 per cent was imposed. The minister did that some time ago. Why has the bar now gone up so much? My understanding concerning hearing loss is that each percentage is an exponential increase, not a flat rate of increase, which means it is a greater loss of hearing. It is a decibel measure.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The threshold of 10 per cent was chosen to make it consistent with the rest of the legislation. We have a standing threshold of 10 per cent, and the decision was made to have a hearing loss threshold consistent with that.

House divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 32

Asher, Ms	Furletti, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Powell, Mrs (*Teller*)
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr (*Teller*)
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs

Noes, 10

Eren, Mr	Nguyen, Mr (*Teller*)
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr (*Teller*)
McLean, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 25

The CHAIRMAN — Order! I invite Mr Theophanous to move his amendment 33, which will test amendment 34.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

33. Clause 25, page 26, lines 9 to 23, omit proposed sub-section (7).

Amendments 33 and 34 refer to the AMA guide. Amendment 34 would omit the words '(other than chapter 15) as modified by this act', and we have already discussed chapter 15. The opposition has also put its objections to proposed new subsection (8). Amendment 33 would have the effect of removing the reference to the psychiatric component as well. We have discussed both provisions.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to; clauses 26 and 27 agreed to.

Clause 28

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — In moving amendment 35, I will canvass amendments 36 to 42, which seek to amend clause 29. I move:

35. Clause 28, page 43, after line 17, insert —

"(15) If a worker has an entitlement under this section, he or she may be paid either in accordance with this section or in accordance with section 93CA, 93CB, 93CC or 93CD, whichever is the greater entitlement.".

This amendment and the others seek to reinstate some of the weekly benefits the legislation erodes. I will go through each briefly. Amendment 35 would insert proposed new section 93C(15) which would say:

> If a worker has an entitlement under this section, he or she may be paid either in accordance with this section or in accordance with section 93CA, 93CB, 93CC or 93CD, whichever is the greater entitlement.

That would allow workers to be paid under the old scheme or the new scheme, whichever offers the highest amount. It is aimed at those workers who are currently on 70 per cent and under. It would not apply to the 5 per cent rate because it does not involve new injuries. The amendment has been moved because it is unfair to have one class of people getting 5 per cent less than a new class.

Amendment 36 seeks to insert '26 weeks' rather than '13 weeks' in proposed section 93CA. We have already been through that. A period of 26 weeks would bring the legislation into line with legislation in other jurisdictions. I have already said that in South Australia, which is the only comparable state without common-law rights, the initial period is 52 weeks and the maximum payment is $1337.80. The least we can do is keep the level we currently have, which is 26 weeks.

Amendment 37 will insert the word 'actual' so that the provision reads, '95 per cent of the worker's actual pre-injury average weekly earnings'. The committee has already debated that issue. The same applies to amendment 38. Amendment 39 seeks to differentiate not on notional earnings but on current weekly earnings, which I am sure the minister understands.

Amendment 40 does the same thing for notional earnings. The main issues here revolve around amendments 35 and 36, which have not been canvassed. They attempt to ensure that workers receiving 70 per cent of their pre-injury earnings are not disadvantaged by substituting '13 weeks' for '26 weeks.'

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 29

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

43. Clause 29, page 46, line 15, omit "75" and insert "80".

I will detail amendments 43 to 54. Amendment 43 seeks to increase the amount of 75 per cent to 80 per cent because that is more appropriate. I suggest 75 per cent is a bit mean; 80 per cent is the midway figure between those currently on total and permanent incapacity and those on serious injury.

The figures provided by the Victorian Workcover Authority suggest that some 6100 workers are classified as TPI and around 4500 are classified as seriously injured, so the number of TPIs is increasing and the number classified as seriously injured is being reduced.

The government aims to cut the cost of Workcover. I have already referred to the 75 per cent rate. Further savings will occur as a result of the reduction from 26 weeks to 13 weeks for first entitlement payments, which will apply to everyone. That will result in considerable savings. I should have thought when all of those things are put together it would be much fairer to move to 80 per cent.

I know the minister will say, 'But we have increased the level to $850'. I suppose at the end of the day this is an actuarial question as much as anything else, but given the way the government calculates the pre-injury weekly earnings, $850 will not provide significant increases to many more people.

In addition, small increases will be paid to some workers while others are excluded. As I said, 80 per cent is a reasonable figure. Is the minister prepared to consider whether the actuarial advice suggests that 80 per cent is affordable?

Amendment 44 refers to the issue of actual earnings again. The same applies to amendment 45 for notional earnings, which are currently weekly. Amendment 46 is the same.

Amendment 47 omits the subparagraph which states:

> where the worker's employer cannot provide suitable employment, makes every effort to return to work in suitable employment at another place of employment.

That should not be up to the worker alone. The employer should help find the worker suitable employment. It should not simply be put back onto the employee as another obstacle in getting paid the benefits. If the government wanted to create a balance it would put a similar obligation on the

employer to find the worker suitable employment in another place of employment.

Amendment 48 is consequential. Amendment 49 inserts a clause which states:

> Without derogating from the obligations imposed under section 122, where the worker's employer cannot provide suitable employment, the employer should make every effort to assist the worker to return to work in suitable employment at another place of employment.

It clearly makes the point that this ought to be, at the minimum, a joint obligation of both the employer and the employee.

Amendment 50 is consequential on other amendments. Amendment 51 once again is about total and partial incapacity.

Amendment 52 is consequential, seeking to install 80 rather than 75 per cent.

Amendment 53 is consequential on other amendments discussed by the committee, and amendment 54 is also consequential, seeking to install 'incapacity' for 'capacity'.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I am happy to respond to the honourable member's comments regarding the level at which the benefit rate was struck — namely, 75 per cent as opposed to 80 per cent. I have some sympathy for his comments. I would like to have made the rate higher than 75 per cent, and I will not offer — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Didn't the Premier offer to, at one stage?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — I will not offer you the explanation that 75 per cent is any fairer in terms of entitlements of those currently on 75 per cent as opposed to 90 per cent because, as you pointed out, some other issues should be considered in the same context, and the cap was one. But the suite that we looked at was much broader than that as well.

The government discussed this in respect of the grandfather issue, in general terms, and there were some other ramifications. We also considered it against the background of the $300 000 for non-economic loss, and we actually changed the levels at which the various entitlements cut in; so we went back to square one and looked at the commitment we had given in advance — that in aggregate terms the entitlement to injured workers would not fall. The conclusion was that we were required to strike the benefit rate of 75 per cent.

We considered that very carefully; in fact we agonised over how we might get the best possible outcome for those unfortunate enough to be caught up in the process. I am happy to give the commitment. That was the first thing that went back on the table when we considered the suite of changes. I would have loved to make it 80 per cent.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The Premier did offer it.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — There were other components of the same offer.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — The same components you have now.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — It was not offered in isolation.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — It was offered on the basis that the unions pull their heads in.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — There was that to it as well.

Hon. M. M. Gould — In your view the unions needed to pull their heads in.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — We agree to differ on that as well. It was an effective offer that was on the table and the unions said, 'Up your jumper'. It was not put on the table in isolation, that is my point. It was part of a package, and we reconsidered the package.

I am happy to give this commitment to Mr Theophanous: the issue of benefits will remain very high on the list of priorities in respect of any further reconsideration of the scheme.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I need to make this point: the Premier made the offer. There is no difference between the package included in the bill and the package suggested by the Premier except that this component is missing. It must have been checked by actuaries and it must have been deemed to be affordable. The only reason it has been withdrawn is that the Premier did not get his way and people were not prepared to be silenced. Be that as it may, the minister did not indicate to the house

his view on the obligations of both employers and employees.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I am quite relaxed about the search for suitable employment being a joint obligation. I know that in the vast majority of cases employers will be absolutely prepared to be involved in that, particularly in those cases where the employers are unable to provide employment directly.

I make this point in an earnest way: we really cannot expect to have hordes of employers running around searching for work for those caught up in the process. This provision simply ensures that employees also take an interest in the search for alternative employment. The effect of Mr Theophanous's amendment would be to delete that completely, and that is not realistic.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — Proposed section 93CB(b)(iii) at page 47 of the bill is proof that the government is making a demand of injured workers that it is not prepared to make of employers. It is not a question of the minister asking injured workers to have an interest. The bill provides that injured workers make every effort to return to work in suitable employment. Who is to decide what 'every effort' means? The minister says one cannot have hordes of employers looking for work for injured workers, but he expects hordes of injured workers without any support or resources to look for suitable employment.

If the bill is to remain as it stands, it is further evidence of the preparedness of the government to treat injured workers in a discriminatory manner and in a way that disadvantages things.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I refer Mr Power to section 93A(3)(a)(iii) of the Accident Compensation Act. Mr Power will find the provision we are speaking about is part of the existing act.

Amendment negatived.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

55. Clause 29, page 50, lines 23 to 25, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert "than 40 per cent of the worker's pre-injury ordinary hours; and".

This amendment seeks to omit the words '15 hours per week and is in receipt of current weekly earnings of at least $100' and insert '40 per cent of the worker's pre-injury ordinary hours'. This is simply an attempt to highlight the fact that, in many instances, the application to receive weekly payments is based on the insurer being able to determine that a worker's entitlements to weekly payments do not cease after the expiry of the second entitlement period within the meaning of section 93CB(1) if the authority is satisfied that the worker has returned to work for a period of not less than 15 hours.

The opposition seeks to insert '40 per cent of the worker's pre-injury ordinary hours'. That is a fairer way of doing it. Employees work different hours; some injured workers work part time or half time. An employee working 20 hours a week would have to work for three-quarters of the time he worked before he had the right to claim. The opposition's amendment is a fairer system. I ask the minister to think about it in the future.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I am happy to think about it in the future. We thought about it earnestly when we were drawing up the specific clause to which Mr Theophanous has referred. This is a new entitlement which takes an injured worker beyond the cliff of 104 weeks in circumstances where the worker is able to work less than 40 hours a week. We did not believe the capacity to do some work in those circumstances should be somehow a penalty on that worker. That is a new circumstance.

The question then arose of a reasonable test of that process. We chose 15 hours and $100 to ensure it was not some sort of token process or open to manipulation in the context of a family company.

The government is trying to establish the bona fides of and protect those involved, given the special circumstances of the people who find themselves in that category.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 30

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Amendments 55 to 59 were canvassed earlier. I invite Mr Theophanous to move amendment 60.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

60. Clause 30, page 55, lines 30 and 31, omit paragraph (f).

I believe the amendment is consequential on amendment 36.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 31

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

61. Clause 31, omit this clause.

The committee should note amendment 61 will also test amendment 83. The amendment seeks to omit the clause.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — We think there has been a misunderstanding and that your amendment has an unintended consequence.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It may be an error. I will have to refer to the act.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I may be able to offer the committee some assistance. The effect of the deletion of clause 31 would be to remove the benefits that give 12 months of weekly payments to workers injured within 12 months of retirement. We suspect the amendment is misconceived.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The amendment is about people who retire. The minister wants to insert in section 93E the words 'within the period of 52 weeks before attaining retirement age or' after the word 'injured', which will mean that after attaining retirement age a worker would be entitled to weekly payments for no more than the first 52 weeks, whether consecutive or not, if there is an incapacity to work.

At the moment, if the retirement age is 65 the worker is entitled to a further 52 weekly payments after turning 65. The government is saying that if within 52 weeks before attaining the retirement age the worker is injured and does not continue for the full 52 weeks, he would receive a lesser payment.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I understand the circumstances to be those described by Mr Theophanous, but for one point. As the law stands, if a claim arises within the final 12 months before retirement, the entitlement ceases on the 65th birthday. The bill gives 12 months cover in those circumstances, but the effect of the opposition's amendment would be to knock that out. The government's amendment is designed to overcome an anomaly, but it seems the opposition's amendment is misconceived.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to; clause 32 agreed to.

Clause 33

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Amendment 62 will test amendments 63 to 73, which seek to amend clause 36.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

62. Clause 33, page 58, line 3, omit "12 November 1997" and insert "commencement of section 33 of the **Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Act 1997**".

Amendment 62 will have the effect of not making the changes to the table of maims retrospective. Proposed section 98(6) would allow workers injured before 12 November 1997 to claim under the old system.

Amendment 63 seeks to omit proposed sections 98C(2) and (3). The opposition does not believe the formula is fair, as we made clear during the second-reading debate. A worker with horrendous injuries has to reach the 80 per cent threshold on the AMA scale to receive the $300 000. The opposition believes a better way would be to insert a simple clause that would read:

> The amount of the non-economic loss in respect of permanent impairment is to be based on the worker's degree of impairment and level of incapacity to an amount not exceeding $300 000.

The opposition is happy to leave the cap at $300 000, but it is unhappy with the way the provision has been calculated. Injured workers first have to jump the 10 per cent hurdle before they can get anything. Having jumped over that, they must jump over a number of hurdles that the government has put in their way before they can claim up to $300 000.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — They are not hurdles.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The formula is based on the AMA calculations. The opposition says it ought to be based on the degree of impairment and the level of incapacity.

Amendments 64 to 72 inclusive are consequential. Amendment 73 would ensure the loss of an injured worker's functions would include the effective loss

of those functions rather than he or she having to physically lose the functions in question.

My concern about the table of maims and section 98C led to the opposition obtaining a legal opinion from a Latham Chambers Queen's Counsel. The opinion states:

> I am particularly concerned with the so-called 'no disadvantage' clause in section 98E. In the second-reading speech the minister referred to this 'no disadvantage' test. However, a number of points should be made about that provision. It is only applicable where there is a total loss. As my instructing solicitor is aware, only a minuscule number of injuries result in claims where there is a total loss of a bodily limb or other total loss referred to in the table in section 98E. Almost all injuries involve partial losses. There is no guide as to what constitutes a total loss for the purposes of the table. For example, if a worker suffered an almost complete amputation to the leg leaving a small stump, is this regarded as a total loss? A reference in the table to a total loss including the permanent total loss of use of such a limb does not greatly assist resolution of this problem.

On the basis of that legal advice from a prominent QC the prospect is that, perhaps inadvertently, the table of maims was constructed with the use of the term 'total losses'. The minister may well have created a circumstance where except in rare circumstances a complete and total loss would result in no claimants, or at least no claims, under the table. I am not sure whether that was intended. Perhaps the legal advice is incorrect.

The opposition strongly objects to the 10 per cent and is concerned that the minister should take note of the opposition's amendment 73. Will the minister answer our concerns?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The rules have not changed on the treatment under the table. The no-disadvantage test was introduced to ensure that so far as was possible we could demonstrate that nobody was disadvantaged as a result of the introduction of a different basis of assessing non-economic loss. The honourable member is concerned about the way the provision will work in practice. His legal advice is inconsistent with the advice we were given when drafting the bill.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — The opposition places on record its strong objection to the introduction of the 10 per cent threshold, which will cut out many people from any payment under the lump sum rules. The opposition hopes it does not apply in the way suggested by its legal advice.

Committee divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 31

Asher, Ms	Hallam, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Atkinson, Mr (*Teller*)	Katsambanis, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Best, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Bishop, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Ross, Dr
Bowden, Mr	Smith, Mr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Ms (*Teller*)
Cover, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs
Furletti, Mr	

Noes, 9

Eren, Mr	Power, Mr (*Teller*)
Gould, Miss (*Teller*)	Pullen, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	Walpole, Mr
Nguyen, Mr	

Pair

Craige, Mr	McLean, Mrs

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to; clauses 34 to 37 agreed to.

Clause 38

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

74. Clause 38, omit this clause.

The purpose of the amendment is to remove those features of the bill that are designed to dictate how a lump sump payment will be made.

The minister has told us that he has been in touch with the federal minister and that the federal minister has told him that she is looking at how the change to lump sum payments will affect DSS payments. The minister seems confident that the DSS payments will not be disallowed. I understand that he has given his assurance that the clause will not be implemented until such time as proper arrangements are in place.

There are other issues beyond that which we want to make absolutely clear. One of them relates to the paternalistic attitude of the Victorian Workcover Authority to injured workers concerning their entitlement to their own money. We think it is simply a measure to delay the payment of appropriate lump sums to injured workers. It runs counter to all the principles the government espouses about the rights of the individual, the ability of individuals to control their own lives and all that stuff. Instead, you throw them out the window whenever it suits you.

At the very least people should be given a choice. If they want to go onto the scheme to receive weekly payments, so be it; but I dare say very few people would make such a choice if it were offered to them. We think that part of the bill is paternalistic. We do not think it is necessary, and we ask the government to rethink it.

The minister got upset when I read out what a particular Workcover Authority officer said, but the fact is that those comments were made. The attitude that injured workers waste their money and cannot be trusted with lump sums runs right through the authority. That sort of paternalism has no place in a modern democracy. We should not have to put up with it, and injured workers should not have to put up with it either. We oppose the clause.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I suspect we will again determine this to be an issue of policy. Our view is that we should move away from the lump sum mentality at every opportunity. We see the payment of lump sums as inconsistent with the primary objective of getting people back to work. In that context it is relevant to note the terms of the letter sent to me by Jocelyn Newman, the federal Minister for Social Security, about the effect of the clause. In her letter she says in part:

> As you note, during our discussions on 21 October, I indicated support for the proposed change from paying compensation for non-economic loss from lump sums to instalments. I indicated some concerns about the possibility of cost-shifting, however.

She goes on to say:

> Officers of the Victorian Workcover Authority have since supplied further details of the proposed package of reforms. They estimated a net saving to the commonwealth —

a net saving to the commonwealth, Mr Theophanous —

> of some $26 million per annum, which is the sum mentioned in your letter.

Senator Newman then says:

> My department is still finalising its own costings but expects them to be of a somewhat lesser, though still significant, magnitude.

She goes on to say:

> Given these savings, and on the understanding that the department will be able to continue liaison and negotiation with the [Victorian Workcover Authority] on other aspects of the package, to ensure an implementation which is in the best interests of all parties, I am happy to confirm my in-principle support for favourable treatment of periodic payments of compensation for non-economic loss.

She then makes the observation:

> This would require a change to the Social Security Act and would need to be considered in the context of the 1998 budget.

I am happy to give the committee an assurance that until the legislation Senator Newman spoke of is passed, we will not proclaim the clause. I think that is a fair undertaking.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I thank the minister for that commitment, but I want to make a point here. We do not want to come back when this is finally resolved. I notice in the letter that is provided by the minister that the Victorian Workcover Authority estimated a net saving to the commonwealth of some $26 million. If the commonwealth is making a saving of $26 million it means that there is an entitlement not going to the workers; somebody is going to be paid the $26 million. The consequence of that is that it is not simply for us a matter of the commonwealth doing a deal with the state and saying, 'Look, we'll pass this thing and give them a partial benefit whereby they don't lose all of their social security rights but they lose some', and in the event the commonwealth gets $26 million. If that is what this is all about then again the workers are going to miss out.

The opposition wants an assurance that irrespective of what the commonwealth does the workers will receive no less in a benefit under any proposal that is

put up in terms of weekly payments that will be provided under this scheme than they would receive if they were going to be paid in a lump sum.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — That is the basis of the original commitment I gave to the honourable member and to the Parliament. We are not prepared to proclaim that provision in the legislation until we are absolutely satisfied that no worker will be disadvantaged as a result of the change from a lump sum to periodic payments.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 39

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move amendment 75, which will also test amendments 76 and 77:

75. Clause 39, line 5, omit "(1)".

This is one of those petty issues where the government has again shown how mean-spirited it is, because with these proposed amendments it seeks to impose a test on workers who die overseas whereby they have to get prior permission from the Victorian Workcover Authority before they become eligible to receive the cost of the funeral. I do not know how a worker who dies overseas will be able, in those circumstances, to make international phone calls or whatever is required.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It is what they are required to do. They must contact the Victorian Workcover Authority to get prior permission before the funeral can take place. That is another example of the pettiness and mean-spiritedness with which this minister and the government have approached the legislation.

Hon. R. M. Hallam — I think that is an unfair representation. The clause simply ensures that where an injured worker chooses to go overseas to have some sort of medical treatment, say a back operation in Sweden, he or she would be required to get permission beforehand — nothing more. No reasonable request will be — —

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Before they go to Sweden?

Hon. R. M. Hallam — Yes.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Because they have to get permission before they go in case they die?

Hon. R. M. Hallam — If you want to make it difficult, that is your option; but at half past 9 in the morning I would have thought we could find a way around it. This is simply to stem any likely abuse in the future.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I quote from the same legal advice the opposition received in relation to this clause and that I read out earlier:

> This seeks to avoid a payment for a burial or cremation costs for workers outside Australia unless the self-insurer gives prior permission.

This seems to be rather petty, as such claims would be very few in number. If a worker dies overseas, does the government really expect the person's body to remain unburied until the authority, employer, authorised insurer or self-insurer investigates the claim? It is a good question and it indicates yet again how another clause in this bill was not thought through. As a consequence a whole range of workers — mainly of ethnic background — will be disadvantaged. So much for your government support for multiculturalism.

Honourable members interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! We have had a very reasonable debate. It has been long but reasonable, and I ask members to stay calm while we move some of these amendments.

Hon. PAT POWER (Jika Jika) — I support Mr Theophanous in his concern about this amendment. I listened with interest to what the minister said, which was that the intention was to create a circumstance where if an injured worker went to Sweden for an operation on his or her back it would be necessary for that injured worker to get permission from the Workcover Authority first.

Certainly the opposition would not have any difficulty with that, but the explanatory notes in relation to clause 39 say:

> ... by limiting the circumstances in which the authority, employer, authorised insurer or self-insurer is liable to pay the costs of services or burials or cremations carried out outside Australia.

We are not speaking just of an injured worker getting approval from the Workcover Authority to travel overseas to have treatment or an operation. It is quite reasonable for the opposition to point out that this will affect primarily workers from non-English-speaking backgrounds, workers who have clear-cut cultural traditions in relation to burials or cremations. I am not suggesting for a minute that the minister was avoiding it in his answer before; I just wanted to draw his attention to the fact that the government's own explanatory notes make it absolutely clear that the clause is essentially talking about prior permission to die overseas.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — In like fashion I respond to Mr Power in the terminology used in new section 99(2D):

> Sub-section (2B) does not apply if the worker or claimant satisfies the Authority, employer, authorised insurer or self-insurer that because of an emergency situation —
>
> (a) it was necessary to immediately provide or carry out a service or burial or cremation specified in sub-section (1);

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Doutta Galla) — For a number of cultural communities it would be deemed to be an emergency to be buried; that is their culture. If, say, a Jewish person who is covered under Workcover travels overseas and dies, the Jewish religion requires that person to be buried within hours of death. The same situation applies in many Muslim communities. It is exactly the same thing, and it is not an emergency; it is a fact of the culture and the religion of those community groups. That is our main concern in relation to this proposed amendment.

Committee divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 31

Asher, Ms	Hallam, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Best, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Bishop, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Ross, Dr
Bowden, Mr	Smith, Mr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Ms
Cover, Mr	Stoney, Mr (*Teller*)
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs (*Teller*)
Furletti, Mr	

Noes, 9

Eren, Mr	Power, Mr
Gould, Miss	Pullen, Mr
Hogg, Mrs (*Teller*)	Theophanous, Mr
McLean, Mrs	Walpole, Mr
Nguyen, Mr (*Teller*)	

Pair

Craig, Mr	Nardella, Mr

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to; clauses 40 to 41 agreed to.

Clause 42

The CHAIRMAN — Order! I ask Mr Theophanous to move amendment 78, which will also test amendments 79 and 80.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

> 78. Clause 42, lines 11 to 13, omit all words and expressions on these lines and insert "given by the person or another person on his or her behalf to the employer."

The purpose of the amendments is to replace what is unworkable and unjust in the process by which an employee gives notice of a particular injury. Currently, the act provides that an injured person or a person representing an injured person should notify the employer of an injury as soon as possible. Clause 42 changes that to provide that the person must give notice within 30 days or have access to no compensation whatsoever.

Amendment 78 amends the provision so that the worker must give notice of the injury, but removes the time limit. Essentially, it inserts the words 'given by the person or another person on his or her behalf to the employer'. I should have thought that to be fairly reasonable, but the minister might take the view that if somebody notifies on behalf of the injured worker it is more or less the same.

Amendment 79 seeks to insert 'or when a claim for compensation in respect of the injury is given to or served on the employer'. Again, that is added to the end of a process for notice to be given to an employer. Amendment 80 seeks to omit proposed subsections (4) to (6). The provision concerns

employees notifying injuries in writing and not being entitled to recover compensation under the act unless notice has been given to the employer within the specified time. The authority, authorised insurer or self-insurer may waive the time limit. I do not believe that is a fair application of the process and for that reason the opposition opposes the provision. Perhaps the minister will indicate his view in relation to somebody else notifying the employer about a worker's injury.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I am happy to put on the record that I would regard notice by a third party that effectively records the injury to constitute notice of injury. I am sure Mr Theophanous understands why that change was introduced. By deeming a claim, whenever it is made, to be notice of injury, the current section 102 provides no real effective obligation on an injured worker to give early notice of the injury. I hope all members of the committee would understand why that is not a satisfactory circumstance. It is not in the best interests of either the injured worker or the employer.

Late notification prevents employers from putting injury prevention and post-injury management measures in place. Claims made after workers have left employment are very difficult to verify and manage. The workers will not have records of the injuries if the incapacities arise much later. It is for the very best reasons that the government wants a formal process under which the recording of injuries is effected.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 43

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

81. Clause 43, lines 17 to 33, page 77, lines 1 to 35, page 78, lines 1 to 35 and page 79, lines 1 to 28, omit sub-clause (2) and insert —

'(2) In the Accident Compensation Act 1985 —

(a) in section 104(1) for "or 98A" **substitute** ", 98A or 98C";

(b) in section 104A(1) for "and 98A" **substitute** ", 98A or 98C";

(c) in section 104A(3) omit "and 98A" and insert ", 98A or 98c".'.

The amendments change the process of the new lump sum provisions.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 44

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

82. Clause 44, omit this clause.

Amendment 82 has been canvassed by amendment 61.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 45

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

83. Clause 45, lines 16 to 23, omit proposed sub-section (1) and insert —

"(1) A worker or the dependants of a worker shall be entitled to compensation in respect of an injury arising out of or in the course of, or due to the nature of, employment.".

Amendment 83 will test amendment 84 and seeks to omit proposed section 134A(1):

> A worker who is, or the dependants of a worker who are or may be, entitled to compensation in respect of an injury arising out of or in the course of, or due to the nature of, employment on or after 12 November 1997 shall not, in proceedings commenced in respect of the injury or otherwise, recover any damages of any kind.

This provision removes Victorian workers' rights to sue under common law. For that reason the opposition is violently opposed to the provision. For honourable members who know what we are talking about, the clause makes it clear: 'in respect of the injury or otherwise, recover any damages of any kind'.

The Victorian Workcover Authority leaflets and the propaganda sent out did not contain the words 'that workers would not be able to recover any damages of any kind'. It might have been better if they had included some of the words from the legislation. The opposition's amendment seeks to insert the words:

> A worker or the dependants of a worker shall be entitled to compensation in respect of an injury arising out of or in the course of, or due to the nature of, employment.

If the opposition's amendment is successful, the use of common law will be reinstated for workers in Victoria. I again appeal to government members to stand up for common law in Victoria. After a debate which has lasted in this place for almost 24 hours, I appeal to them to stand up and be counted on the question of common law. Common law is one of the great traditions that has protected the rights of individuals through the ages. It is totally inconsistent to claim that you believe in liberal philosophy, in the rights of the individual as a liberal, and then to pass legislation that removes those individual rights discriminates as savagely as this legislation does puts a worker in a different category from everyone else and will create a whole range of anomalies in our community, whether that be because some people will be working and will therefore not be able to claim while others are not at work and will be able to claim, or whatever the reason.

This is a disgraceful piece of legislation, and the most disgraceful provision in this disgraceful piece of legislation is the clause we are debating at the moment, which removes the right of all Victorians to sue under common law if they are injured at work in this state.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — The honourable member will not be surprised to hear me say that the government does not accept his amendment. The issue has been extensively canvassed. I have taken part in the same debate the honourable member refers to. It is one of the most extensive debates in my time in this Parliament. As I have said, all the issues have been well and truly canvassed over the currency of the debate and the amendments are unacceptable to the government.

Committee divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 31

Asher, Ms	Hallam, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Best, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Bishop, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Boardman, Mr	Ross, Dr
Bowden, Mr	Smith, Mr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Ms
Cover, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL. (*Teller*)	Strong, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr (*Teller*)	Wilding, Mrs
Furletti, Mr	

Noes, 9

Eren, Mr (*Teller*)	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr (*Teller*)
McLean, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr	

Pair

Craige, Mr	Walpole, Mr

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to; clauses 46 to 54 agreed to.

Clause 55

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Amendment 88 will also test amendment 89.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

88. Clause 55, lines 10 to 12, omit proposed sub-section (8).

This is another one of those biased, mean-spirited, small clauses we have found all the way through this legislation. This clause seeks to fine workers $2000 if they fail to comply with a requirement under the act. It is designed to punish workers who do not attend meetings organised by the authority. There is even provision that if a worker does not attend a hearing organised by the authority he or she will be fined $2000. What a disgrace to be so vindictive, so arrogant and so anti-worker as to fine an ordinary worker who fails to attend one of your hearings up to $2000. It is another example of the disgraceful way the government has put the bill together, and it is for that reason we have moved this amendment.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I hear the comments made by Mr Theophanous, but there is some double standard on his part. He was supportive of the increase in the penalties imposed upon employers, which have been lifted by almost 500 per cent, but he is prepared to delete the penalties for workers who fail to attend employment interviews. This is a serious issue, and we should expect both parties to take it as seriously as it warrants.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — Those comments cannot go unanswered. The penalties

have been increased for employers who injure workers in the workplace. Those penalties have been increased, and it is about time. They are still not up to the level in New South Wales. The government's record is that it has had 76 convictions of negligent employers over the past 12 months; during the last year of the Labor administration there were 170.

It is about time the government did something, but what has it done? It has introduced legislation to fine workers who do not attend these conferences up to $2000. This is a new provision and it should not be inserted in the act. The government should be ashamed of itself for introducing it.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — For the record, I refer Mr Theophanous to section 164 of the Accident Compensation Act, which states:

> A person must comply with any requirement or direction made or given under this Part.
>
> Penalty: 20 penalty units.

It is part of the existing law.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to; clause 56 agreed to.

Clause 57

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Amendment 90 will also test amendments 91 and 92.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

90. Clause 57, line 17, omit "or found guilty".

This is another example of the test for workers being made harder. In relation to refunding money to the authority, it is not enough for a worker to have been convicted of an offence, which is the normal test; the minister has added the words, 'or found guilty'. That means a higher level of test than previously applied under this section.

As honourable members would know, there are many petty offences of which a judge will find a person guilty but will not enter a conviction. That level of test has not applied in those circumstances in the past, but workers will again be penalised by this bill by the introduction of yet another small test for them to overcome — this time because of petty offences.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — Let the committee understand the effect of the amendment moved by Mr Theophanous. He wants workers who defraud the scheme and are found guilty but against whom no conviction is recorded to retain the fraudulently obtained benefits.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That is what it is at the moment, isn't it?

Hon. R. M. HALLAM — If that is what you are prepared to support, then let the record show that is precisely what you are supporting. The government believes allowing proven offenders to retain the proceeds of the crime brings the law into disrepute, and it certainly creates inequity between different offenders. The provision in the bill is an appropriate change.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to; clause 58 agreed to.

Clause 59

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Amendment 93 will also test amendment 94.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

93. Clause 59, line 21, omit "Authority" and insert "Minister".

The opposition had to think hard about this one because the government is seeking to give the authority the power to issue the general guidelines for prosecutions, offences and other items, a power that currently rests with the minister. The amendment would put it back with the minister. The opposition is not sure the amendment would improve the situation, particularly given that throughout this debate the minister has done the bidding of the authority anyway.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I am not sure that those comments should be dignified with a response, but I suspect if I dug far enough I might actually find a backhanded compliment, which I will accept.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to.

Clause 60

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

95. Clause 60, omit this clause.

These are the standard clauses that the government puts into virtually every piece of proposed legislation that comes before this house. We have seen them in some 150 bills and we have them here again. They use the constitution to limit access for workers to the Supreme Court about these horrendous changes. Obviously the removal of common-law rights in Victoria would not be possible without modifying the constitution.

The clause modifies the constitution to take away workers' rights. It is a disgrace and it shows once again that the constitution in Victoria is not worth anything because it can be changed by a simple motion in both houses of Parliament and people's rights can be taken away because the government of this arrogant Premier happens to have a majority in both houses. We reject the limiting of access to the Supreme Court.

Interjections from gallery.

Persons escorted from gallery.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! If there is any further interference, everybody will be cleared from the upper gallery.

Interjections from gallery.

Persons escorted from gallery.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to; clauses 61 to 69 agreed to.

Clause 70

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I move:

99. Clause 70, line 14, omit "2500" and insert "5000".

The purpose of the amendments is to change the penalties. If the government were at all serious about injured workers and about trying to stop injuries in our workplaces it would accept the amendments because they would bring Victoria more or less into line with the New South Wales level of penalty that can be applied to negligent employers who cause workplace injuries to employees.

The amendments would double the 2500 penalty points proposed by the government to 5000, so we would have fines of $500 000 and $1 million, rather than what the government is proposing. We would not have the situation where employers get off with token fines for causing the death of workers. I have already read into *Hansard*, and I do not intend to do it again, details of situations where workers have been killed and the fines have been as low as $12 000 — for a life. That is the sort of system that the government has condoned over the past five years.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — It is very late. I do not wish to take up the invitation extended by the Leader of the Opposition, other than to say that I hope even he would acknowledge that the penalty increases included in the bill are already considerable. I hear his description of them as tokenism. I cannot accept that. The bulk of the penalties have been increased by up to fivefold. The government takes the view that the bill sends a strong signal to the courts to greatly increase the penalties for serious offences. I think that is implicit in the changes that have already been passed by the committee.

Amendment negatived; clause agreed to; clauses 71 to 77 agreed to.

Reported to house without amendment.

Report adopted.

Third reading

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am of the opinion that the third reading of this bill requires to be passed by an absolute majority of the whole of the number of the members of the Legislative Council.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 33

Asher, Ms	Hall, Mr
Ashman, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Hartigan, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Best, Mr	Knowles, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Luckins, Mrs
Boardman, Mr (*Teller*)	Powell, Mrs (*Teller*)
Bowden, Mr	Ross, Dr
Brideson, Mr	Smith, Mr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Ms
Craige, Mr	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Strong, Mr

Davis, Mr P. R.	Varty, Mrs
de Fegely, Mr	Wells, Dr
Forwood, Mr	Wilding, Mrs
Furletti, Mr	

Noes, 10

Eren, Mr	Nguyen, Mr
Gould, Miss	Power, Mr
Hogg, Mrs	Pullen, Mr (*Teller*)
McLean, Mrs	Theophanous, Mr
Nardella, Mr (*Teller*)	Walpole, Mr

Motion agreed to by absolute majority.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

Hon. R. I. KNOWLES (Minister for Health) — I move:

> That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until a day and hour to be fixed by the President, which time of meeting shall be notified in writing to each honourable member.

Christmas felicitations

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (Minister for Industry, Science and Technology) — I rise to speak on Christmas felicitations, and I extend them to Mrs Hogg in particular. This morning we have seen the Trades Hall Council choir, B-grade theatrical performances from the halfwits and a senseless and childish filibuster by the opposition that has done nothing for the stature of Parliament and has done even less for the stature of the Australian Labor Party.

I apologise on behalf of the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the National Party for putting the staff of Parliament through what happened yesterday and today as a result of the stupid tactics of John Brumby and Theo Theophanous. Parliament should never be abused in the wanton manner in which it has been abused by Mr Theophanous. We should never see the institution of Parliament so deliberately demeaned as it has been over the past day. There was a conscious abuse of the generous privileges of the Legislative Council.

There are often complaints about the power the Legislative Assembly has had for decades to gag debates and curtail people's right to speak. We have no such limits in this house, and we cherish our rights. In an uninterrupted tradition this house has never used the gag or the guillotine, or curtailed a member's right to speak — and that is why we are here 24 hours after the start of the debate. That freedom is usually accompanied by a sense of responsibility on the part of members but that freedom has been abused by members of the Labor Party for bit of cheap publicity and a short-term stunt.

The government was not going to be bluffed by the opposition into breaking the longstanding and proper democratic traditions of the house, as the opposition would have liked it to, by moving the gag for the very first time. The culmination of the opposition's stunt was to parody the government as the ones who had gagged debate. The government decided not use the gag, and although it was an unfair imposition on the staff — the Clerks, Hansard and public servants — it was necessary to keep up the tradition.

On Tuesday Mr Theophanous voluntarily entered into an agreement with the government that is recorded in *Daily Hansard*. It is an agreement the media should reflect on. As I recall, Mr Theophanous agreed that we would debate the Workcover bill to its conclusion on Thursday. It was no surprise that we were debating it on Thursday and no surprise at all that we would debate it to its conclusion — despite his telling the media this morning, 'The bill should have been delayed. It should have been put off. This is unfair'.

The bill was debated with his explicit agreement. The Labor Party agreed with the Liberal and National parties to do so. It did not have to, but it did not protest. Not once last Tuesday did the Labor Party say it was unhappy with the idea of debating it. It is a fraud to suggest to the media, as he suggested this morning, that somehow the debate was unfair and not on Labor's terms. The debate was on its terms. The Minister for Health is reported at page 15 of *Daily Hansard* of Tuesday, 9 December, as saying:

> Earlier today the Leader of the Opposition indicated a willingness to enter into discussions about the week's program. Those discussions have been held and by agreement I can advise the house that we will debate the Audit (Amendment) Bill today until conclusion. After opposition business tomorrow we will debate

> and conclude other bills except the Accident Compensation (Miscellaneous Amendment) Bill, which will be debated from 10.00 a.m. on Thursday and concluded on that day, after which the house will rise.

That was the agreement made by this hollow figure, who later led a B-grade comedy troupe out of the house, telling the media, 'We are going to protest'.

Let the media call him to account for abusing the traditions of Parliament, for breaking a deal that he voluntarily and openly entered into with the other parties, and for making a farce of his party because of the tactics he employed. We have to live through this, and we will. We will do it without altering the traditions of the house. We will continue to defend them, despite the fact that in the wee hours of the morning it seems an absurdity to be putting everyone through it.

We will stand by the traditions and will live with the duplicity and childishness of the Leader of the Opposition — but the public should not go without knowing about it. We should never allow people to think that that person, who pretends he will be a minister in a future government, is fit to govern, let alone fit to lead a party in this house.

I conclude where I started on this matter, by apologising to all the staff of Parliament for the pain the Labor Party put them through. It was an indignity they should not have had to suffer, and I look forward to the facts being well communicated.

I now turn to a far more pleasant aspect, the approach of Christmas. This is the last day of the sittings. At 10.24 a.m. on Friday we get the opportunity to conclude a sitting day that started at 10.00 a.m. yesterday! In my Christmas felicitations I want to thank a number of people who help make Parliament work so professionally and who help make this house so relevant and efficient.

In particular, I thank you, Mr President, and the Deputy President, for the outstanding work that you have both done over the past year. You have been extraordinarily fair and reasoned in your judgments. You have brought great credit on the Legislative Council. I believe my views on the work of Mr Chamberlain, the President, and Mr Hall, the Deputy President, will be shared by the opposition. In particular I thank you both for your forbearance over the past 24½ hours. I do not do that in isolation: your work over the past year has been something we have all admired. But it is a rich contrast to some other places.

I thank the Clerks, as I did on a private occasion last week, for their work, leadership and stamina. I appreciate the advice and assistance they give us. I particularly thank the Housekeeper, Bill Jarrett. In a personal sense I have never received more courteous or helpful assistance. His team is a credit to him. His team here today is a group of people we admire. We certainly thank them, and I think I speak for everyone in the chamber when I say to them: thank you for your work over the past 12 months.

I should like to comment particularly on the work of Hansard. We congratulate Carolyn Williams on being appointed as the Editor of Debates and welcome her elevation to that post. Also, this day marks the retirement of Erica Flint from Hansard, who has served there for many years. I think Erica was here when I started. We thank her for her public service in Hansard.

Also retiring today — I think she is still here, and she certainly was here overnight — is Alison Black, who has served this Parliament for 27 years in the parliamentary library. Her service to us all has been enormous. The library has changed a lot in those 27 years, I am sure, and it is now something of a high-tech den. On behalf of all of us I thank Alison for the work she has done and the obliging way she has dealt with members' inquiries.

I also thank the staff of the dining rooms and the chef for their memorable service. In addition, I praise the gardener, Paul Gallagher, for his work and that of his team. We take for granted that the gardens are in such outstanding condition. They have certainly improved quite dramatically over the past five years, although I realise Paul is new to the post. I congratulate him on his work and thank him on behalf of not only members of Parliament but the thousands of members of the public who use the gardens all the time.

Finally, it is an important time, leading up to Christmas — I actually have to look at my watch to see when Christmas will be — to wish everyone a pleasant and safe Christmas; enjoy the time with your families, as I am particularly looking forward to doing, and experience, as we did last night, a lot of Christmas cheer.

Hon. C. J. HOGG (Melbourne North) — On behalf of all members of the opposition I join the Leader of the Government in this short and unusual ceremony of Christmas felicitations. Clearly it has been an extremely difficult, very tiring and in some senses very emotional week which we hope will

never be repeated. We appreciate the fact that everybody is suffering from the huge burden and strain placed on them after two enormous days of sitting and one rather smaller day in between.

The subjects of the two long sitting days are clearly pieces of legislation that are of enormous public interest. There have been other occasions on which we have sat for many, many hours. Usually in this house we do not take advantage of the privileges the Leader of the House has mentioned, but in the case of the bill we have been discussing for 24½ hours or thereabouts and the Audit (Amendment) Bill we debated on Tuesday there are circumstances that have compelled us to debate the issues to the limit.

That being said, I also wish everybody a very happy and safe Christmas, which means taking particular care as we get out of this place now, blinking in the daylight and watching the traffic for the next hour or so.

I thank the President for the excellent guidance he gives members in this house and for the kindness he shows many of us individually. I thank the Chairman of Committees for his patience and judgment. I thank the Clerks — Allan Bray, Wayne Tunnecliffe and Matthew Tricarico — for their immense efforts this session and for their timely and well thought-out advice. In the papers office I again thank Ray Wright, Anne Sargent, Felicity Murphy and Gabrielle Wade for the extremely gracious service they give to members of this house. It takes a lot to keep smiling under difficult circumstances, and all the people I have mentioned have managed to do that.

Bill Jarrett is an outstanding Housekeeper, and everyone on this side of the house would want me to place that on the record. I thank the attendants, Russell Bowman, Greg Mills, Michael Stubbings, Geoff Barnett, Peter Anastasiou, Philip Stoits, Alan Ryan, Quentin Cornelius and Charlie Marafioti, who look after this house. This last week has been dreadful for the attendants and we know things are serious when they stop smiling in the middle of the night. To all of you who managed to keep on smiling for the past two days and nights, thank you.

We thank Christine Haydon, whon we do not see very often but who manages parliamentary services. To the library staff, we thank Bruce Davidson and Gail Dunston, and we particularly endorse what the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology had to say about Alison Black, who is retiring after 27 years. I know a number of members will pay a personal tribute and thank Alison in private. We thank Megan Peniston-Bird, the education officer, who has made the business of this place infinitely more interesting and who is a resource for members with the schools in their area.

Thank you to Hansard, whose members do so much so indefatigably. To Carolyn Williams, Maggie Sutherland and Jan Kendall, but particularly to Erica Flint and Jim McGregor, who are finishing up in a full-time capacity, thank you many times over — your patience, generosity and effort we hold in the highest esteem.

Thank you to the dining room staff for their patience, which has been tested in providing not only supper but also breakfast. We thank Syd Koehrer, Robyn Rogers and the staff. I second comments of Minister for Industry, Science and Technology about Paul Gallagher, because the parliamentary gardens look fantastic. We also thank Bill Schober, the parking attendant, who looks after the cars and the car parking. I hope I have not left anyone out. I thank everybody for their efforts in a most heartfelt way. We are sorry this session has ended in such a trying fashion, but many thanks for your forbearance and generosity. A happy and safe Christmas to everybody and a happy new year. I believe we will get together again in February.

Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern) — On behalf of my colleagues in the National Party I again join in the felicitations, and I note we are doing it at an odd hour, as often is the case. At least it is daylight, although it just happens that we have been here for two sleeps!

I fully endorse the opening remarks of the Leader of the Government. We have seen Parliament demeaned this week by the ego of one man who wanted to pull a stunt. Once again, we have seen it left to Mrs Hogg to retrieve some honour for the Labor Party.

I thank the people who render such outstanding service to Parliament. I will not enumerate them all but I shall include them. The Hansard staff, as usual, have put in an outstanding performance, if I may say so; either they are getting better or I am speaking in a somewhat more articulate manner because I seldom have to make *Hansard* corrections at all. That is a measure of their skills.

I also thank the library staff and, in particular, I congratulate Alison Black on her 27 years service to this place. She must be about the longest-serving

staff member. I did not realise until a moment before the Leader of the House spoke that she was finishing her employment here today, yet only 30 minutes ago she gave me yet another lesson on how to learn that damn new technology! I can now look up in *Hansard* what I said during last year's felicitations so as to avoid repetition. There is no doubt that the library is a high-tech operation and its being on the Internet is a great asset.

If I may relate one incident of yesterday to show how we can again be maligned by the press — this time, they claim, quite innocently: I had a telephone call from a newspaper journalist in my electorate who said, 'As Mr Pescott failed to speak in Parliament last year, I am doing a survey of the records of three local members who represent this area. I have had a look on the Internet; it says you have not made a speech since 1995. Before I print that I thought I should check the facts'.

Hon. R. S. de Fegely interjected.

Hon. W. R. BAXTER — It was not the ABC but a good country newspaper that has a bit of commonsense and checks things that on the surface would appear not to be correct. It was not correct. I rapidly had my office pull off the Internet the 619 or some ridiculous number of speeches I had made since 1995. I set him right. That is an indication of how technology is marvellous, but the users need to know how to utilise it and not take at face value what it may throw up if the correct questions are not asked.

I also thank the dining room staff. As honourable members well know, eating is one of my favourite pastimes. Particularly in this place it helps to reflieve the boredom during the long hours of the night. The dining room staff do a tremendous job. The waiting staff are always convivial, friendly and helpful.

I particularly pay tribute to those who work in the kitchen. I assume not many members would have visited the kitchens in this place. Not until I started my task on the Parliament House Completion Authority had I taken the opportunity to look more closely at the kitchens. There is no doubt they are absolutely primitive. The kitchen staff — Malcolm and his chef and assistants — do a mighty job in turning out the quality food they do from facilities that belong to a bygone era.

I also thank the staff of the Legislative Council Papers Office. Anne Sargent is a delight to deal with; no matter what you ask for, no matter how ancient or how deeply buried in the archives it may be, she can produce it almost immediately. That is a great service that sometimes we fail to appreciate as much as we might.

I also thank you, Mr President, and your deputy, Mr Hall, for the outstanding way in which you both conduct the business of the house. I have had the honour of serving under a number of Presidents and even more Deputy Presidents. The way you both conduct the business of the house and the committee stages is something of which you can be proud. We as members can be thankful for the way in which debates are conducted and the authority you are able to exercise with dignity in sometimes difficult circumstances.

I also thank my National Party colleagues for their support and friendship during the year, particularly Mr Bishop, who is the whip, and Mr Best, who is the secretary of the parliamentary party. I have just about convinced Mrs Powell that no matter how dedicated a local member she is, she has a perfectly good excuse for not going to the annual meeting of the Cohuna branch of the National Party tonight, despite its being on her schedule. She is an example of the dedication of the new members who have come into this place.

I thank them, along with my colleague Roger Hallam, the Minister for Finance. We would all acknowledge that Mr Hallam has had an extraordinary workload this year, given the number of major bills he has handled both on his own and on behalf of ministers in the other place. Having had some experience of sitting at that table for long hours, I say to Roger Hallam: many thanks for a job well done.

I say to all honourable members: go forth from this place today, have a good sleep over the weekend — except for those of you who are manning polling booths tomorrow — and let us come back in 1998 refreshed and ready to recover anything the Parliament may have lost this week.

Hon. B. T. PULLEN (Melbourne) — I do not usually say anything during Christmas felicitations, but I express my appreciation of the grace and good humour shown by staff in every quarter during two very trying days. We owe them a real debt. They have been impressive.

When we are not speaking we have the freedom to move about, go to the library and so on. In that sense our job is not as difficult as the jobs of those who

have to stand in their places and wait. That is an extraordinarily difficult thing for people to do; I do not think I would be capable of doing it. Those people have shown a great deal of dedication in supporting us.

Honourable members should not underestimate the importance of the two long debates we have had. A number of members have treated them seriously, and they should not be dismissed because of the particular views they may have. The debates were extraordinarily long, but they were very important. I acknowledge that a number of members handled themselves with considerable good humour and grace, and for the majority of the time the conduct of the house was creditable.

I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

The PRESIDENT — Because you work so closely with others in this organisation for three or four days a week you get to know many people well, which makes the task I have now very difficult.

We are extraordinarily well served at all levels by the officers and staff of the Parliament. They are all dedicated to their tasks, they all have remarkable senses of humour which they are able to keep in trying circumstances, and they all put up with us, which is extraordinary in itself. I thank all those who work for the Parliament of Victoria for the support and assistance they give us all.

Alison Black is a good example of the dedication of the staff who work in this place. As has been said, Alison has worked for Parliament for 27 years. I will not go over the many things that have been said about Alison, except to say that she is the embodiment of absolute courtesy and professionalism and has a very dry sense of humour.

Alison has had a long-term effect on the Legislative Council. This place does not change its practices readily, but Alison suggested to me that at the end of the day it was difficult to know which house had adjourned. She suggested that we should ring three bells at the end of our proceedings. I did what I was instructed to do and introduced that practice — and we have followed it ever since.

In the olden days when they used to give knighthoods to public servants retiring with distinguished records, Alison would have got some title or other — —

An Honourable Member — They used to give one to the President.

The PRESIDENT — That's right. As I said, I am looking for a papal knighthood! We can give her a title, something like Lady Alison of the Bells.

When we go through the departments — and I am particularly closely associated with Hansard, the library and the Legislative Council — I feel extraordinarily fortunate that we have the quality of the people to assist us that we have — people such as the Clerk of the Parliaments, Allan Bray, his deputy, Wayne Tunnecliffe, and Matthew Tricarico, who works very closely with me, as do Geoff Barnett and Yolande Meerwald. I thank the people who work in the many aspects of Parliament, and Mrs Hogg named every one of them. Every one of them has made a great contribution.

Again, it is fairly typical for us to criticise the operations of the dining rooms. I believe the dining rooms do an outstanding job, especially considering that they operate on the smallest subsidy of any parliamentary dining rooms in Australia. The New South Wales parliamentary dining rooms receive $1 million a year more than the Victorian parliamentary dining rooms. I think the Victorian staff do an excellent job. The parliamentary gardens also are an outstanding feature.

We are involved in a number of projects such as the Parlynet project, which is coming together at the present time. I thank Adam Todhunter and Mike Harrington from the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the members of the steering committee, Rosemary Varty, Victor Perton and Carlo Carli, the Speaker and other members who have been involved in this project. Next week we will finally accept tenders for a software program we need to make the whole thing work. I am also pleased to report that yesterday the Premier signed off on the funding necessary to provide the web servers and other bits and pieces we need around Parliament to make the whole Parlynet project go.

By the way, I have a definition of e-mail. As you know, we are hearing more and more references to e-mail and people will be expected to use it more and more. This definition of e-mail is the ability to send letters to the President of the United States and to instantaneously receive no answer whatsoever.

In September this year we had the two open days of Parliament. I took the opportunity to speak from this area to the visitors to give them a running

commentary about the workings of Parliament, the parliamentary committees and so on. The vast majority of those people, of course, were Victorians but had never been to Parliament. I was trying to emphasise to them that this was their Parliament; it did not belong to the politicians.

What I noticed on that occasion, as with the Royal Melbourne Show and the open day last year, was the enormous support from the public for the completion of Parliament House. My policy speech to the members here is that I am hoping to be in this position for some years yet and I will be very disappointed if I am not here when Parliament House is completed.

Unfortunately the building leads to in-built inefficiencies in the way we operate. If you are on the second floor at one end of the building you have to go down a couple of flights of stairs to get to the second floor at the other end, and the offices of the parliamentary committees are a couple of blocks away so we have to send Hansard reporters down there, wasting that travelling time, to cover the work of the parliamentary committees. It is an inefficient building. I believe there is still enormous public support for its completion, and I know every member sitting here would support that as well.

We made an advance this year when we voluntarily adopted a code of conduct in relation to the use of unsourced material. I invoked the code a number of times, and I regret that earlier this week I believe the code was breached. It was done in a way that made it impossible for the Chairman of Committees at the time to detect because of the way it came out, but certainly the spirit of it was breached when an anonymous letter was used to blackguard a senior public servant, or a servant of one of our authorities.

We ought to think about that again — think about the power we in this house have to destroy reputations and make sure it does not happen again.

I thank the whips, who do so much to ensure the proceedings work. The outstanding cooperation that exists between Caroline Hogg and Ken Smith ensures that everybody knows where they should be at particular times and to generally develop sensible programs. Without that cooperation the house would be in chaos.

One of the great things Parliament does is to introduce itself into the community to let people know what it is all about. For instance, many members made themselves available at the Melbourne show as part of the program to educate people about their members of Parliament. Youth and Children's parliaments have been held, both of which were outstanding. Earlier this year I presided over the YMCA Youth Parliament, which was a very serious business. It was opened by the Premier and supported by the Leader of the Opposition. Youth Parliament debated issues over a couple of days and sent its bills as recommendations to the government of the day. Youth Parliament has been taking place for 10 years. It is a superb program and makes the 140 young people involved knowledgeable about our system, because it seems Parliament is still one of the great secrets in the state.

The parliamentary intern program is another rewarding exercise. Outstanding students are gathered into our midst from Melbourne and Monash universities. They then go out as advocates of our parliamentary system. This year a student who I hope will go back to Japan more aware of our system worked with me. Two years ago I worked with a student from the United States of America who is now working in the White House. It is a tremendous opportunity for Parliament. I thank Megan Peniston-Bird for the education function she performs, which is also associated with the parliamentary library.

I particularly thank my deputy, Peter Hall, who gives me outstanding support. He is a professional Chairman of Committees and Deputy President and I thank him very much. I wish all members and their families a happy Christmas and a productive 1998.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 10.52 a.m. (Friday).

Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the dates shown.

The questions have been incorporated from the notice papers of the Legislative Council.

The answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.

The portfolio of the minister answering the question on notice starts each heading.

Tuesday, 7 October 1997

Treasurer: consultancies

427. **THE HON. T.C. THEOPHANOUS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): In relation to consultants engaged for the financial years 1992-93, 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96, what are the details of each consultancy commissioned by the Gas and Fuel costing less than $50,000, indicating — (i) date; (ii) cost; (iii) purpose; (iv) name and address of consultant; (v) recommendations made; (vi) action taken in response to recommendations; and (vii) whether tenders were called.

ANSWER:

The above question asked of the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources has been redirected to the Treasurer.

The answer supplied by the Treasurer is :

The total cost of consultancies commissioned by Gas and Fuel which cost under $50,000 for each year was:

Year	$
1992/93	Not available
1993/94	1,995,665
1994/95	1,929,226
1995/96	2,303,000

Due to the detailed nature of parts (i) to (vii) of the question, it is felt that in this instance the time and resources required to provide a detailed response can not be justified.

Premier: *Victoria on the Move*

1271. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): In relation to the recent publication "Victoria on the Move" January 1997 edition:

(a) What was the total cost of the publication.

(b) How many copies were printed and to whom were they distributed.

(c) Was the edition put out to tender.

(d) Who did the layout, design and printing of the publication.

Was there any involvement of the Premier's Office at any stage of the development and publication of the edition; if so, who was involved and what was the nature of the involvement.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

(a) Print $3,785, Film etc. $835, Design in house.

(b) 20,000 copies were distributed to electorate offices and Information Victoria.

(c) Competitive quotes were sought as required by Treasury regulations.

(d) Layout and design was prepared by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Printing by McLaren Press.

(e) Various staff members from the Premier's Office contributed ideas and material which was incorporated in the publication where appropriate.

Planning and Local Government: parliamentary secretary trips

1274. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): How many interstate and overseas trips has the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Local Government taken at departmental expense since 30 March 1996, indicating the — (i) mode of travel; (ii) dates and length of travel; (iii) destination; and (iv) cost of travel, including the cost of any travel originally paid for the by the Department and later reimbursed by the Parliamentary Secretary.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The following interstate and international travel by air was undertaken by the Parliamentary Secretary since 30 March 1996 —

DATE	DESTINATION	PURPOSE	COST OF AIR FARE
1.9.96-10.9.96	Paris	Represent Minister for Planning and Local Government at a meeting of the Metropolis Association.	$5382.40
11.10.96	Canberra	Attend Local Government Ministers Conference	$534.00
18.10.96	Adelaide	Attend Construction Ministers Conference	$626.00
3.12.96	Canberra	Attend Local Government Reform Seminar.	$567.00
25.2.97	Sydney	Represent Minister for Planning and Local Government at meeting, University of New South Wales.	$685.40

Planning and Local Government: parliamentary secretary travel allowance

1276. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): What amount of travel allowance has been paid to the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Local Government since 30 March 1996 by financial year.

ANSWER:

The Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Local Government has been paid travel allowance for expenses incurred when travelling on official business.

The time and resources to provide additional detail or to establish what travel allowance has been paid for intrastate travel cannot be justified.

Travel expenses for interstate and international travel were as follows:

DATE	DESTINATION	EXPENSES
1.9.96-10.9.96	Paris, to represent the Minister for Planning and Local Government at a meeting of the Metropolis Association.	$2507.60
25.2.97	Sydney, to represent the Minister for Planning and Local Government at a meeting of the University of New South Wales.	$175.00

Education: school refurbishment

1314. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In relation to Table 2.2.4 in Budget Paper No. 3, what are the details of the allocations proposed under the items "Various Schools - Refurbishment (various)" $5.590 million and "Standards and conditions for publicly owned buildings" $1 million.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Details of the allocation proposed under the item "Various Schools - Refurbishment (various)" have not been determined as yet.

In relation to the $1 million for "Standards and conditions for publicly owned buildings", it is proposed that these funds be used to progressively upgrade TAFE facilities to a safe and acceptable standard consistent with the Minister for Finance Guidelines on Standards for Publicly Owned Buildings.

Education: regional maintenance funds

1315. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What are the amounts, particularly those available for maintenance purposes, held under delegation to the regional Managers of the Department, or under their control.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

A total of approximately $55 million (1996/97 financial year), is held under delegation or under the control of the regional Managers of the Department of Education.

This amount covers salaries, operating and grant expenses, and the cost of school support services. $1.3 million of this is for maintenance and minor works within the region.

Industry, Science and Technology: Midlands forest management area

1319. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): How many sawmillers currently hold licences in the Midlands Forest Management Area, indicating — (i) when these licences are due to expire; (ii) how many of them are receiving B grade logs on the condition

that they use them for in-house value adding; and (iii) in each case what volume of B grade logs was value added to in-house for the year 1995-96.

ANSWER:

There are 14 sawmillers who obtain some or all of their allocation from licences for sawlogs and/or residual logs held for the Midlands FMA.

(i) The licences have varying expiry dates from 30/6/2002 to 30/6/2009.

(ii) Seven sawmillers have a specific entitlement to B class logs included in their licence. There is no condition in the licences that they are used for in-house value adding.

(iii) The Department does not collect the information necessary to provide a response to this part of the question.

Corrections: drugs

1321. **THE HON. J. McLEAN** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): What proportion of people who are currently in prison for crimes in Victoria are incarcerated for reasons — (i) directly attributable to illegal drugs; and (ii) indirectly attributable to illegal drugs.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

As at April 1997, 18% of prisoners in custody are serving sentences for at least one offence of providing drugs to others or using illegal drugs.

The proportion of prisoners whose crime is indirectly related to illegal drugs can only be estimated. This is a notoriously difficult figure to measure. Varying estimates have been quoted in the past, based on a range of methodologies which provide diverse results.

In Victoria the proportion is currently measured on the basis of self-reported information collected at the time of the prisoner's reception into the prison system. This information has only been collected since January 1996.

It is estimated on this basis that 40% of prisoners in custody may have committed their offences either under the influence of drugs or to support a drug habit. This figure is thought to underestimate the association between drugs and crime as prisoners may not accurately report their use of drugs. However, this is the best source of information available at the current time on the indirect relationship between illegal drugs and offending.

Industry, Science and Technology: grants

1358. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The answer as provided by my Department is:

Information on grants is provided in the Budget Papers, annual reports of the department or listed in the annual reports of individual agencies.

Assistance by way of a grant is provided to those firms and agencies of significance to Victoria's economy. Due to the large number of grants involved, the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

Small Business: grants

1363. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

No grants are made in this portfolio area.

Transport: grants

1364. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me is not provided for the following reasons:

(i) information on grants is provided in the Budget Papers, annual reports of the department or listed in the annual reports of individual agencies; and

(ii) due to the large number of grants involved, the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: grants

1365. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me is not provided for the following reasons:

(i) information on grants is provided in the Budget Papers, annual reports of the department or listed in the annual reports of individual agencies; and

(ii) due to the large number of grants involved, the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

Tertiary Education and Training: grants

1368. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training): In relation to each department and agency

responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me is not provided for the following reasons -

(i) information on grants is provided in the Budget Papers, annual reports of the department or listed in the annual reports of individual agencies, and

(ii) due to the large number of grants involved, the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

Planning and Local Government: grants

1369. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me is not provided for the following reasons:

(i) information on grants is provided in the Budget Papers, annual reports of the department or listed in the annual reports of individual agencies; and

(ii) due to the large number of grants involved, the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

Conservation and Land Management: grants

1373. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me can only be provided in part because there are a large number of often small grants involving a range of agencies and the time and resources required to assemble this information cannot be justified.

The summary information provided in the following attachment includes those grants for which information is readily available within the Department of Natural Resources and Environment relating to the Conservation and Land Management portfolio. However, the Honourable Member may wish to narrow her enquiry and I will reconsider her request.

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT - 1995/96 COAST ACTION / COASTCARE COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS FOR 1995/96 COAST ACTION / COASTCARE COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS		
Area	**No. of Projects**	**Appproved Funds**
Gippsland	9	$62,000
Port Phillip	20	$97,160
South West	8	$47,400
TOTALS	**37**	**$206,560**

The information provided above is a summary of the 1995/96 Coast Action / Coastcare Community Project Grants. A more detailed format is provided in the *1995/96 Coast Action Program Grants and Coast Action / Coastcare Community Project Grants Report* which is publicly available on request to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT - 1996/97 COAST ACTION / COASTCARE COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS FOR 1996/97 COAST ACTION / COASTCARE COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS		
Area	**Recommended Projects**	**Recommended Funding**
Indigenous Communities	6	$89,010
State Wide	7	$58,592
Central	32	$254,416
Gippsland	22	$165,235
Western	2	$168,411
TOTALS	**69**	**$735,664**

The information provided above is a summary of the 1996/97 Coast Action / Coastcare Community Project Grants. A more detailed format is provided in the *1996/97 Coast Action / Coastcare Community Project Grants Report* which is publicly available on request to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Health: employment initiatives, Casey

1377. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Casey.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department of Human Services

Small Business: employment initiatives, Casey

1381. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Casey.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Casey

1382. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Casey.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Casey

1383. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Casey.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Casey

1384. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Casey.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Greater Dandenong

1385. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Greater Dandenong

1389. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Greater Dandenong

1390. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Greater Dandenong

1391. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Greater Dandenong

1392. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Monash

1393. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Monash.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Monash

1397. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Monash.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Monash

1398. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Monash.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Monash

1399. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Monash.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Monash

1400. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Monash.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Frankston

1401. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Frankston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Frankston

1405. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Frankston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Frankston

1406. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Frankston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Frankston

1407. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Frankston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Frankston

1408. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Frankston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Kingston

1409. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Kingston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Kingston

1413. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Kingston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Kingston

1414. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Kingston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Kingston

1416. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Kingston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Glen Eira

1417. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Glen Eira

1421. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Glen Eira

1422. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Glen Eira

1423. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Glen Eira

1424. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Hobsons Bay

1425. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hobson's Bay.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Hobsons Bay

1429. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hobson's Bay.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Hobsons Bay

1430. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hobson's Bay.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Hobsons Bay

1431. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hobson's Bay.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Hobsons Bay

1432. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hobson's Bay.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Wyndham

1433. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Wyndham

1437. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Wyndham

1438. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Wyndham

1439. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Wyndham

1440. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Greater Geelong

1441. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Greater Geelong

1445. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Greater Geelong

1446. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Greater Geelong

1447. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Greater Geelong

1448. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Greater Bendigo

1449. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Greater Bendigo

1453. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Greater Bendigo

1454. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Greater Bendigo

1455. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Greater Bendigo

1456. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Yarra Ranges

1457. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Yarra Ranges

1461. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Yarra Ranges

1462. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Yarra Ranges

1463. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Yarra Ranges

1464. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Knox

1465. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Knox.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Knox

1469. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Knox.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Knox

1470. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Knox.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Knox

1471. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Knox.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Knox

1472. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Knox.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Banyule

1473. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Banyule.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Banyule

1477. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Banyule.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Banyule

1478. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Banyule.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Banyule

1479. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Banyule.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Banyule

1480. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Banyule.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Hume

1481. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hume.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Hume

1485. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hume.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Hume

1486. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hume.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Hume

1487. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hume.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Hume

1488. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hume.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, La Trobe

1489. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of La Trobe.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, La Trobe

1493. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of La Trobe.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, La Trobe

1494. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of La Trobe.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, La Trobe

1495. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of La Trobe.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, La Trobe

1496. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of La Trobe.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Manningham

1497. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Manningham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Manningham

1501. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Manningham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Manningham

1502. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Manningham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Manningham

1503. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Manningham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Manningham

1504. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Manningham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Stonnington

1505. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Stonnington

1509. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Stonnington

1510. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Stonnington

1511. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Stonnington

1512. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Whittlesea

1513. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Whittlesea

1517. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Whittlesea

1518. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Whittlesea

1519. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Whittlesea

1520. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Brimbank

1521. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Brimbank

1525. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Brimbank

1526. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Brimbank

1527. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Brimbank

1528. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Ballarat

1529. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Ballarat

1533. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Premier: employment initiatives, Ballarat

1535. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Ballarat

1536. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Maroondah

1537. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Maroondah

1541. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Maroondah

1542. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Maroondah

1543. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Maroondah

1544. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Melbourne

1545. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Melbourne

1549. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Melbourne

1550. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Melbourne

1551. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Melbourne

1552. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Bass Coast

1553. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Bass Coast

1557. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Bass Coast

1558. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Bass Coast

1559. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Bass Coast

1560. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Nillumbik

1561. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Nillumbik

1565. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Nillumbik

1566. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Nillumbik

1567. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Nillumbik

1568. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Swan Hill

1569. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Swan Hill

1573. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Swan Hill

1574. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Swan Hill

1575. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Swan Hill

1576. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Greater Shepparton

1577. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Greater Shepparton

1581. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Greater Shepparton

1582. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Greater Shepparton

1583. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Greater Shepparton

1584. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Wangaratta

1585. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Wangaratta

1589. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Wangaratta

1590. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Wangaratta

1591. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Wangaratta

1592. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Mildura

1593. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Mildura

1597. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Mildura

1598. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Mildura

1599. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Mildura

1600. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Horsham

1601. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Horsham

1605. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Horsham

1606. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Horsham

1607. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Horsham

1608. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Boroondara

1609. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Boroondara

1613. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Boroondara

1614. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Boroondara

1615. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Boroondara

1616. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Cardinia

1617. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Cardinia

1621. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Cardinia

1622. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Cardinia

1623. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Cardinia

1624. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Darebin

1625. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Darebin.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Darebin

1629. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Darebin.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Darebin

1630. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Darebin.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Darebin

1631. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Darebin.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Darebin

1632. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Darebin.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Port Phillip

1633. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Port Phillip

1637. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Port Phillip

1638. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Port Phillip

1639. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Port Phillip

1640. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Maribyrnong

1641. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Maribyrnong

1645. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Maribyrnong

1646. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Maribyrnong

1647. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Maribyrnong

1648. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Moonee Valley

1649. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Moonee Valley

1653. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Moonee Valley

1654. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Moonee Valley

1655. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Moonee Valley

1656. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Melton

1657. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Melton

1661. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Melton

1662. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Melton

1663. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Melton

1664. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Mitchell

1665. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Mitchell

1669. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Mitchell

1670. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Mitchell

1671. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Mitchell

1672. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Moreland

1673. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moreland.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Moreland

1677. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moreland.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Moreland

1678. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moreland.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Moreland

1679. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moreland.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to

university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Moreland

1680. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moreland.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Mornington Peninsula

1681. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Mornington Peninsula

1685. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Mornington Peninsula

1686. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Mornington Peninsula

1687. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Mornington Peninsula

1688. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Wodonga

1689. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Wodonga

1693. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Wodonga

1694. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Wodonga

1695. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Wodonga

1696. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: employment initiatives, Yarra

1697. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Yarra.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1377.

Attorney-General: employment initiatives, Yarra

1701. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Attorney-General's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Yarra.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds, and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Yarra

1702. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Yarra.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Premier: employment initiatives, Yarra

1703. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Yarra.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Conservation and Land Management: employment initiatives, Yarra

1704. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Yarra.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Health: capital works, Casey

1705. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipality;

Information on Capital Works Project costing over $100,000 are listed in Budget Paper No. 1;

Due to the large number of projects involved, the time and resources required to provide detailed information for capital works projects costing less than $100,000 cannot be justified.

The attached list of projects however, is a detailed list of all capital works projects for the Department of Human Services (by Program Area) which commenced in 1995/96.

(Information referred to in answer (10 pages) sent to honourable member and copy tabled in parliamentary library).

Roads and Ports: capital works, Casey

1707. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Casey

1708. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Wyndham

1709. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What was the number of road accidents on that section of the Princes Highway/Maltby Pass within the City of Wyndham in each year from 1993 to 1996 in which — (i) more than one occupant was killed; (ii) an occupant was killed; and (iii) occupants required attendance by an ambulance.

ANSWER:

Year	(i) - More than one killed	(ii) - One killed	(iii) - Ambulance attendance
1993	Nil	Nil	N/A
1994	Nil	1	N/A
1995	Nil	Nil	N/A
1996	Nil	2	N/A

N/A — VicRoads is unable to provide this information as the accident database only records whether an occupant was hospitalised, based on the accident reports prepared by the Victoria Police.

Finance: capital works, Casey

1710. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

Transport: capital works, Casey

1712. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Casey

1713. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Casey

1716. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Greater Dandenong

1718. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Greater Dandenong

1720. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Greater Dandenong

1721. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Goulburn Valley Highway

1722. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What was the number of road accidents on the Seymour/Shepparton section of the Goulburn Valley Highway in each year from 1993 to 1996 which — (i) more than one occupant was killed; (ii) an occupant was killed; (iii) occupants required attendance by an ambulance; (iv) an articulated vehicle was involved when more than one person was killed, one person was killed, and occupants required attendance by an ambulance, respectively.

ANSWER:

Year	(i) - More than one killed	(ii) - One killed	(iii) – Ambulance attendance
1993	Nil	Nil	N/A
1994	Nil	1	N/A
1995	Nil	1	N/A
1996	2	5	N/A

N/A — VicRoads is unable to provide this information as the accident database only records whether an occupant was hospitalised, based on the accident reports prepared by the Victoria Police.

(iv) an articulated vehicle was involved when —

Year	(a) - More than one killed	(b) - One killed	(c) – Ambulance attendance
1993	Nil	Nil	N/A
1994	Nil	1	N/A
1995	Nil	Nil	N/A
1996	2	4	N/A

N/A — VicRoads is unable to provide this information as the accident database only records whether an occupant was hospitalised, based on the accident reports prepared by the Victoria Police.

Finance: capital works, Greater Dandenong

1723. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

The capital works project for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong was as follows:

PROJECT	1995/96 expenditure
Dandenong Health & Community Services Building - Purchase and Refurbishment	$316,000

Transport: capital works, Greater Dandenong

1725. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Greater Dandenong

1726. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Greater Dandenong

1729. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Monash

1731. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Monash

1733. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Monash

1734. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: Melbourne Port Services

1735. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of Melbourne Port Services in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been the — (i) staff levels; and (ii) budget allocation, for this Service.

ANSWER:

Melbourne Port Services (MPS) was incorporated on the 1 February 1996 and became operational on 1 March 1996.

(i) 535 staff members were employed by MPS during 1996.

(ii) There was no budget allocation for MPS.

Finance: capital works, Monash

1736. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

Transport: capital works, Monash

1738. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Monash

1739. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Monash

1742. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Frankston

1744. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Frankston

1746. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Frankston

1747. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: taxi licence cancellations

1748. THE HON. P. POWER — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many persons had their licence to drive a taxi withdrawn by the Victorian Taxi Directorate in each year from 1993 to 1996 following — (i) complaints by a passenger not resulting in charges being made; (ii) complaints by a passenger resulting in charges being made; and (iii) convictions arising from a complaint by a passenger.

ANSWER:

The Victorian Taxi Directorate was established on 14 February 1994.
As a result of :

(i) complaints by a passenger not resulting in charges being made:
7 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate revoked and
1 person had his/her taxi drivers' certificate suspended in 1994;
6 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate revoked and
3 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate suspended in 1995;

8 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate revoked and
3 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate suspended in 1996.

(ii) complaints by a passenger resulting in charges being made:
1 person had his/her taxi drivers certificate revoked in 1996.
No other persons had their taxi drivers' certificate suspended or revoked in the 1994 to 1996 period.

(iii) convictions arising from a complaint by a passenger:
2 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate revoked in 1994;
4 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate revoked in 1995; and
3 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate revoked in 1996.

Finance: capital works, Frankston

1749. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

Transport: capital works, Frankston

1751. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Frankston

1752. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Frankston

1755. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Kingston

1757. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Kingston

1759. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Kingston

1760. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: taxi licence cancellations

1761. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many persons had their licence to drive a taxi withdrawn by the Victorian Taxi Directorate in each year from 1993 to 1996 as a result of probity concerns.

ANSWER:

The Victorian Taxi Directorate was established on 14 February 1994.

As a result of probity concerns:
79 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate revoked and
9 person had their taxi drivers' certificate suspended in 1994;
58 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate revoked and
8 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate suspended in 1995;
42 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate revoked and
8 persons had their taxi drivers' certificate suspended in 1996.

Finance: capital works, Kingston

1762. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

Transport: capital works, Kingston

1764. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Kingston

1765. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Kingston

1768. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Glen Eira

1770. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Glen Eira

1772. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Glen Eira

1773. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: taxidrivers

1774. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What is the minimum level of remuneration required to be provided to taxi drivers operating a vehicle on behalf of an owner during daylight on — (i) Monday to Friday; (ii) weekends; and (iii) public holidays.

(b) What is the minimum level of remuneration required to be provided to taxi drivers operating a vehicle on behalf of an owner during night-time on — (i) Monday to Friday; (ii) weekends; and (iii) public holidays.

ANSWER:

There is no set minimum level of remuneration under Driver Leasing Agreements which are the most common form of engagement of taxi drivers. The terms of Driver Leasing Agreements are a commercial matter between the taxi owner and driver, however, the standard industry agreement provides that the driver shall retain 50% of the gross takings he/she achieves during a shift. There is no difference in rates by time of day or day of week.

Finance: capital works, Glen Eira

1775. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

Transport: capital works, Glen Eira

1777. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Glen Eira

1778. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Glen Eira

1781. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Hobsons Bay

1783. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Hobsons Bay

1785. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Hobsons Bay

1786. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Planning and Local Government: municipal superannuation

1787. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): Which municipalities have lodged a request for assistance in meeting unfunded superannuation liability with — (i) the Office of Local Government; and (ii) the Minister's office.

ANSWER:

[i] No requests have been received by the Office of Local Government.

[ii] The Delatite Shire Council
The Greater Dandenong City Council
The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

Finance: capital works, Hobsons Bay

1788. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

Transport: capital works, Hobsons Bay

1790. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Hobsons Bay

1791. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Hobsons Bay

1794. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Wyndham

1796. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Wyndham

1798. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Wyndham

1799. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Planning and Local Government: municipal rates

1800. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): Which municipalities have been granted relief from rate capping following — (i) a recommendation from the Office of Local Government; and (ii) the Minister's approval without recommendation from the Office of Local Government.

ANSWER:

All municipalities which have been granted relief from rate capping were recommended by the Office of Local Government and approved by myself.

No approvals were granted without a recommendation from the Office of Local Government.

Finance: capital works, Wyndham

1801. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

Transport: capital works, Wyndham

1803. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Wyndham

1804. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Wyndham

1807. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Greater Geelong

1809. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Greater Geelong

1811. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Greater Geelong

1812. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Planning and Local Government: municipal rates

1813. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): Which municipalities have lodged a request for relief from rate capping with — (i) the Office of Local Government; and (ii) the Minister's office.

ANSWER:

The Office of Local Government received requests from the following councils:

Colac Otway Shire Council
Greater Geelong City Council
Indigo Shire Council
Loddon Shire Council
Port Phillip City Council
Wangaratta Rural City Council
Corangamite Shire Council

The following councils made requests to the Minister for Planning and Local Government:

Ballarat City Council
Casey City Council
Delatite Shire Council
East Gippsland Shire Council
Greater Bendigo City Council
Hepburn Shire Council
Hobsons Bay City Council
Kingston City Council
Nillumbik Shire Council
Pyrenees Shire Council
Strathbogie Shire Council
Swan Hill Rural City Council
Whitehorse City Council
Wodonga Rural City Council
Yarra Ranges Shire Council
Yarriambiack Shire Council

Finance: capital works, Greater Geelong

1814. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

The capital works project for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong was as follows:

PROJECT	**1995/96 expenditure**
Public Offices - Energy Retrofitting	$4,000

Transport: capital works, Greater Geelong

1816. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Greater Geelong

1817. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Greater Geelong

1820. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Greater Bendigo

1822. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Greater Bendigo

1824. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Greater Bendigo

1825. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: Vicroads regional offices

1826. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of VicRoads Regional Offices in each year from 1993 to 1996 what was the location, staff levels and budget allocation for each office.

ANSWER:

The information sought is detailed in the attached table.

VICROADS REGIONAL OFFICES

Office & Location		Approved Staffing levels by Region as at				Total Expenditure for Financial Years $ Million			
		30/6/93	30/6/94	30/6/95	30/6/96	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96
Metro North West	Carlton	297*	361	354	332	69.3*	121.6	85.8	77.0
Metro South East	Nunawading	399*	383	366	350	118.4*	117.6	91.0	91.4
Central Metro	Carlton	519*				74.6*			
Eastern	Traralgon	225.5	179	181	165	47.3	30.1	42.6	39.9
North Eastern	Benalla	251	226	216	213	47.4	56.1	56.4	49.5
Northern	Bendigo	191	174	178	149	32.6	32.8	43.2	36.1
South Western	Geelong	254	200	194	190	53.2	40.5	48.8	41.2
Western	Ballarat	246	213	208	232	45.9	49.9	48.0	50.1

* Central Metropolitan Region combined with other metro regions in 1993/94.

Finance: capital works, Greater Bendigo

1827. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

Transport: capital works, Greater Bendigo

1829. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Greater Bendigo

1830. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Greater Bendigo

1833. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Yarra Ranges

1835. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Yarra Ranges

1837. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Yarra Ranges

1838. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: Vicroads project offices

1839. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of VicRoads Project Offices in each year from 1993 to 1996 what was the location, staff levels and budget allocation for each office.

ANSWER:

The information sought is detailed in the attached table.

DETAILS OF VICROADS PROJECT OFFICES

1993/94 TO 1995/96 FINANCIAL YEARS

Financial Year	Project Details	Ballarat Bypass Project	Calder Corridor Projects	Eastern Projects	Goulburn Valley Highway Project	Princes East Project	South Eastern Arterial Project	Western Ring Road Project
1993/94	Location	Old Creswick Rd Ballarat	Piper St Kyneton [1]	Maroondah Hwy Ringwood [2]	N.A	McCrorey Street Trafalgar	Tooronga Rd Glen Iris	Melrose Drive Tullamarine
	Staff No.s	10	10	25	N.A	11	7	53

Financial Year	Project Details	Ballarat Bypass Project	Calder Corridor Projects	Eastern Projects	Goulburn Valley Highway Project	Princes East Project	South Eastern Arterial Project	Western Ring Road Project
	Total Budget Allocation	$18.3M	$10.2M	$22.5M	N.A	$10.6M	$1.1M	$110.3M
1994/95	Location	Old Creswick Rd Ballarat	Beaucham p St Kyneton	Frederick St Doncaster	Benalla Rd Shepparton (3)	McCrorey Street Trafalgar	Tooronga Rd Glen Iris	Melrose Drive Tullamarine
	Staff No.s	14	17	34	7 - 8	11	13	62
	Total Budget Allocation	$18.5M	$25.0M	$63.6M	$3.1M	$13.3M	$38.6M	$107.0M
1995/96	Location	Old Creswick Rd Ballarat	Beaucham p St Kyneton	Frederick St Doncaster	Benalla Rd Shepparton	McCrorey Street Trafalgar	Tooronga Rd Glen Iris	Melrose Drive Tullamarine
	Staff No.s	13	14	36	6 - 4	12	15	58
	Total Budget Allocation	$23.0M	$13.8M	$65.9M	$1.3M	$18.0M	$53.1M	$96.5M

Notes : (1) Calder Projects moved to Beauchamp St Kyneton in September 1993.
(2) Eastern Projects moved to Frederick St Doncaster in February 1994 with a small presence maintained at Ringwood subsequent to that date.
(3) Goulburn Valley Project Office opened in July 1994

Finance: capital works, Yarra Ranges

1840. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

Transport: capital works, Yarra Ranges

1842. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Yarra Ranges

1843. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Yarra Ranges

1846. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Knox

1848. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Knox

1850. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Knox

1851. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: registration and licensing offices

1852. THE HON. P. POWER — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of VicRoads Registration and Licensing Offices in each year from 1993 to 1996 what was the location, staff levels and budget allocation for each office.

ANSWER:

The information sought is detailed in the attached table.

VICROADS REGISTRATION & LICENSING OFFICES

Office & Location	Approved Staffing levels by Office as at				Total Expenditure for Financial Years $ Million			
	30/6/93	30/6/94	30/6/95	30/6/96	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96
Ararat	3	2.5	2.5	2.5	# Expenditure for Ararat included with Ballarat			
Bairnsdale	6.5	6	6.5	6.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Ballarat	17	16.5	16.5	16.5	1.3#	1.4#	1.1#	1.3#
Benalla	1	2	2	2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
Bendigo	17	17	17	17	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.7
Blackburn	34	33	33	31	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
Braybrook	33	33	33	33	2.3	2.2	1.9	2.0
Broadmeadows	27	27	27	27	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.7
Camberwell	12	11	11	11	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8
Carlton	48	44	44	44	2.9	2.8	2.5	2.8
Colac	1	1	1	1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Dandenong	29	29	29	30	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7
Echuca	1	2	2	2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Ferntree Gully	25	24	24	25	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4
Frankston	23	23	23	25	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7
Geelong	28	27	28	28	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.9
Glen Waverley	17	16	16	16	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Greensborough	24	24	24	24	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.5
Hamilton	3	3	3	3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3
Horsham	6.5	7.5	7	7	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5
Kyneton	1	2	2	2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Leongatha	3.5	4	4	4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Mildura	8	8	8	9	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.6
Morwell	13	14	14	14	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Oakleigh South	35	30	34	32	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8

Office & Location	Approved Staffing levels by Office as at				Total Expenditure for Financial Years $ Million			
	30/6/93	30/6/94	30/6/95	30/6/96	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96
Portland	3	3	3	3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Sale	5	5	5	5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4
Seymour	5	5	5	5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3
Shepparton	13	13	13	14	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.9
Swan Hill	3	3	4	4	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Wangaratta	6	7	7	7	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.6
Warragul	6	6	6	6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Warrnambool	12	10	10	10	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.7
Werribee	13	13	13	13	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8
Wodonga	10	11	11	10	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.8

Finance: capital works, Knox

1853. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

Transport: capital works, Knox

1855. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Knox

1856. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Knox

1859. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Banyule

1861. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Banyule

1863. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Banyule

1864. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: State Boating Council

1865. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of the State Boating Council in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been the level of staff and budget allocated to the Council.

ANSWER:

The State Boating Council is a non-statutory advisory body made up of representatives from recreational boating groups and government agencies with responsibilities in the area of recreational boating. The SBC does not employ any staff. Administrative support is provided by the Marine Board, and is equivalent to about 50% of one officers time.

The State Boating Council is not allocated a budget as part of the annual budget appropriations. It provides advice to the Minister for Roads and Ports on the disbursement of funds appropriated for boating facilities and marine safety, as follows -

1992/93	$2,191,000
1993/94	$2,168,200
1994/95	$2,266,000
1995/96	$2,384,000
1996/97	$2,418,000

Finance: capital works, Banyule

1866. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

Transport: capital works, Banyule

1868. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Banyule

1869. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Banyule

1872. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Hume

1874. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Hume

1876. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Hume

1877. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works"90

Roads and Ports: Victorian Channels Authority

1878. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of the Victorian Channels Authority in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been the level of staff and budget allocated to the Authority.

ANSWER:

The Victorian Channels Authority (VCA) was incorporated on 1 January 1996 and became operational on 1 March 1996.

(i) At 30 June 1996, the VCA had 47 staff members.

(ii) The VCA does not receive a budget allocation.

Finance: capital works, Hume

1879. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

Transport: capital works, Hume

1881. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Hume

1882. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Hume

1885. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, La Trobe

1887. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, La Trobe

1889. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, La Trobe

1890. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: Roads Corporation

1891. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of the Roads Corporation (VicRoads) in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been the level of staff and budget allocated to the Corporation.

ANSWER:

The table below indicates the staff levels and budget allocations from 1993 to 1996 of VicRoads.

Financial Year	Level of Staff	Allocated budget $ Million
1992-93	4111	675.2
1993-94	3270	592.3
1994-95	2904	725.0
1995-96	2835	760.8

Finance: capital works, La Trobe

1892. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

Transport: capital works, La Trobe

1894. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, La Trobe

1895. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, La Trobe

1898. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Manningham

1900. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Manningham

1902. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Manningham

1903. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Roads and Ports: Marine Board of Victoria

1904. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of the Marine Board of Victoria in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been the level of staff and budget allocated to the Board.

ANSWER:

Year	Staff	Budget
1993	17	$ 1,226,000
1994	16	$ 1,172,000
1995	16	$ 1,401,000
1996	16	$ 1,433,000

Finance: capital works, Manningham

1905. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

Transport: capital works, Manningham

1907. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Manningham

1908. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Manningham

1911. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Stonnington

1913. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Stonnington

1915. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Stonnington

1916. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Stonnington

1918. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

Transport: capital works, Stonnington

1920. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Stonnington

1921. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Stonnington

1924. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Whittlesea

1926. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Whittlesea

1928. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Whittlesea

1929. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Planning and Local Government: free publication

1930. THE HON. P. POWER — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication Review of Council's Annual Reports and Corporate Plans in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

This report was prepared only in 1994 and was published jointly by the Office of Local Government and the Standing Committee on Local Government Financial Management.

The Committee printed and distributed the report and the Office of Local Government does not have details on the number of reports distributed nor the costs of preparation, printing or distribution of the report.

The time and resources required to provide an estimate of the cost of the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication cannot be justified.

Finance: capital works, Whittlesea

1931. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

Transport: capital works, Whittlesea

1933. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Whittlesea

1934. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Whittlesea

1937. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Brimbank

1939. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Brimbank

1941. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Brimbank

1942. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Planning and Local Government: free publication

1943. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication Report of an Investigation into Senior Staff Employment Contracts and Appointments in Victorian Municipalities in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

The report was produced in May 1994 and was tabled in Parliament in the Legislative Council on 19 May 1994 by the former Minister for Local Government and ordered to be printed.

No record was kept by the Office of Local Government of the number of reports which were distributed and I am unaware of how many were distributed through the Papers Room of the Legislative Council. However, they were made available to all councils and any person who requested a copy of the report.

The report was prepared within the budget resources of the Office of Local Government. No separate budget allocation was identified for the preparation of the report.

The time and resources required to provide an estimate of the cost of the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication cannot be justified.

Finance: capital works, Brimbank

1944. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

Transport: capital works, Brimbank

1946. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Brimbank

1947. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Brimbank

1950. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Ballarat

1952. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Ballarat

1954. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Ballarat

1955. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Ballarat

1956. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

The capital works project for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat was as follows:

PROJECT	**1995/96 expenditure**
Public Offices - Energy Retrofitting	$3,000

Transport: capital works, Ballarat

1958. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Ballarat

1959. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Ballarat

1962. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Maroondah

1964. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Maroondah

1966. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Maroondah

1967. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Maroondah

1968. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

Transport: capital works, Maroondah

1970. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Maroondah

1971. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Maroondah

1974. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Health: capital works, Melbourne

1976. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1705.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Melbourne

1978. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Melbourne

1982. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Melbourne

1983. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Bass Coast

1990. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Bass Coast

1994. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Bass Coast

1995. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Nillumbik

2002. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Nillumbik

2006. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Nillumbik

2007. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Swan Hill

2014. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Swan Hill

2018. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Swan Hill

2019. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Greater Shepparton

2026. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Greater Shepparton

2030. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Greater Shepparton

2031. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Wangaratta

2038. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Wangaratta

2042. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Wangaratta

2043. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Mildura

2050. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Mildura

2054. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Mildura

2055. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Horsham

2062. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Horsham

2066. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Horsham

2067. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Boroondara

2074. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Boroondara

2078. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Boroondara

2079. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Cardinia

2086. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Cardinia

2090. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Cardinia

2091. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Darebin

2098. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Darebin

2102. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Darebin

2103. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Port Phillip

2110. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Port Phillip

2114. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Port Phillip

2115. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Maribyrnong

2122. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Maribyrnong

2126. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Maribyrnong

2127. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Moonee Valley

2134. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Moonee Valley

2138. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Moonee Valley

2139. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Melton

2146. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Melton

2150. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Melton

2151. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Mitchell

2158. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Mitchell

2162. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Mitchell

2163. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Moreland

2170. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Moreland

2174. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Moreland

2175. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Mornington Peninsula

2182. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Mornington Peninsula

2186. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Mornington Peninsula

2187. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Wodonga

2194. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Wodonga

2198. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Wodonga

2199. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Yarra

2206. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Infrastructure in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Department of Infrastructure is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Department of Infrastructure; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Transport: capital works, Yarra

2210. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What were the capital works projects for the Public Transport Corporation in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to the Public Transport Corporation is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of the Public Transport Corporation; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Should the Honourable Member require further information on particular capital works, I will be happy to consider her request.

Roads and Ports: capital works, Yarra

2211. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What were the capital works projects for the VicRoads in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to VicRoads is not provided for the following reasons:-

(i) information on capital works is provided in the Budget Papers and annual report of VicRoads; and

(ii) the time and resources required to provide detailed information for the period specified cannot be justified.

Small Business: investment proposals

2392. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to her portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current *Investment Evaluation Guidelines* and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

No investment proposals relating to my portfolio were prepared in 1996-97.

Tuesday, 14 October 1997

Education: ministerial officer pecuniary interests

1283. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): Have all ministerial officers either currently or formerly employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest declaration; if so, on what date was the declaration signed and on what date did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

All ministerial officers currently and formerly employed in the current Ministers office have signed a pecuniary interest declaration.

Commencement Date	Date of most recent pecuniary interest declaration
5/2/96	13/6/96
26/7/93	13/6/96
10/7/95	13/6/96
1/5/96	13/6/96
24/7/95	13/6/96
26/10/92	9/8/96
7/10/92	13/6/96
3/3/97	11/3/97
5/3/97	11/3/97

Education: triennial school review contracts

1316. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What are the names of all contractors and sub contractors/reviewers engaged to carry out the Triennial Reviews of schools under the Schools Review Process and the amounts to be paid under their contracts.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The names of the companies awarded contracts by the Department of Education to carry out Triennial Reviews of schools are:

Castlemaine Education Centre
Deakin University
EdPsych Services
Educational Development & Review
Educational Evaluators Australia
Kingfisher Management Services
Melbourne University
Monash University
National Curriculum Services
University of Ballarat

Contracts have been given two categories: one year contracts with an option for a further two years and three year contracts subject to annual review.

The total per annum cost over the 10 companies is $1.818 million

Premier: Kovess International

1318. **THE HON. B. T. PULLEN** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): Has the Premier or any agency for which he is responsible entered into any contracts with Kovess International or Kovess Evans Training and Development Ltd; if so, what is the purpose, price and duration of each contract.

ANSWER:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet and other agencies for which I have responsibility have not entered into any contracts with Kovess International or Kovess Evans Training and Development Ltd.

Education: staff

1320. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What was the number of equivalent full time student support staff at each Department of Education regional office as at 1 July 1996 and 1 April 1997, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Resources for all school support services are provided each year to regional offices, which are then required to budget on the basis of 30% for curriculum support and 70% for student support. Regions are able to coordinate the provision of services to their schools using either payroll staff or contracted services, having a view to the needs of the schools and the availability of services in the area.

The total numbers of equivalent full time (EFT) school support positions allocated for services in 1996 and 1997 are outlined in the summary below.

Region	**1996 EFT**	**1997 EFT**
Barwon-South Western	56.9	51.2
Central Highlands-Wimmera	40.2	36.2
Loddon Campaspe-Mallee	53.7	48.3
Goulburn North-Eastern	53.3	48.0
Gippsland	45.7	41.1
South East Metropolitan (combined in 1996)	214.5	
Eastern Metropolitan		97.8
Southern Metropolitan		95.2
North West Metropolitan (combined in 1996)	155.4	
Northern Metropolitan		82.2
Western Metropolitan		57.7
Total	**619.7**	**557.7**

Education: Education Week

1322. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What allocations have been made to each organisation and school by the Community Information Service and the Communications and Public Affairs Department for the celebration of Education Week for 1996 and 1997.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

1996
Nil

1997

National Gallery of Victoria	Family Day - Education through Art	$ 5,000
Art Craft Teachers Association	International Art Education Forum	$ 2,000
Parliament House	Re-enactment - Passage of Education Act 1872	$ 2,000
Performing Arts Network	Beepup & Piflik - Musical Comedy	$11,500
National Resources Conservation League	Grounds for Learning	$ 250
Mathematical Association of Victoria	Family Maths - Fun for All	$ 1,200
Warrnambool Art Gallery	Achievement through Art	$ 2,250
Australian Stock Exchange	View of Australian Stock Exchange	$ 200
Geelong Performing Arts Centre	Puppet Play	$ 936
St Arnaud Secondary College	Victorian Regional Youth Jazz Festival	$ 5,000

Education: Education Week

1323. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What is the total budget for 1997 Education Week, including details of amounts set aside for all advertising, promotion, administrative costs and grants to schools and other organisations, and what are the equivalent details for 1996.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

1996	Advertising	$64,468
	Promotions & Administration	$72,000
	Grants to Schools/Organisations	Nil
1997	Advertising	$65,000
	Promotions & Administration	$41,664
	Grants to Schools/Organistions	$30,336

Agriculture and Resources: water authority payments

1324. **THE HON. C. J. HOGG** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): For each year from 1992 to 1997 to date how much has been paid by each water authority to the Department of Treasury and Finance or to Consolidated Revenue.

ANSWER:

The relevant figures are provided in the attached table.

Metropolitan Water Businesses:

figures include dividends, (former) contributions to the Consolidated Fund paid by Melbourne Water Corporation in respect of the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop and the metropolitan planning function, tax equivalent payments and financial accommodation levy payments.

the figures exclude repayment of Victorian equity trust units by Melbourne Water Corporation in 1992/93 ($107.1M).

Non-Metropolitan Water Authorities:

figures are the dividends paid by the non-metropolitan water authorities.

since there have been a large number of amalgamations over the period dividend payments from the old authorities have been summed to present the figures in terms of the current water authorities.

these calculations are shown in Appendix A.

Payments to The Department of Treasury and Finance or to Consolidated Revenue

Made by Each Water Authority from 1992 to 1997

WATER AUTHORITY	PAYMENTS				
FULL NAME	1992/1993	1993/1994	1994/1995	1995/1996	1996/1997
Melbourne Water Corporation	183,400,000	232,000,000	128,700,000	67,700,000	144,700,000
Yarra Valley Water			100,000	28,400,000	64,750,000
City West Water			100,000	8,200,000	30,100,000
South East Water			100,000	28,100,000	64,750,000
Barwon Region Water Authority	1,647,000	3,668,000	3,874,000	4,160,000	4,213,000
Central Gippsland Region Water Authority	841,000	1,905,000	1,936,000	2,057,000	2,100,000
Central Highlands Water Authority	744,000	1,701,000	1,819,000	1,907,000	1,880,000
Coliban Region Water Authority	763,000	1,757,000	1,904,000	2,051,000	2,066,000
East Gippsland Region Water Authority	262,000	598,000	641,000	691,000	703,000
Glenelg Region Water Authority	109,000	240,000	251,000	256,000	280,000
Goulburn Valley Region Water Authority	478,000	1,029,000	1,151,000	1,175,000	1,263,000
Grampians Region Water Authority	377,000	833,000	883,000	1,082,000	1,076,000
Kiewa Murray Region Water Authority	293,000	666,000	705,000	757,000	793,000
Lower Murray Region Water Authority	347,000	776,000	832,000	930,000	943,000
Mid-Goulburn Region Water Board	202,000	448,000	472,000	499,000	503,000
Otway Region Water Authority	159,000	410,000	368,000	422,000	420,000
Ovens Region Water Authority	290,000	663,000	689,000	674,000	795,000
Portland Coast Region Water Authority	123,000	255,000	285,000	298,000	308,000
South Gippsland Region Water Authority	236,000	535,000	563,000	591,000	601,000
South West Water Authority	256,000	573,000	587,000	684,000	699,000
Western Region Water Authority	563,000	1,262,000	1,309,000	1,474,000	1,468,000
Westernport Region Water Authority	166,000	398,000	492,000	530,000	614,000

WATER AUTHORITY	PAYMENTS				
FULL NAME	1992/1993	1993/1994	1994/1995	1995/1996	1996/1997
Rural Water Corporation (Urban Supply)	83,000	180,000		1,000	1,000
Rural Water Corporation (Rural Supply)		1,000,000	1,000,000		
Gippsland Southern Rural Water Authority				223,415	179,000
Goulburn-Murray RWA				601,145	497,000
Sunraysia RWA				61,047	188,000
Wimmera Mallee RWA				114,393	136,000
Totals of all Metros, NMUs and Rural Water	**191,339,000**	**250,897,000**	**148,761,000**	**153,639,000**	**326,026,000**

Cash payments made for each year include dividends, contributions to the Consolidated Fund, income tax equivalent, wholesale sales tax equivalent and financial accommodation levy payments. Note that they are the actual cash (not accrued) payments made by the authorities in each year.

APPENDIX A

Estimates of New Water Authorities' Payments to Government 1992 - 1995

Based on previous Authorities in the Region

Notes: 1. Some smaller amalgamations occurred over the period and are

Barwon Region	**92-93**	**93-94**	**94-95**
Geelong and District Water Board	1,647,430	3,667,840	3,873,637
Total:	**1,647,430**	**3,667,840**	**3,873,637**

Central Gippsland Region Water Auth.	**92-93**	**93-94**	**94-95**
Latrobe Region Water Authority	555,320	1,256,002	1,252,028
Tarago Water Board	118,220	278,080	294,423
Macalister Water Board	62,980	139,392	146,073
City of Sale	104,300	231,726	243,271
Total:	**840,820**	**1,905,200**	**1,935,795**

Central Highlands Region Water Auth.	**92-93**	**93-94**	**94-95**
Central Highlands Region(+Lexton W.B)	2,740		1,580,008
Shire of Avoca	5,500	12,452	12,788
Beaufort Water Board	11,690	28,160	26,956
Learmonth Water Board	1,100	2,530	
Shire of Talbot & Clunes	9,830	21,340	22,379
West Moorabool Water Board			
Shire of Ballan	19,920	14,998	
Creswick and District Water Board	26,590	56,320	
City of Maryborough	65,380	147,202	153,847
Shire of Tullaroop	9,630	17,842	22,563
Ballarat WB	591,290	1,400,300	
Total:	**743,670**	**1,701,144**	**1,818,541**

Coliban Region Water Authority	**92-93**	**93-94**	**94-95**
Coliban Region Water Authority	607,510	1,407,582	1,531,708
Campaspe Region Water Authority	101,020	228,096	243,777
Gordon Water Board	3,640	7,458	8,579
Shire of Korong	9,500	21,956	24,472
Goulburn-Murray RWA			
Shire of Bet Bet	5,840	11,660	11,776
Shire of Cohuna	20,460	45,166	47,380
Heathcote Water Board	15,310	34,738	35,949
Total:	**763,280**	**1,756,656**	**1,903,641**

East Gippsland Region Water Auth.	**92-93**	**93-94**	**94-95**
Mitchell Water Board	144,210	319,154	351,440
Tambo WB	71,910	175,142	195,063
Orbost WB	26,750	59,598	63,112
Mallacoota WB	13,420	30,404	31,464
Omeo	6,090	14,080	
Total:	**262,380**	**598,378**	**641,079**

Glenelg Region Water Auth.	**92-93**	**93-94**	**94-95**
Hamilton WB	74,790	165,220	
Glenelg-Wannon WB	28,010	61,798	250,585
Shire of Mount Rouse	6,080	12,848	
Total:	**108,880**	**239,866**	**250,585**

Goulburn Valley Region Water Auth.	92-93	93-94	94-95
Goulburn Valley Region WA(**Shepp WB**)*	227,120	511,808	723,603
Mooroopna WB	46,420	112,662	
Rodney WB	25,200	55,770	
Shire of Cobram	34,240	79,288	89,861
Deakin WB	8,780	21,824	22,816
Euroa Nagambie Regional WA	39,630	27,082	90,482
Town of Kyabram	42,780	96,294	103,178
Nathalia Shire	14,970	33,110	35,144
Shire of Numurkah	30,300	72,094	82,708
Tungamah Shire WB(Katandra West Dist.)	770	1,645	1,754
Waranga WB	7,640	17,138	1,754
Total:	**477,850**	**1,028,715**	**1,151,300**

Grampians Region Water Auth.	92-93	93-94	94-95
Shire of Arapiles			
Birchip Shire Council	3,810	7,326	8,763
Hindmarsh WB	12,810	28,248	29,348
Kowree WB	12,830	27,170	28,451
Sea Lake WB	3,430	7,326	7,682
Stawell WB	51,700	116,820	19,619
Wycheproof WB	3,300	7,238	7,590
City of Ararat	61,460	135,410	142,278
Charlton WB	11,190	24,662	25,783
Horsham WB	103,880	230,956	246,813
Murtoa WB	8,010	17,534	18,676
St. Arnaud Town Council	22,370	49,522	53,222
Walpeup Shire Council	2,380	5,390	5,474
Wimmera Mallee Water			
Shire of Ararat	7,270	15,906	16,652
Donald WB	13,580	29,854	31,441
Kaniva Shire Council	8,160	18,194	19,757
Nhill WB	18,220	40,194	42,113
Stawell Shire Council	8,370	18,040	124,200
Warracknabeal WB	24,140	53,108	55,522
Total:	**376,910**	**832,898**	**883,384**

Kiewa Murray Region Water Authority	92-93	93-94	94-95
Kiewa Valley WA	26,830	59,554	62,192
Rural City of Wodonga	218,520	501,160	530,656
United Shire of Beechworth	20,680	47,542	50,324
Tallangatta SC	13,930	28,072	30,889
Upper Murray Water Board	13,300	29,436	30,912
Total:	**293,260**	**665,764**	**704,973**

Lower Murray Region Water Authority	92-93	93-94	94-95
Sunraysia WB	226,710	508,156	548,136
Borough of Kerang	32,350	71,522	76,912
Wimmerra Mallee Rural WA urb(Piangil)			
G-Valley RWA: Koondrook, Nyah,*			
Swan Hill WB	75,890	169,092	177,215
Robinvale WB	12,500	27,500	29,302
Total:	**347,450**	**776,270**	**831,565**

Mid-Goulburn Regional Water Board	92-93	93-94	94-95
Mid-Goulburn Regional Water Board	126,010	280,962	294,285
Shire of Alexandra	32,300	71,522	74,750
Mansfield District	32,890	71,324	77,372
Pyalong Water Board	1,130	2,618	2,553
Yea WB	9,880	21,846	22,885
Total:	**202,210**	**448,272**	**471,845**

Otway Region Water Authority	92-93	93-94	94-95
Colac District WB	119,500	383,240	339,802
Lorne WB	27,420		
Lough Calvert Drainage Trust			
Aireys Inlet WB	11,900	26,620	28,060
Total:	**158,820**	**409,860**	**367,862**

Ovens Region Water Authority	92-93	93-94	94-95
Benalla WB	73,790	162,844	171,097
Bright District WB	24,320	53,966	57,569
Shire of Myrtleford	22,980	53,086	52,026
Tungamah Shire WB	2,150	5,114	5,261
City of Wangaratta	121,900	285,098	296,861
Shire of Yarrawonga	44,690	103,224	106,628
Goorambat District of G-Valley Region WA*			
Total:	**289,830**	**663,332**	**689,442**

Portland Coast Region Water Authority	92-93	93-94	94-95
Portland WB	83,620	170,632	285,407
Heywood WB	11,910	26,026	
Port Fairy WB	27,320	58,696	
Total:	**122,850**	**255,354**	**285,407**

South Gippsland Region Water Auth.	92-93	93-94	94-95
Alberton WB	20,980	45,584	48,783
Korumburra WB	30,350	67,518	70,541
Leongatha WB	35,470	85,580	92,184
South Gippsland WB	22,960	51,524	52,072
Wonthaggi/Inverloch WB	126,430	284,746	299,207
Total:	**236,190**	**534,952**	**562,787**

South West Water Authority	92-93	93-94	94-95
City of Warrnambool	187,880	422,554	
Shire of	7,950	18,216	
Town of	28,530	63,030	
Shire of Heytesbury	14,450	32,274	
Shire of Hampden	11,930	26,246	
Mortlake WB	4,900	11,110	
Hopkins RWA(Renamed SWWA Jan1995)			586,523
Total:	**255,640**	**573,430**	**586,523**

Western Region Water Authority	92-93	93-94	94-95
Macedon Region WA	232,390	524,370	524,124
Shire of Melton	216,850	480,480	510,255
Shire of Bacchus Marsh	86,060	196,812	209,990
Romsey-Lancefield Water Board	27,440	60,302	64,929
Total:	**562,740**	**1,261,964**	**1,309,298**

Westernport Region Water Authority	92-93	93-94	94-95
Westernport Water Board	165,610	398,266	492,200
Total:	**165,610**	**398,266**	**492,200**

Note:*Breakdown of Goulburn Valley Region WA payments not available so there will be a slight understatement of payments made by Ovens and Lower Murray WAs because all of the old Goulburn Valley WA payments have been put into the new Goulburn Valley Region Water Authority.

Agriculture and Resources: water authority payments

1325. **THE HON. C. J. HOGG** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): In relation to the $350 million in the budget what is the estimated payment for each water authority.

ANSWER:

On page 383 of 1997/98 Budget Paper No. 3, Table 3.9 "Public Authority Income", a 1997/98 Budget estimate of $314.8 million is provided for the water industry. This includes:

estimated payments of $21.7 million by non-metropolitan water authorities;

estimated payments by the 4 metropolitan water businesses of $293.1 million.

It should be noted that the definition of "Public Authority Income" excludes financial accommodation levy payments (estimated $7.1 million).

Thus, the 1997/98 Budget estimate for total payments to the Consolidated Fund by the four metropolitan water businesses (including financial accommodation levy payments) is $300.2 million (c.f. forecast $305.6 million in 1996/97).

The Corporate Plans (including projected profitability and payments to Government) of the metropolitan water businesses (including the 3 retail businesses which are subject to performance appraisal on a "competition by comparison" basis) are submitted for the consideration of the Government on a commercial-in-confidence basis.

As the dividend payments in 1997/98 by individual businesses remain subject to negotiation in the context of relevant commercial considerations, including actual and projected profit and cash flow, it is not appropriate to identify projections in respect of individual businesses.

The estimated payments of $21.7 million by non-metropolitan water authorities is based on the forecast total payments made in 1996/97. As the dividend payments in 1997/98 are subject to the actual number of assessments, as at 30th June 1997, it is not appropriate to identify projections for each individual non-metropolitan water authority.

Agriculture and Resources: water infrastructure

1326. **THE HON. C. J. HOGG** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): What Build, Own and Operate or Build,

Own, Operate and Transfer schemes have been undertaken or are under construction for water or wastewater infrastructure.

ANSWER:

The only Build, Own and Operate or Build, Own, Operate and Transfer water or wastewater infrastructure project to be built or under construction in Victoria is the Yan Yean Water Treatment Plant, a BOO scheme, that was built for Melbourne Water by Yan Yean Water Pty Ltd (a company owned jointly by North West Water Australia Pty Ltd and Transfield Pty Ltd). This plant was opened in 1994.

Agriculture and Resources: water charges

1327. **THE HON. C. J. HOGG** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): What are the water service or access charges and wastewater services or access charges being charged by water authorities, indicating the basis of calculation and the level of the price charged.

ANSWER:

The water and wastewater service or access charges levied by water authorities vary widely across Victoria. These charges also vary significantly within an authority's districts.

While all the 18 non-metropolitan urban water authorities have adopted a pay for use tariff structure or two-part tariff, the three metropolitan water businesses still use property valuation as a basis for setting service charges.

Information about the water and wastewater service charges and the price charged by the non-metropolitan water authorities are published as tariff notices in various local newspapers and the authorities' approved business plans for 1996/97, a list of which is set out in Attachment 1.

The calculation of the service charges is based on recovering the full cost of providing services to customers. The steps involved in this calculation for the non-metropolitan urban water authorities are shown in Attachment 2.

ATTACHMENT 1
PUBLISHED PUBLIC INFORMATION
ON WATER AND WASTEWATER TARIFFS AND CHARGES

WATER AUTHORITY	INFORMATION SOURCE	DATE ADVERTISED/SUBMITTED
Barwon	Geelong Advertiser	29 June 1996
Central Gippsland	Moe & Narracan News Morwell Advertiser Warragul/Drouin Gazette Maffra Spectator - Gippsland Times La Trobe Valley Express	9 July 1996 9 July 1996 9 July 1996 9 July 1996 9 July 1996
Central Highlands	Business Plan 1996/97	30 April 1996
Coliban	Business Plan 1996/97	30 April 1996
East Gippsland	Bairnsdale Advertiser Snowy River Mail	26 July & 2 August 1996 31 July 1996
Glenelg	Hamilton Spectator	22 August 1996
Goulburn Valley	Business Plan 1996/97	26 April 1996
Grampians	Business Plan 1996/97	30 April 1996
Kiewa Murray	Alpine Times Ovens & Murray Advertiser Corowa Free Press Corryong Courier	Over period 10 to 21 August 1996 Over period 10 to 21 August 1996 Over period 10 to 21 August 1996 Over period 10 to 21 August 1996

WATER AUTHORITY	INFORMATION SOURCE	DATE ADVERTISED/SUBMITTED
	Border Morning Mail	Over period 10 to 21 August 1996
	Twin Cities Post	Over period 10 to 21 August 1996
Lower Murray	Sunraysia Daily	26 July 1996
	Koondrook-Barham Bridge	26 July 1996
	Swan Hill Guardian	26 July 1996
	Kerang Northern Times	26 July 1996
	Robinvale Sentinel	1 August 1996
Mid-Goulburn	Corporate Plan 1997/98	21 April 1996
Otway	Business Plan 1996/97	29 April 1996
Ovens	Benalla Ensign	17 July 1996
	Yarrawong Chronicle	17 July 1996
	Alpine Times	16 July 1996
	Wangaratta Chronicle	19 July 1996
Portland Coast	Portland Observer	6 September 1996
	Warrnambool Standard	7 September 1996
South Gippsland	Business Plan 1996/97	30 April 1996
South West	Warrnambool Standard	12 October 1996
	Cobden Times	30 October 1996
	Terang Express	31 October 1996
	Camperdown Chronicle	29 October 1996
	Mortlake Dispatch	30 October 1996
	Western Plains Advertiser	31 October 1996
Western	The Age	2 August 1996
Westernport	Phillip Island Advertiser	31 July 1996
	South Gippsland Sentinel Times	30 July 1996

ATTACHMENT 2

BASIS OF CALCULATION FOR WATER AND WASTEWATER CHARGES

NON-METROPOLITAN URBAN WATER AUTHORITIES

Part 13 Division 5 of the Water Act 1989 gives non-metropolitan urban water authorities (NMUs) considerable flexibility in the structuring and setting of tariffs for the payment of services. The tariff policies adopted by individual authorities may vary depending on local circumstances and preferences.

All NMUs in Victoria have adopted pay for use pricing structure or two-part tariff as part of the water sector reform which is in accordance with the Council of Australian Governments agreements. The three metropolitan water retailers still use property valuation as a basis for setting service charges.

Pay for use tariffs consist of two parts: firstly a service charge which is levied for the availability of the service, and secondly a volume charge which is calculated as a uniform sum per kilolitre of water used. These charges are calculated on the basis of recovering the full cost of providing services to customers.

Broadly the following steps are involved in calculating the two-part tariff by NMUs:

(1) Establish Total Revenue Yield

This is identified in the authority's business plan. The yield includes revenue required to cover the authority's costs, as well as the surplus required to generate the funds for its future capital works. This revenue requirement is affected by several assumptions including inflation, consumption growth, capital works programme, methods of financing the works programme, estimated water sales and the timing of any new augmentation works.

(2) Calculate the Volume Charge

The price to be charged for water is made up of the cost of production and the cost of undertaking the next augmentation. The production component covers those recurrent costs that vary as the amount of water used increases. These include costs of pumping, treating or disinfecting water and bulk purchase where applicable. The production cost per kilolitre is calculated by dividing the total of those costs which are directly related to supplying water by total estimated water sales.

The augmentation component is based on the cost consumers would have to meet for the next increment of water. This is calculated by establishing the present value of the cost of works to augment the system including cost of headworks expansion, additional pumps and main amplification. The present value is then multiplied by the indicative interest rate to give the cost of capital to undertake the project. The charge per kilolitre is calculated by dividing this cost of capital by total estimated water sales.

(3) Calculate the Service Charge

The amount of revenue required from the service charge is calculated by subtracting the volume charge revenue from the required total revenue yield.

(4) Allocating the Service Charge

Ideally, service charges should be allocated according to the relative share of the system capacity commanded by each and every customer. However, to determine this precisely would be impractical. The most feasible approach used is to classify customers into groups including residential, non-residential, industries and caravan parks, and determine the relative capacity share of each group on the basis of the meter size tapping for water and as a flat service charge for wastewater.

Agriculture and Resources: water charges

1328. **THE HON. C. J. HOGG** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): Which municipalities pay a water service or access charge and wastewater service or access charge on their properties separately from their usage charges.

ANSWER:

All municipalities pay water and wastewater service charges on their properties separately from their usage charges unless they are exempted from paying by the water authority. The municipalities concerned are shown in the following table.

MUNICIPALITIES WHICH PAY WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICE CHARGES SEPARATELY FROM USAGE CHARGES IN 1996/97

WATER AUTHORITY	MUNICIPALITY/SHIRE COUNCIL
Barwon	Greater Geelong City, Surf Coast, Borough of Queenscliffe, Parts of Golden Plains and Colac-Otway that are within Barwon Water's District.
Central Gippsland	Baw Baw, La Trobe, Wellington, South Gippsland
Central Highlands	Ballarat City, Pyrenees, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Moorabool, Central Goldfields, Corangamite
Coliban	Greater Bendigo City, Campaspe, Loddon, Gannawarra, Macedon

WATER AUTHORITY	MUNICIPALITY/SHIRE COUNCIL
	Ranges, Mount Alexander, Central Goldfields, Mitchell
East Gippsland	East Gippsland
Glenelg	Moyne, Glenelg, Southern Grampians
Goulburn Valley	Greater Shepparton City, Moira, Strathbogie, Campaspe
Grampians	In 1996/97 Grampians Water did not levy any service charge on the ten municipalities within its water and sewerage districts. The municipalities are the Northern Grampians, Horsham Rural City, Ararat Rural City, Buloke, Swan Hill Rural City, Mildura Rural City, Ganawarra, Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack, West Wimmera
Kiewa Murray	Wodonga Rural City, Towong, Indigo, Alpine
Lower Murray	Mildura Rural City, Swan Hill Rural City, Gannawarra
Mid-Goulburn	Mitchell, Murrindindi, Delatite, Strathbogie
Otway	Colac-Otway, Surf Coast
Ovens	Moira, Alpine, Delatite, Wangaratta Rural City
Portland Coast	Moyne, Glenelg
South Gippsland	South Gippsland, Wellington, Bass Coast
South West	Warrnambool City, Moyne, Corangamite
Western	Hume City, Melton, Macedon Ranges, Moorabool
Westernport	Bass Coast
City West	Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne (north of the Yarra River), Moonee Valley, Wyndham, Yarra and parts of Melton and Hume
South West	Port Phillip, Glen Eira, Bayside, Kingston, Greater Dandenong, Knox, Casey, Frankston, Mornington Peninsula, Parts of Melbourne, Stonnington, Monash, Yarra Ranges, Cardinia, Baw Baw and South Gippsland
Yarra Valley	Banyule, Boroondara, Darebin, Manningham, Marroondah, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whitehorse, Whittlesea, Parts of Cardinia, Hume, Stonnington and Yarra Ranges

Agriculture and Resources: water charges

1329. **THE HON. C. J. HOGG** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): What are the current water and wastewater service (or access charges) or rates charges and water and wastewater usage charges for each water authority.

ANSWER:

The water and wastewater service or access charges levied by water authorities vary widely across Victoria. These charges also vary significantly within an authority's districts.

While all the 18 non-metropolitan urban water authorities have adopted a pay for use tariff structure or two-part tariff, the three metropolitan water businesses still use property valuation as a basis for setting service charges.

Information about the water and wastewater service charges and the price charged by the non-metropolitan water authorities are published as tariff notices in various local newspapers and the authorities' approved business plans for 1996/97, a list of which is set out in Attachment 1.

ATTACHMENT 1
PUBLISHED PUBLIC INFORMATION
ON WATER AND WASTEWATER TARIFFS AND CHARGES

WATER AUTHORITY	INFORMATION SOURCE	DATE ADVERTISED/SUBMITTED
Barwon	Geelong Advertiser	29 June 1996
Central Gippsland	Moe & Narracan News	9 July 1996
	Morwell Advertiser	9 July 1996
	Warragul/Drouin Gazette	9 July 1996
	Maffra Spectator - Gippsland Times	9 July 1996
	La Trobe Valley Express	9 July 1996
Central Highlands	Business Plan 1996/97	30 April 1996
Coliban	Business Plan 1996/97	30 April 1996
East Gippsland	Bairnsdale Advertiser	26 July & 2 August 1996
	Snowy River Mail	31 July 1996
Glenelg	Hamilton Spectator	22 August 1996
Goulburn Valley	Business Plan 1996/97	26 April 1996
Grampians	Business Plan 1996/97	30 April 1996
Kiewa Murray	Alpine Times	Over period 10 to 21 August 1996
	Ovens & Murray Advertiser	Over period 10 to 21 August 1996
	Corowa Free Press	Over period 10 to 21 August 1996
	Corryong Courier	Over period 10 to 21 August 1996
	Border Morning Mail	Over period 10 to 21 August 1996
	Twin Cities Post	Over period 10 to 21 August 1996
Lower Murray	Sunraysia Daily	26 July 1996
	Koondrook-Barham Bridge	26 July 1996
	Swan Hill Guardian	26 July 1996
	Kerang Northern Times	26 July 1996
	Robinvale Sentinel	1 August 1996
Mid-Goulburn	Corporate Plan 1997/98	21 April 1996
Otway	Business Plan 1996/97	29 April 1996
Ovens	Benalla Ensign	17 July 1996
	Yarrawong Chronicle	17 July 1996
	Alpine Times	16 July 1996
	Wangaratta Chronicle	19 July 1996
Portland Coast	Portland Observer	6 September 1996
	Warrnambool Standard	7 September 1996
South Gippsland	Business Plan 1996/97	30 April 1996
South West	Warrnambool Standard	12 October 1996
	Cobden Times	30 October 1996
	Terang Express	31 October 1996
	Camperdown Chronicle	29 October 1996
	Mortlake Dispatch	30 October 1996
	Western Plains Advertiser	31 October 1996
Western	The Age	2 August 1996
Westernport	Phillip Island Advertiser	31 July 1996
	South Gippsland Sentinel Times	30 July 1996

Agriculture and Resources: water quality standards

1330. **THE HON. C. J. HOGG** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): What is the government policy on water and wastewater quality standards, indicating when these policies were adopted and when water authorities have to fully implement them.

ANSWER:

The government's current policy on drinking water quality was made in August 1994. It provides for all rural water authorities where appropriate to upgrade their drinking water supplies to meet the health-related aspects of the World Health Organization 1984 guidelines over the next five years (by the year 2000). Supplies in the metropolitan area are to meet the standards set down in the Operating Licences for the three retail companies by the dates specified in the licences. These standards are generally based on the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia's drinking water guidelines of 1987.

The government is seeking advice from an interdepartmental working group before making a decision on whether or not to adopt the latest Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 1996 for all Victorian water supplies. This advice is expected by the end of the year.

The government's policy on wastewater quality standards is set down in the State Environment Protection Policy for the Waters of Victoria. In 1994 the government decided that discharges to inland waterways are to be upgraded as necessary over the next seven years so as to ensure SEPP objectives are achieved by the year 2002.

Agriculture and Resources: water charges

1331. **THE HON. C. J. HOGG** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): Does the government intend to adopt a policy which provides for water charges for rural, community, sporting and recreation clubs to be made a community service obligation; if so, when.

ANSWER:

Concession arrangements for water charges in the metropolitan area are prescribed in Schedule 1 of the Water Industry Act 1994.

An approach to deal with concessions for sporting bodies and community organisations in country areas has been developed in conjunction with the water industry.

The Victorian Government recognises the contribution that sporting bodies and community organisations make to the quality of life of most Victorians. It therefore supports water authorities giving special tariff consideration to these bodies.

All consumers however, should pay in reasonable measure for the water used and the sewerage services provided, to ensure there is an economic signal to conserve water and to investigate options such as untreated water or recycled water.

The price paid and the tariff structure for these organisations should be determined by the Board of Directors of each water business. These directors have been appointed by the Government to manage each business on behalf of the State Government.

Water businesses will have different approaches to prices and tariffs for these organisations. It will depend on the local circumstances and will be a basis on which water companies can be benchmarked and compete by comparison.

As a minimum however, the Government expects each Board to develop and publish its policy on water charges for recreational and community organisations. This should be developed in consultation with the local community to reflect the level of support that exists from those who will have to pay higher prices to subsidise these groups. The level of cross subsidy should be reported in each annual report to ensure

ongoing transparency and to accord with policy developed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

Sporting bodies will vary from professionally organised clubs with gaming machines through to small clubs totally reliant on volunteers and local fund-raising. The policy on water charges need to be sensitive to the degree of commercialism of different bodies.

Education: *Education 1997* newsletters

1332. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of the *Education 1997* newsletters available from the offices of various Coalition Members of Parliament — (i) to whom were these newsletters distributed; (ii) what was the total cost of the project; and (iii) who paid for this project.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Education 97 was: (i) distributed to all Coalition Members of Parliament; (ii) produced by a staff member in the Minister's private office with no direct cost centre; and (iii) was paid for by the Minister's private office budget.

Education: school site sales

1333. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In relation to the school sites for sale or already sold in 1996 and 1997 who were the purchasers of each of the sites and what amount was paid in each case.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Property Sales - Asset Disposal Program 1996/97

Property	Purchaser	Sale Price
Allens Flat PS	A A Rotherham	$64,500
Altona Meadow SDS	Aust Invest & Develop P/L	$35,500
Ballarat East (Eureka St)	Ballarat Adult & Further Ed	$260,000
Balliang (Sch)	Balliang & District Rural Fire Brigade	$26,644
Beech Forest PS (Res)	S G Thomas	$12,000
Berriwillock PS	S Q H Lai	$25,000
Binginwarri PS (Sch)	R G Wright	$40,000
Botany Park PS (Balarto)	Wellington Gem P/L (As Trustee For Corvu Unit Trust)	$300,000
Brunswick PS	Austmart Developments P/L	$2,300,000
Buckley PS	Surf Coast Shire	$37,780
Bulla PS	T Western	$260,000
Burwood PS (Part)	Wanissa Corp Ltd	$240,000
Carrajung PS	J Kelty	$38,500
Carrum Downs PS (Old)	Honfrid Nominees P/L	$475,000
Castle Donnington PS (Res)	R M Sonogan	$42,000
Chandler Hs (Part)	N Stoikos	$30,000
Charlton PS (Old)	M Macdonald	$50,000
Coburg East PS	Roman Catholic Trust	$1,750,000
Coghills Creek PS (Part)	D F Rieniets	$2,000
Connewirrico	West Wimmera Shire	$14,000

Property	Purchaser	Sale Price
Croydon Park MA	Darnley Developments P/L	$620,000
Deans Marsh PS (Part)	A R Lester	$6,000
Dennington PS	S P Averchenkov	$50,000
Doncaster East PS	Australand Holdings P/L	$2,902,000
Doncaster Park PS	Orientimex Australiasia P/L	$2,580,000
Dooen Primary School	B R Devlin	$8,000
Doutta Galla PS (Part)	Sidcorp P/L	$1,428,000
Dry Creek PS	D & M Boyd	$27,000
Eastmeadows PS	Selimiye Foundation Ltd	$397,750
Eastmont PS	Australand Holdings P/L	$1,447,280
Eastville PS	A D Curnow & K L Hutchinson	$35,500
Echua PS (Main Site) Site 1	Shire Of Campaspe	$675,000
Eldorado PS	Atkinson & Landells	$36,000
Ensay PS	East Gippsland (S)	$43,851
Euroa (Lot 1)	I J Smith	$27,500
Faraday PS	Westcor Prop Consultants P/L	$56,000
Fawkner PS (Balance Of Site)	Quang Duc Buddist Welfare Assoc.	$351,000
Flaggy Creek PS	M C Calvin And/Or Nom.	$20,500
Footscray/Yarraville SC (Part)	Bazem P/L	$2,100,000
Fynsford PS	G Collis	$185,000
Glen Waverley SC (Syndal CPS)	Bazem P/L	$2,900,000
Glen Waverley (Lawrence CPS)	Mt Waverley Park Estate P/L	$6,825,000
Glenfern SC	Landgroup P/L	$1,635,000
Glenlyon PS	C G Ryan	$70,000
Gormandale PS (Old Sch)	S Kneebone	$32,750
Gormandale PS (Res)	S Kneebone	$32,750
Gormandale East PS	E & N Nowak	$35,000
Granya PS	P I Lukins	$15,500
Grenville PS	Donkenzie Investments P/L	$16,750
Hadfield PS	A V Garro	$1,435,000
Harcourt PS (Site 1)	N Elyateem	$15,000
Harcourt PS (Site 2)	G & J Russell	$40,000
Kennington PS	Apostolic Church Trust	$545,000
King Valley PS	J G Hayes And/Or Nom.	$58,000
Korweinguboora PS	W J Jennings	$42,000
Langwarrin North PS	Property Projects Australia	$375,000
Larpent PS	B & L Hogan	$15,000
Little Hampton PS	Hepburn (Shire)	$36,405
Lockington (Part A)	I & C Holman	$9,500
Lovely Banks PS	E Heinmann And/Or Nom.	$115,000
Lysterfield PS (Relocation)	M Mazzeo & L Amato	$165,000
Macleod PS	Australand Holdings P/L	$1,500,000
Maidstone PS	Salvatore John Tarascio	$851,000
Malvern PS (Part)	City Of Stonnington	$450,000
Mannerim PS	D F Manly	$73,000
Marcus Hill PS	Greater City Of Geelong	$80,000
Maryborough TS-Assembly Hall	Country Theatres P/L	$92,500
Merrilands PS	Pendant Properties P/L	$1,459,000
Merton PS	G I Cook	$45,000
Moorilim PS	D J Brown	$5,500
Mooroopna North West PS	K L Macgregor	$53,000
Mount Duneed PS	Surf Coast (Shire)	$55,970
Murrayville (Res)	K B Willersdorf	$25,000
Murrumbeena SC	Frank Penhalluriak	$5,450,000
Murtoa (Res)	R & J Mckay	$30,000
Musk PS	Hepburn (Shire)	$36,275

Property	Purchaser	Sale Price
Myrtle Creek PS	K Kelly	$65,000
Neerim East PS	N Houghton	$25,000
Nilma North PS	T W Hammond And/Or Nom.	$88,800
Norris Bank PS (School Endowment Plantation)	Low Cost Quality Homes P/L	$340,000
North Melbourne PS	Neltan P/L And/Or Nom.	$1,185,000
Parkwood HS (Part 2)	Patrick Kelly	$651,000
Paynesville PS (Old)	J & J Brennan	$175,000
Port Albert PS (Part 2)	B W Edwards And/Or Nom.	$15,500
PPP Leopold	Greater Geelong City Council	$290,000
Raglan PS	I & J O'Brien	$55,000
Richmond (Old)	Cavill & Williams	$20
Rushworth PS	R D Jones	$38,000
Sea Lake PS	Buloke (Shire)	$23,000
Sea Lake Primary Sportsground	Buloke (Shire)	$10
South Melbourne PS	Wattsea P/L	$3,500,000
Speewa PS	M R Arnold & L J Henderson	$70,000
Staghorn Flat PS	F J Peacock	$65,000
Stewart PS (Balance)	K L Turlan	$15,000
Strangways PS	W B Breidahl	$62,000
Strath Creek PS	Shire Of Murrindindi	$22,500
Strathdownie PS (School)	J M Seymour	$11,600
Sutton Grange PS	N Hewitt & T Ware	$73,000
Sydenham PS	Dept Of Health & Community Services	$370,000
Wattle Heights SDS	Barney Vassiliou	$1,575,000
Waverley Park PS	St James Estate P/L	$1,412,000
Wellington PS	Bruce Hamilton And/Or Nom.	$1,412,000
West Melbourne PS	Salvation Army (Vic) Property Trust	$1,490,000
Won Wron (Res)	M & P Findlay	$38,000
Won Wron PS (Sch)	M & P Findlay	$27,000
Woodbourne PS	A Diemar	$76,000
Woorinen North PS	B R Paull	$10,500
Wycheproof Hs (Res 1)	A & D Mcnaughton	$35,500
Wycheproof Hs (Res 2)	F & D Potter	$27,500

Education: truancy

1334. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of truancy data, what are the total truancy figures for 1995, 1996 and 1997 to date, differentiating by — (i) local government area; (ii) electorate; and (iii) Department of Education region.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Victorian government schools carefully maintain their own data relating to the attendance of students. This data is used by schools to identify and support students who have attendance difficulties.

Victorian government schools also report rates of student absence in two sample months in their annual reports. These figures are used to establish statewide benchmarks of student absence in both primary and secondary schools. During the triennial school review, each school's absence figures are considered against the statewide benchmarks and schools with ongoing absence rate difficulties are expected to develop strategies in their school charters to address the problem.

In 1995, Victorian government primary schools had an average percentage absence of 6.07%. In secondary schools, the absence rate was 8.06%. These figures do not represent truancy rates, rather they include

explained as well as unexplained absences. Figures are not available on the basis of Local Government Area, Electorate or Department of Education region.

Figures for the 1996 school year are now being calculated from school annual reports.

Education: Education Week

1335. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of Education Week 1996 what was the total cost of the electronic and print media by — (i) major metropolitan newspaper; (ii) suburban newspaper; (iii) regional newspaper; (iv) radio station; and (v) television network.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

(i) $34,267.12

(ii) $22,613

(iii) $3,750.60

(iv) $3,837.75

(v) nil

Education: home education

1336. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of the number of applications by parents to educate their children at home:

(a) What are the total figures for 1995, 1996 and 1997 to date.

(b) What are the figures by electorate, local government area and Department of Education region, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

(a) 1995 : 156

1996 : 166

1997 : 122 (to date)

(b) REGION

BARWON-SOUTH WESTERN

Local Government Area	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**
Colac – Otway	4	0	4
Corangamite	0	6	4
Glenelg	6	11	0
Greater Geelong	8	4	12
Moyne	1	0	4
Southern Grampians	0	0	1
Surfcoast	2	0	0
Warrnambool	4	0	1
Totals	**25**	**21**	**26**

Local Government Area	1995	1996	1997
Electorates			
Bellarine	2	0	5
Geelong	2	4	0
Geelong North	2	0	4
Polwarth	6	3	7
Portland	6	11	1
South Barwon	2	0	3
Warrnambool	5	3	6
Totals	**25**	**21**	**26**

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS-WIMMERA

Local Government Area	1995	1996	1997
City Of Ballarat	0	2	0
Shire Of GoldenPlains	1	4	0
Shire Of Hepburn	0	1	0
Shire Of Hindmarsh	3	0	0
Northern	0	2	0
Shire Of Pyrenees	2	0	0
Shire Of Yarriambiack	3	2	0
Totals	**9**	**11**	**0**
Electorates			
Ballarat West	0	2	0
Polwarth	1	0	0
Ripon	2	5	0
Wimmera	6	4	0
Totals	**9**	**11**	**0**

LODDON CAMPASPE-MALLEE

Local Government Area	1995	1996	1997
Campaspe	1	3	0
Gannawarra	4	5	0
Greater Bendigo	1	2	0
Loddon	1	0	0
Macedon Ranges	1	3	0
Mount Alexander	0	0	1
Totals	**8**	**13**	**1**
Electorates			
Bendigo East	1	1	0
Bendigo West	1	1	1
Gisborne	1	3	0
Rodney	5	8	0
Totals	**8**	**13**	**1**

GOULBURN NORTH-EASTERN

Local Government Area	1995	1996	1997
Greater Shepparton	0	0	2
Mitchell	1	2	0
Moira	0	2	0
Murrindindi	0	1	1
Strathbogie	0	1	0
Wangaratta	0	2	2
Wodonga	1	0	3
Totals	**2**	**8**	**8**

Local Government Area	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**
Electorates			
Benalla	0	2	1
Benambra	1	0	3
Murray Valley	0	4	2
Seymour	1	2	0
Shepparton	0	0	2
Totals	**2**	**8**	**8**

GIPPSLAND

Local Government Area	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**
Baw Baw	3	6	6
East Gippsland	2	5	7
Latrobe	14	17	8
Wellington	6	6	3
Totals	**25**	**34**	**24**
Electorates			
East Gippsland	8	11	7
Morwell	4	7	8
Narracan	11	11	4
South Gippsland	2	2	3
West Gippsland	0	3	2
Totals	**25**	**34**	**24**

EASTERN METROPOLITAN (Established January 1997)

Local Government Area	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**
Boroondara	0	0	2
Manningham	0	0	1
Maroondah	0	0	6
Monash	0	0	2
Whitehorse	0	0	2
Yarra Ranges	0	0	5
Totals	**0**	**0**	**18**
Electorates			
Bayswater	0	0	5
Bulleen	0	0	2
Evelyn	0	0	5
Forest Hill	0	0	2
Glen Waverley	0	0	1
Hawthorn	0	0	1
Malvern	0	0	1
Mooroolbark	0	0	1
Totals	**0**	**0**	**18**

WESTERN METROPOLITAN (Established January 1997)

Local Government Area	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**
Melton	0	0	1
Totals	**0**	**0**	**1**
Electorates			
Melton	0	0	1
Totals	**0**	**0**	**1**

SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN (Established January 1997)

Local Government Area	1995	1996	1997
Cardinia	0	0	3
Casey	0	0	3
Frankston	0	0	1
Glen Eira	0	0	1
Greater Dandenong	0	0	1
Kingston	0	0	1
Mornington Peninsula	0	0	1
Totals	**0**	**0**	**11**
Electorates			
Albert Park	0	0	1
Berwick	0	0	3
Cranbourne	0	0	2
Frankston	0	0	1
Mornington	0	0	1
Pakenham	0	0	2
Springvale	0	0	1
Totals	**0**	**0**	**11**

NORTHERN METROPOLITAN (Established January 1997)

Local Government Area	1995	1996	1997
Darebin	0	0	1
Hume	0	0	8
Moreland	0	0	11
Nillumbik	0	0	11
Yarra	0	0	2
Totals	**0**	**0**	**33**
Electorates			
Broadmeadows	0	0	10
Northcote	0	0	3
Preston	0	0	1
Tullamarine	0	0	8
Warrandyte	0	0	11
Totals	**0**	**0**	**33**

SOUTH EAST METROPOLITAN (Ceased December 1996)

Local Government Area	1995	1996	1997
Cardinia	0	2	0
Casey	11	9	0
Glen Eira	4	1	0
Greater Dandenong	2	1	0
Kingston	0	1	0
Knox	3	12	0
Manningham	21	2	0
Maroondah	7	2	0
Melbourne	0	3	0
Monash	2	0	0
Mornington Peninsula	3	5	0
Port Phillip	0	1	0
Stonnington	0	1	0
Yarra Ranges	7	10	0
Totals	**60**	**50**	**0**
Electorates			
Bayswater	7	2	0

Local Government Area	1995	1996	1997
Bentleigh	4	2	0
Berwick	11	6	0
Bulleen	12	2	0
Clayton	0	1	0
Dandenong	0	1	0
Dandenong North	1	1	0
Doncaster	9	0	0
Dromana	3	3	0
Electorates	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**
Evelyn	3	6	0
Forest Hill	2	0	0
Frankston	0	1	0
Knox	2	10	0
Malvern	0	1	0
Mornington	0	1	0
Monbulk	1	0	0
Mordialloc	0	1	0
Pakenham	4	7	0
Prahran	0	3	0
Springvale	1	0	0
Wantirna	0	1	0
Warrandyte	0	1	0
Totals	**60**	**50**	**0**

NORTH WEST METROPOLITAN (Ceased December 1996)

Local Government Area	1995	1996	1997
Hume	6	6	0
Melton	1	0	0
Moreland	8	9	0
Nillumbik	12	11	0
Yarra	0	3	0
Totals	**27**	**29**	**0**
Electorates			
Broadmeadows	8	9	0
Melton	1	0	0
Northcote	0	3	0
Tullamarine	6	6	0
Warrandyte	12	11	0
Totals	**27**	**29**	**0**

Education: *Herald Sun* information

1337. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of the weekly Department of Education promotion/information in the Herald Sun newspaper, what is the total cost for 1995, 1996 and 1997 to date.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

1995	$94,000
1996	$318,363
1997	$120,376

Education: school computer allocations

1338. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of the computer allocations made to schools on a $1 to $3 of locally raised funds basis, what are the allocations by electorate, local government area and Department of Education region, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The recent Information Technology Subsidy program was outstandingly successful with $8.4 million in Government subsidies assisting schools to:

purchase 14,225 new computers - 12,857 desktops and 1,368 notebooks

purchase 2,462 printers, 220 plotters and scanners and 269 multi video devices - a total of 2951 devices

implement new Local Area Networks or improve existing Local Area Networks - 411 schools

implement new Internet Access or improve existing Internet Access - 413 schools

Subsidy funding was provided to schools on the basis of $1 for every $3 contributed by schools. The $3 contribution by schools comes from Government provided School Global Budget funds as well as locally raised funds.

The details of computer allocations made to schools on a $1 to $3 basis by designated areas as requested are provided below:

Legislative Assembly Electorate

Legislative Assembly Electorate	School Contribution	DoE Contribution	Total of Submission
Albert Park	$302,317.13	$100,772.38	$403,089.50
Altona	$267,353.25	$89,117.75	$356,471.00
Ballarat East	$293,909.48	$97,969.83	$391,879.30
Ballarat West	$587,740.50	$195,913.50	$783,654.00
Bayswater	$277,753.50	$92,584.50	$370,338.00
Bellarine	$226,293.00	$75,431.00	$301,724.00
Benalla	$360,550.50	$120,183.50	$480,734.00
Benambra	$540,346.50	$181,115.50	$720,462.00
Bendigo East	$142,854.75	$47,618.25	$190,473.00
Bendigo West	$275,647.50	$91,882.50	$367,530.00
Bennetswood	$265,707.00	$88,569.00	$354,276.00
Bentleigh	$246,652.75	$82,217.25	$328,870.00
Berwick	$354,143.25	$118,047.75	$472,191.00
Box Hill	$200,988.75	$66,996.25	$267,985.00
Brighton	$85,493.25	$28,497.75	$113,991.00
Broadmeadows	$290,091.00	$96,697.00	$386,788.00
Bulleen	$163,197.38	$54,399.13	$217,596.50
Bundoora	$250,911.00	$83,637.00	$334,548.00
Burwood	$228,406.50	$76,135.50	$304,542.00
Carrum	$204,055.50	$68,018.50	$272,074.00
Caulfield	$44,235.75	$14,745.25	$58,981.00
Clayton	$177,250.09	$59,083.36	$236,333.45
Coburg	$76,140.75	$25,380.25	$101,521.00
Cranbourne	$272,623.65	$90,874.55	$363,498.20
Dandenong	$200,477.25	$66,825.75	$267,303.00
Dandenong North	$253,146.00	$84,382.00	$337,528.00
Doncaster	$238,189.50	$79,396.50	$317,586.00

Legislative Assembly Electorate	School Contribution	DoE Contribution	Total of Submission
Dromana	$130,231.95	$43,410.65	$173,642.60
Eltham	$323,975.58	$107,991.86	$431,967.44
Essendon	$219,355.50	$73,118.50	$292,474.00
Evelyn	$394,744.59	$131,581.53	$526,326.12
Footscray	$214,027.95	$71,342.65	$285,370.60
Forest Hill	$502,113.45	$167,371.15	$669,484.60
Frankston	$235,439.25	$78,479.75	$313,919.00
Frankston East	$658,685.56	$219,561.85	$878,247.41
Geelong	$247,340.55	$82,446.85	$329,787.40
Geelong North	$239,598.00	$79,866.00	$319,464.00
Gippsland East	$322,192.50	$107,397.50	$429,590.00
Gippsland South	$383,665.29	$127,888.43	$511,553.72
Gippsland West	$362,516.24	$120,838.75	$483,354.99
Gisborne	$214,896.00	$71,632.00	$286,528.00
Glen Waverley	$343,026.30	$114,342.10	$457,368.40
Hawthorn	$237,299.25	$79,099.75	$316,399.00
Ivanhoe	$187,192.43	$62,397.48	$249,589.90
Keilor	$456,375.00	$152,125.00	$608,500.00
Kew	$340,068.75	$113,356.25	$453,425.00
Knox	$361,814.25	$120,604.75	$482,419.00
Malvern	$76,777.50	$25,592.50	$102,370.00
Melbourne	$308,850.56	$102,950.19	$411,800.75
Melton	$365,047.50	$121,682.50	$486,730.00
Mildura	$654,855.00	$218,285.00	$873,140.00
Mill Park	$180,894.75	$60,298.25	$241,193.00
Mitcham	$215,394.75	$71,798.25	$287,193.00
Monbulk	$469,755.75	$156,586.25	$626,342.00
Mooroolbark	$249,097.56	$83,032.52	$332,130.08
Mordialloc	$347,996.02	$115,998.67	$463,994.69
Mornington	$270,612.38	$90,204.13	$360,816.50
Morwell	$197,220.75	$65,740.25	$262,961.00
Murray Valley	$327,947.31	$109,315.77	$437,263.08
Narracan	$296,157.00	$98,719.00	$394,876.00
Niddrie	$130,923.75	$43,641.25	$174,565.00
Northcote	$39,795.00	$13,265.00	$53,060.00
Oakleigh	$93,389.25	$31,129.75	$124,519.00
Pakenham	$259,301.25	$86,433.75	$345,735.00
Pascoe Vale	$197,912.93	$65,970.98	$263,883.90
Polwarth	$359,385.00	$119,795.00	$479,180.00
Portland	$431,045.19	$143,681.73	$574,726.92
Prahran	$102,987.75	$34,329.25	$137,317.00
Preston	$162,498.75	$54,166.25	$216,665.00
Richmond	$217,683.45	$72,561.15	$290,244.60
Ripon	$285,322.13	$95,107.38	$380,429.50
Rodney	$455,046.48	$151,682.16	$606,728.64
Sandringham	$538,704.75	$179,568.25	$718,273.00
Seymour	$421,595.25	$140,531.75	$562,127.00
Shepparton	$500,614.45	$166,871.48	$667,485.93
South Barwon	$258,987.75	$86,329.25	$345,317.00
Springvale	$451,167.75	$150,389.25	$601,557.00
Sunshine	$127,611.75	$42,537.25	$170,149.00
Swan Hill	$515,097.75	$171,699.25	$686,797.00
Thomastown	$210,897.75	$70,299.25	$281,197.00
Tullamarine	$252,408.90	$84,136.30	$336,545.20
Wantirna	$363,474.75	$121,158.25	$484,633.00
Warrnambool	$246,939.15	$82,313.05	$329,252.20

Legislative Assembly Electorate	School Contribution	DoE Contribution	Total of Submission
Warrandyte	$333,685.54	$111,228.51	$444,914.05
Werribee	$464,411.25	$154,803.75	$619,215.00
Williamstown	$161,178.75	$53,726.25	$214,905.00
Wimmera	$383,514.75	$127,838.25	$511,353.00
Yan Yean	$210,026.63	$70,008.88	$280,035.51
Totals:	$25,337,248.50	$8,446,750.17	$33,782,998.67

Local Government Area:

Local Government Area	School Contribution	DoE Contribution	Total of Submission
Alpine (S)	$64,467.75	$21,489.25	$85,957.00
Ararat (Rc)	$67,933.13	$22,644.38	$90,577.50
Ballarat (C)	$804,806.25	$268,268.75	$1,073,075.00
Banyule (C)	$597,192.26	$199,064.09	$796,256.34
Bass Coast (S)	$135,897.75	$45,299.25	$181,197.00
Baw Baw (S)	$264,552.75	$88,184.25	$352,737.00
Bayside (C)	$540,630.75	$180,210.25	$720,841.00
Boroondara (C)	$786,351.00	$262,117.00	$1,048,468.00
Brimbank (C)	$735,242.25	$245,080.75	$980,323.00
Buloke (S)	$137,763.75	$45,921.25	$183,685.00
Campaspe (S)	$400,068.48	$133,356.16	$533,424.64
Cardinia (S)	$247,832.25	$82,610.75	$330,443.00
Casey (C)	$581,892.15	$193,964.05	$775,856.20
Central Goldfields (S)	$131,843.25	$43,947.75	$175,791.00
Colac-Otway (S)	$204,673.50	$68,224.50	$272,898.00
Corangamite (S)	$138,657.00	$46,219.00	$184,876.00
Darebin (C)	$293,430.75	$97,810.25	$391,241.00
Delatite (S)	$224,895.00	$74,965.00	$299,860.00
East Gippsland (S)	$297,995.25	$99,331.75	$397,327.00
Frankston (C)	$953,576.56	$317,858.85	$1,271,435.41
Gannawarra (S)	$27,186.75	$9,062.25	$36,249.00
Glen Eira (C)	$341,938.75	$113,979.25	$455,918.00
Glenelg (S)	$284,136.83	$94,712.28	$378,849.10
Golden Plains (S)	$45,661.50	$15,220.50	$60,882.00
Greater Bendigo (C)	$353,517.75	$117,839.25	$471,357.00
Greater Dandenong (C)	$872,238.00	$290,746.00	$1,162,984.00
Greater Geelong (C)	$850,539.30	$283,513.10	$1,134,052.40
Greater Shepparton (C)	$521,875.45	$173,958.48	$695,833.93
Hepburn (S)	$98,670.23	$32,890.08	$131,560.30
Hindmarsh (S)	$117,040.50	$39,013.50	$156,054.00
Hobsons Bay (C)	$360,830.25	$120,276.75	$481,107.00
Horsham (Rc)	$82,705.50	$27,568.50	$110,274.00
Hume (C)	$584,334.90	$194,778.30	$779,113.20
Indigo (S)	$182,448.00	$60,816.00	$243,264.00
Kingston (C)	$697,507.27	$232,502.42	$930,009.69
Knox (C)	$985,307.25	$328,436.75	$1,313,744.00
La Trobe (S)	$354,096.00	$118,032.00	$472,128.00
Loddon (S)	$80,944.50	$26,981.50	$107,926.00
Macedon Ranges (S)	$107,519.25	$35,839.75	$143,359.00
Manningham (C)	$446,469.38	$148,823.13	$595,292.50
Maribyrnong (C)	$274,969.95	$91,656.65	$366,626.60
Maroondah (C)	$603,312.79	$201,104.26	$804,417.05
Melbourne (C)	$125,529.75	$41,843.25	$167,373.00
Melton (S)	$227,076.75	$75,692.25	$302,769.00

Local Government Area	School Contribution	DoE Contribution	Total of Submission
Milawa (S)	$195,366.75	$65,122.25	$260,489.00
Mildura (Rc)	$626,498.25	$208,832.75	$835,331.00
Mitchell (S)	$255,827.25	$85,275.75	$341,103.00
Moira (S)	$92,055.81	$30,685.27	$122,741.08
Monash (C)	$1,039,517.89	$346,505.96	$1,386,023.85
Moonee Valley (C)	$433,938.75	$144,646.25	$578,585.00
Moorabool (S)	$95,671.50	$31,890.50	$127,562.00
Moreland (C)	$398,423.93	$132,807.98	$531,231.90
Mornington Peninsula (S)	$452,665.58	$150,888.53	$603,554.10
Mount Alexander (S)	$70,457.25	$23,485.75	$93,943.00
Moyne (S)	$44,043.00	$14,681.00	$58,724.00
Murrindindi (S)	$67,755.00	$22,585.00	$90,340.00
Nillumbik (S)	$267,775.88	$89,258.63	$357,034.50
Northern Grampians (S)	$60,793.50	$20,264.50	$81,058.00
Port Phillip (C)	$272,596.13	$90,865.38	$363,461.50
Pyrenees (S)	$37,996.50	$12,665.50	$50,662.00
Queenscliffe (B)	$86,483.25	$28,827.75	$115,311.00
South Gippsland (S)	$153,758.99	$51,253.00	$205,011.99
Southern Grampians (S)	$112,539.62	$37,513.21	$150,052.82
Stonnington (C)	$153,192.75	$51,064.25	$204,257.00
Strathbogie (S)	$48,038.25	$16,012.75	$64,051.00
Surf Coast (S)	$75,156.75	$25,052.25	$100,209.00
Swan Hill (S)	$314,367.75	$104,789.25	$419,157.00
Towong (S)	$217,572.75	$73,524.25	$290,097.00
Warrnambool (C)	$162,780.15	$54,260.05	$217,040.20
Wellington (S)	$330,753.54	$110,251.18	$441,004.72
West Wimmera (S)	$60,008.25	$20,002.75	$80,011.00
Whitehorse (C)	$645,865.95	$215,288.65	$861,154.60
Whittlesea (C)	$366,105.75	$122,035.25	$488,141.00
Wodonga (Rc)	$201,847.50	$67,282.50	$269,130.00
Wyndham (C)	$457,886.25	$152,628.75	$610,515.00
Yarra (C)	$300,153.26	$100,051.09	$400,204.35
Yarra Ranges (S)	$900,503.40	$300,167.80	$1,200,671.20
Yarriambiack (S)	$103,293.00	$34,431.00	$137,724.00
Totals:	$25,337,248.50	$8,446,750.17	$33,782,998.67

Department of Education Regions

Department of Education Region	School Contribution	DoE Contribution	Total of submission
Southern Metropolitan	$1,979,948.64	$659,982.88	$2,639,931.52
Western Metropolitan	$1,591,127.10	$530,375.70	$2,121,502.80
Central Highlands Wimmera	$5,488,284.90	$1,829,429.30	$7,317,714.20
Barwon South Western	$1,701,989.18	$567,329.73	$2,269,318.91
Eastern Metropolitan	$2,233,227.49	$745,409.16	$2,977,636.65
Goulburn North East	$2,045,032.50	$681,677.50	$2,726,710.00
Loddon Campaspe Mallee	$2,839,622.47	$946,540.82	$3,786,163.29
Northern Metropolitan	$4,931,624.27	$1,643,874.42	$6,575,498.70
Gippsland	$2,526,391.95	$842,130.65	$3,368,522.60
Totals:	$25,337,248.50	$8,446,750.17	$33,782,998.67

Education: teachers

1339. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of the EFT teacher numbers what are those figures, including

the number of Voluntary Departure Packages taken up in each year as at 30 June for each of the years from 1992 to 1997.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Years	EFT Teacher Numbers	EFT Voluntary Departure Packages
30 June 1992	41,481	109
30 June 1993	38,247	3,298
30 June 1994	35,272	4,110
30 June 1995	35,668	1,000
30 June 1996	35,561	53
27 May 1997	34,961	533

Education: maintenance allowance

1340. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of the Education Maintenance Allowance applications, what total number of applications has been received for 1996 and 1997, indicating the number in respect of each electorate.

ANSWER:

I am advised as follows:

The number of Education Maintenance Allowance applications received in respect of the 1996 calendar year is 140,460 and the 1997 calendar year is 145,575.

Statistics are not maintained in respect of electorates. To provide this information would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available.

Education: special needs program

1341. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of the integration of students with special needs, what are the dollar amounts directed to these programs by — (i) total state wide programs; and (ii) electorate, for 1995 and 1996 and 1997 to date.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

In 1995 the Department of Education reorganised the resources which were spread over a number of programs supporting students with disabilities into a single program - the Program for Students with Disabilities and Impairments which incorporates support to students in both regular and specialist schools.

Since 1995 under the Schools of the Future Program, all schools receive an annual budget based on the academic year. Funding from 1995 incorporates all Global Budget funding for specialist schools and funding provided in the Disabilities and Impairments component of the budget for mainstream schools. Expenditure also includes special school transport.

Program for Students with Disabilities and Impairments Expenditure 1995 -1997

1995	1996	1997
167,108,000	178,609,000	197,200,000

As students with disabilities are enrolled in 1525 of the 1664 schools with the resources allocated on the educational needs of students irrespective of where they are located in the state and these resources are included in the Global Budget of each school, the current program is not designed as to enable electronic access to the program expenditure by electorate.

Education: special needs program

1342. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of support services for children with special needs, what is the EFT breakdown of specialist staff employed as speech therapists, social workers and allied support staff respectively, by region and by local government area for 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997 to date.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Regions are able to coordinate the provision of services to their schools using either payroll or contracted services. The total number of EFT positions allocated for all school support services since 1994 to date are outlined in the table below.

The breakdown of student support services was not collated in 1994. The reduction reflected in the figures between 1994 and 1995 was due to the transfer of resources associated with the servicing of non-government schools direct to the Catholic Education Office and to the Association of Independent Schools in Victoria to enable those organisations to determine appropriate servicing arrangements for their respective schools. The difference between 1996 and 1997 was the result of departmental structure changes.

The information requested is shown for each of the Department of Education's regions only. Allocations are not made on the basis of local government areas and to provide this information would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available.

School Support Services Allocation - 1994

	Curriculum Support	Student Support	Total
Region	EFT	EFT	EFT
Barwon South West	23.3	38.7	62.0
Central Highlands Wimmera	16.9	26.1	43.0
Loddon Campaspe Mallee	21.5	35.5	57.0
Goulburn North East	43.0	15.0	58.0
Gippsland	24.0	26.0	50.0
South East Metropolitan	36.0	206.3	242.3
North West Metropolitan	20.0	143.0	163.0
Statewide Total	**184.7**	**490.6**	**675.3**

School Support Services Allocation - 1995

	Curriculum Consultants	Visiting Teachers	Speech Therapists	Social Workers	Guidance Officers	Total
Region	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT
Barwon South West	17.8	5.3	10.2	7.6	16.0	56.9
Central Highlands Wimmera	14.9	7.3	6.0	5.0	7.0	40.2
Loddon Campaspe Mallee	17.7	10.1	6.7	6.6	12.6	53.7
Goulburn North East	16.7	7.0	8.4	8.5	12.7	53.3
Gippsland	17.7	6.6	8.0	5.0	8.4	45.7
South East Metropolitan	36.0	43.2	40.1	21.9	73.3	214.5
North West Metropolitan	19.0	29.4	28.0	19.3	59.7	155.4
Statewide Total	**139.8**	**108.9**	**107.4**	**73.9**	**189.7**	**619.7**

School Support Services Allocation - 1996

Region	Curriculum Consultants EFT	Visiting Teachers EFT	Speech Therapists EFT	Social Workers EFT	Guidance Officers EFT	Total EFT
Barwon South West	17.1	9.1	9.1	5.7	15.9	56.9
Central Highlands Wimmera	12.1	6.4	6.4	4.0	11.3	40.2
Loddon Campaspe Mallee	16.1	8.6	8.6	5.4	15.0	53.7
Goulburn North East	16.0	8.5	8.5	5.3	14.9	53.3
Gippsland	13.7	7.3	7.3	4.6	12.8	45.7
South East Metropolitan	64.4	34.3	34.3	21.5	60.1	214.5
North West Metropolitan	46.6	24.9	24.9	15.5	43.5	155.4
Statewide Total	**185.9**	**99.2**	**99.2**	**62.0**	**173.5**	**619.7**

School Support Services Allocation - 1997

Region	Curriculum Consultants EFT	Visiting Teachers EFT	Speech Therapists EFT	Social Workers EFT	Guidance Officers EFT	Total EFT
Barwon South West	15.4	8.2	8.2	5.1	14.3	51.2
Central Highlands Wimmera	10.9	5.8	5.8	3.6	10.1	36.2
Loddon Campaspe Mallee	14.5	7.7	7.7	4.8	13.5	48.3
Goulburn North East	14.4	7.7	7.7	4.8	13.4	48.0
Gippsland	12.3	6.6	6.6	4.1	11.5	41.1
Northern Metropolitan	24.7	13.2	13.2	8.2	23.0	82.2
Eastern Metropolitan	29.3	15.6	15.6	9.8	27.4	97.8
Southern Metropolitan	28.6	15.2	15.2	9.5	26.7	95.2
Western Metropolitan	17.3	9.2	9.2	5.8	16.2	57.7
Statewide Total	**167.3**	**89.2**	**89.2**	**55.8**	**156.2**	**557.7**

Education: advertising

1343. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of advertising and promotional and informational material placed in all media by the Department of Education, what is the dollar figure by newspaper, television, radio and educational issue, respectively for 1995, 1996 and 1997 to date.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Hon. M. M. Gould, MLC may wish to submit a more focused and specific question on the matter.

Education: school enrolments and budgets

1344. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What is the total number of students enrolled in government schools in Victoria by electorate for 1996 and 1997.

(b) What is the total number of students enrolled in government primary and secondary schools, respectively in Victoria by electorate for 1996 and 1997.

(c) What is the dollar figure of amounts allocated to each school via their School Global Budgets by electorate for 1996 and 1997.

(d) What is the dollar figure of amounts allocated to schools via their School Global Budgets by local government area for 1996 and 1997.

(e) What is the total number of government — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools by electorate for 1996 and 1997.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The requested information has been provided to the honourable member in the following format: Table 1 - parts (a) and (b); Table 2 - part (c); Table 3 - part (d); and Table 4 - part (c).

(Information referred to in answer (113 pages) sent to honourable member and copy tabled in parliamentary library.)

Education: bus transport

1345. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In relation to bus transport:

(a) What is the total budget spent on bus transport by the Department of Education for 1995, 1996 and in 1997 to date.

(b) What is the total dollar figure spent on bus transport by the Department of Education for students attending special needs schools for 1995, 1996 and in 1997 to date.

(c) What is the dollar figure spent on bus transport by the Department of Education in the non-metropolitan areas, by department region, in 1995, 1996 and in 1997 to date.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The total amount spent on bus transport was: 1995 - $12,042,465; 1996 - $14,877,668; and 1997 (to May) - $5,766,033.

The amount spent on bus transport for special settings was: 1995 - $11,902,324; 1996 - $14,824,329; and 1997 (to May) - $5,766,033.

The amount spent on bus transport in non-metropolitan areas by department regions was:

	1995	1996	1997 (to May)
Barwon South Western	$894,048	$896,932	$377,537
Central Highlands	$429,638	$440,148	$175,557
Loddon Campaspe Mallee	$771,055	$841,783	$308,675
Goulburn North Eastern	$346,872	$394,341	$159,179
Gippsland	$310,888	$365,777	$146,450

Education: teachers

1346. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of the number of EFT teachers employed by the Department of Education in non-metropolitan areas what are the total figures each year from 1991 to 1996 and this year to date.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Full time equivalent of all teaching staff receiving pay in non metropolitan regions as at the last pay in June, 1991-1996 and the first pay in June 1997 is as follows:

Year	Total
1991	14,702.3
1992	14,709.9
1993	13,524.5
1994	12,230.2
1995	12,274.1
1996	12,214.2
1997 to date	12,434.6

Education: teachers

1347. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of teachers with mathematics specialist qualification employed by the Department of Education:

(a) What is the total EFT number of these teachers employed in the metropolitan area of Melbourne for each year from 1991 to 1996 and this year to date by — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary sector.

(b) What is the total number of teachers employed in regional (non-metropolitan) areas of Victoria for each year from 1991 to 1996 and this year to date by — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary sector.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

With the introduction of the Schools of the Future program, there has been a transfer of responsibility, authority and accountability to government schools. An essential component of the program is the adoption of full staffing flexibility to enable schools to fully meet the educational needs of students. Schools can now progressively build a staff team that can provide the best possible teaching and learning in the school.

Principals employ qualified teachers of mathematics to deliver mathematics curriculum in schools.

As a consequence information concerning teachers with mathematics specialist qualifications employed by the Department of Education is held at the school level and is not readily available in the format requested.

Education: teachers

1348. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of teachers with a music specialist qualification employed by the Department of Education:

(a) What is the total number of teachers employed in metropolitan area of Melbourne for each year from 1991 to 1996 and this year to date by — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary sector.

(b) What is the total number of teachers employed in regional (non-metropolitan) areas of Victoria for each year from 1991 to 1996 and this year to date by — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary sector.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

With the introduction of the Schools of the Future program, there has been a transfer of responsibility, authority and accountability to government schools. An essential component of the program is the adoption of full staffing flexibility to enable schools to fully meet the educational needs of students. Schools can now progressively build a staff team that can provide the best possible teaching and learning in the school.

Principals employ qualified teachers of music to deliver music curriculum in schools.

As a consequence information concerning teachers with music specialist qualifications employed by the Department of Education is held at the school level and is not readily available in the format requested.

Education: teachers

1349. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of teachers with a science specialist qualification employed by the Department of Education:

(a) What is the total number of teachers employed in metropolitan area of Melbourne for each year from 1991 to 1996 and this year to date by — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary sector.

(b) What is the total number of teachers employed in regional (non-metropolitan) areas of Victoria for each year from 1991 to 1996 and this year to date by — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary sector.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

With the introduction of the Schools of the Future program, there has been a transfer of responsibility, authority and accountability to government schools. An essential component of the program is the adoption of full staffing flexibility to enable schools to fully meet the educational needs of students. Schools can now progressively build a staff team that can provide the best possible teaching and learning in the school.

Principals employ qualified teachers of science to deliver science curriculum in schools.

As a consequence information concerning teachers with science specialist qualifications employed by the Department of Education is held at the school level and is not readily available in the format requested.

Education: early intervention

1350. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of Early Intervention Program what are the total number of children enrolled in the program in Victoria for 1994, 1995, 1996 and this year to date by — (i) local government area; (ii) Department of Education region; and (iii) electorate.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The vast majority of Early Intervention Programs for young children with disabilities are funded by the Department of Human Services.

The Department of Education (DoE) only maintains a very small number of programs (15) attached to Special Developmental Schools which transferred as part of the school aged component of the Day Training Centres during the 1980s.

The numbers of actual children being supported by these Early Intervention Programs vary from week to week dependent on the age and support requirements of the child and the family.

The programs at each school location have been provided with a fixed resource package based on Full Time Equivalent (FTE) students for the period 1994 to 1997.

Number of FTE student positions in each electorate and DoE Region 1994-1996

Electorate Name	DoE Region				
	Barwon South Western	Goulburn North Eastern	South Eastern Metro	North Western Metro	Grand Total
Albert Park	0	0	6	0	6
Bayswater	0	0	7	0	7
Bennettswood	0	0	8	0	8
Bentleigh	0	0	8	0	8
Berwick	0	0	15	0	15
Carrum	0	0	23	0	23
Clayton	0	0	16	0	16
Dandenong North	0	0	22	0	22
Evelyn	0	0	9	0	9
Frankston	0	0	3	0	3
Ivanhoe	0	0	0	8	8
Mordialloc	0	0	18	0	18
Mornington	0	0	2	0	2
Polwarth	16	0	0	0	16
Shepparton	0	12	0	0	12
Grand Total	**16**	**12**	**137**	**8**	**173**

Number of FTE student positions in each electorate and DoE Region 1997

Electorate Name	DoE Regions					
	Barwon South Western	Goulburn North Eastern	Eastern Metro	Southern Metro	Northern Metro	Grand Total
Albert Park	0	0	0	6	0	6
Bayswater	0	0	7	0	0	7
Bennettswood	0	0	8	0	0	8
Bentleigh	0	0	0	8	0	8
Berwick	0	0	0	15	0	15
Carrum	0	0	0	23	0	23
Clayton	0	0	16	0	0	16
Dandenong North	0	0	0	22	0	22
Evelyn	0	0	9	0	0	9
Frankston	0	0	0	3	0	3
Ivanhoe	0	0	0	0	8	8
Mordialloc	0	0	0	18	0	18
Mornington	0	0	0	2	0	2
Polwarth	16	0	0	0	0	16
Shepparton	0	12	0	0	0	12
Grand Total	**16**	**12**	**40**	**97**	**8**	**173**

To provide the information requested by local government area would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available.

Education: Association of Schools Councils in Victoria

1351. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of the Association of Schools Councils in Victoria, what is the total dollar figure that this organisation has received from the Department of Education in each year from 1991 to 1996 and this year to date.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The following amounts were received by the organisation:

Year	Organisation	Total for year
1991	ACPPIV	$ 45,490
1992	ACPPIV	$ 26,355
1993	ACPPIV	$ 225,000
1994	ACPPIV	$ 241,000
1995	ASCIV	$ 356,000
1996	ASCIV	$ 219,000
1997 (to date)	ASCIV	$ 157,000
Total		**$1,269,845**

Education: new schools

1352. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of new schools:

(a) What is the total number of new school applications received from the non-government sector in each year from 1992 to 1996 and this year to date by — (i) electorate; and (ii) local government area.

(b) What is the total number of new school applications approved for the non-government sector in each year from 1992 to 1996 and this year to date by — (i) electorate; and (ii) local government area.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

(a) New non-government school applications received:

1992	6
1993	11
1994	11
1995	13
1996	15
1997 (to date)	17

There was insufficient detail provided to enable an accurate analysis to be made with respect to electorate and local government areas.

New non-government school applications approved:

Year	No. Approved	LGA	Assembly	Council
1992	2	Greater Dandenong	Springvale	Chelsea
		Wodonga	Benambra	North East
1993	2	Swan Hill	Swan Hill	North Western
		Greater Bendigo	Bennettswood	North Western
1994	2	Greater Bendigo	Bendigo East	North Western
		Casey	Cranbourne	South Eastern
1995	6	Mornington Pen.	Mornington	South Eastern

Year	No. Approved	LGA	Assembly	Council
		Casey	Berwick	Eumemmerring
		Wyndham	Werribee	Melbourne West
		Greater Bendigo	Bendigo East	North Western
		Hume	Broadmeadows	Melbourne North
		Frankston	Frankston East	Chelsea
1996	7	Greater Geelong	Bellarine	Geelong
		Hume	Yan Yean	Central Highlands
		Boroondara	Hawthorn	East Yarra
		Greater Geelong	Geelong North	Geelong
		Greater Shepparton	Shepparton	North Eastern
		Macedon Ranges	Gisborne	Ballarat
		Casey	Berwick	Eumemmerring
1997	9	Wyndham (2)	Werribee (2)	Melbourne West (2)
		Hume	Broadmeadows	Melbourne North
		Brimbank	Melton	Doutta Galla
		Hume	Tullamarine	Melbourne North
		Banyule	Bundoora	Jika Jika
		Greater Geelong	Bellarine	Geelong
		Greater Shepparton	Shepparton	North Eastern
		Moreland	Thomastown	Melbourne North

Education: overseas fee-paying students

1353. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In respect of overseas fee paying students:

(a) What is the total enrolment by school of these students for each year from 1993 to 1996 and this year to date.

(b) What is the total dollar figure by school received from overseas fee paying students for each year from 1993 to 1996 and this year to date.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

(a) The first intake of fee paying overseas student program in government schools occurred in October 1995. Total enrolment for 1995 - 18, 1996 - 189 and 1997 - 329. Details of total enrolments by schools for each year have been made available to the Honourable Member.

(b) Fifteen percent of the fees received from overseas students are retained by the Department of Education to cover the administration and marketing costs of the program. The remaining eighty five percent of the fees received are disbursed between the host school, the English Language Centre/School and the Victorian School of Languages. In addition fee paying overseas students attending non-government schools may choose to undertake a language through the Victorian School of Languages. Thirty five percent of the fee is retained by the Department of Education to cover administration costs and the remaining sixty five percent is disbursed to the Victorian School of Languages.

The total dollars received by schools, English Language Centres/Schools and the Victorian School of Languages in 1995, 1996 and this year to date have been made available to the Honourable Member.

Student Numbers and Disbursements by School for 1995

School Code	Host School	Students	Received in Total $	Host School $	ELC $	VSL $
77017507	Alexandra Secondary College	1	1,100.00		850.00	
77017550	Balwyn High School	2	5,407.49	2,324.64	2,186.73	
77017550	Balwyn High School	1		Disbursed	in '96	
77017720	Cheltenham Secondary College	1	2,100.00	1,300.50	399.50	
77017776	Doncaster Secondary College	4	6,667.48	3,348.78	2,233.58	
70017934	Hawthorn Secondary College	1	1,674.99	1,024.14	314.60	
70017934	Keilor Downs Secondary College	1		Disbursed	in '96	
70018715	Keilor Downs Secondary College	1	2,100.00	1,300.50	399.50	
70018017	Maroondah Secondary College	1		Scholarship holder		
70018819	Melbourne Girls High School	1	2,100.00	1,300.50	399.50	
77018064	Monash Secondary College	1		Disbursed	in '96	
77018105	Mount Waverley Secondary College	1		Disbursed	in '96	
70018233	Prahran Secondary College	2	4,100.00	2,601.00	799.00	
	Total	**18**	**25,249.96**	**13,200.06**	**7,582.41**	**0**

School Numbers and Disbursements by School for 1996

School Code	Host School	Students	Received in Total $	Host School $	ELC $	VSL $
70010734	Clayton North Primary School	1	2,693.24	2,204.25		
70011508	Glenferrie Primary School	1	975.00	743.75		
70012897	Carnegie Primary School	1	1,850.02	1,487.52		
70012955	Princess Hill Primary School	2	2,650.00	2,082.50		
70014733	Bellevue Primary School	1	2,350.00	1,912.50		
70014840	Clayton West Primary School	1	1,225.00	956.25		
70014863	Laburnum Primary School	3	10,425.00	8,606.25		
70014924	Syndal South Primary School	6	21,975.00	18,168.75		
70015213	Berwick Lodge Primary School	1	2,350.00	1,912.50		
70015288	Boroondara Park Primary School	2	4,700.00	3,825.00		
70015419	Roberts McCubbin Primary School	1	1,850.00	1,487.50		
	Primary Schools Total	**20**	**53,043.26**	**43,386.77**		**0.00**
70016212	Collingwood College	7	36,502.52	23,659.58	6,772.56	
70017061	Hillcrest Secondary College	1	3,092.51	2,543.63		
70017120	Doveton Secondary College	2	14,955.00	12,155.00		455.00
70017540	Ballarat High School	1	5,927.51	4,953.38		
70017550	Balwyn High School	4	25,919.58	19,618.36	2,073.28	
70017610	Blackburn High School	1	8,100.00	6,800.00		
70017635	Box Hill High School	3	19,965.29	13,868.72	2,073.28	910.00
70017670	Buckley Park Secondary College	1	6,400.00	2,245.08	3,109.92	
70017680	Camberwell High School	3	17,107.48	13,249.72	1,036.64	
70017712	Chandler Secondary College	4	20,875.01	17,403.76		
70017720	Cheltenham Secondary College	3	21,324.69	11,748.32	5,735.92	455.00
70017760	Dandenong High School	1	6,400.00	3,281.72	2,073.28	
70017773	East Doncaster Secondary College	4	13,692.51	3,431.36	7,867.27	
70017776	Doncaster Secondary College	13	68,303.79	35,650.61	19,918.81	1,628.00
70017810	Elwood College	1	4,100.00	2,737.25	662.75	
70017865	Glen Waverley Secondary College	8	39,789.40	24,060.00	8,694.24	455.00
70017934	Hawthorn Secondary College	1	6,400.00	3,281.72	2,073.28	

School Code	Host School	Students	Received in Total $	Host School $	ELC $	VSL $
70017950	Kew High School	12	37,346.98	22,968.01	7,756.92	
70018017	Maroondah Secondary College	2	8,955.32	3,372.96	4,069.06	
70018064	Monash Secondary College	2	9,650.00	5,946.72	2,085.78	
70018105	Mount Waverley Secondary College	15	92,458.81	69,273.04	6,494.95	1,820.00
70018130	Macleod High School	1	1,452.35	246.66	902.84	
70018233	Prahran Secondary College	6	31,885.42	17,227.58	8,204.78	1,365.00
70018326	Coomoora Secondary	1	2,147.51	1,740.38		
70018428	Wantirna Secondary College	7	34,503.35	16,932.56	11,800.29	
70018470	Westall Secondary College	2	9,777.93	7,104.60	1,036.64	
70018474	Wheelers Hill Secondary College	1	4,825.00	2,979.61	1,036.64	
70018475	Williamstown High School	1	6,900.00	5,780.00		
70018709	Hampton Park Secondary College	1	4,239.71	3,132.00		455.00
70018715	Keilor Downs Secondary College	9	36,650.00	17,879.00	12,508.50	
70018724	Forest Hill Secondary College	7	38,749.96	24,052.00	8,290.47	
70018733	Hobsons Bay Secondary College	3	11,325.00	9,371.25		
70018738	Western Heights Secondary College	2	3,980.00	3,213.00		
70018739	Sandringham Secondary College	15	70,849.15	39,366.80	18,277.78	1,532.00
70018744	Mullauna Secondary College	1	4,825.00	4,016.25		
70018747	Blackburn English Language School	2	5,775.00	1,192.40	3,546.35	
70018783	The Grange Secondary College	2	6,144.58	2,979.61	2,073.28	
70018801	South Oakleigh Secondary College	1	8,100.00	6,800.00		
70018807	Brunswick Secondary College	3	19,258.99	13,736.71	2,073.28	359.00
70018816	Heathmont College	3	10,599.99	3,019.07	5,735.92	
70018819	Melbourne Girls' College	12	61,597.06	38,230.34	10,868.26	2,634.00
	Secondary Colleges Total	**169**	**840,852.39**	**521,248.76**	**168,852.97**	**12,068.0 0**
	Grand Total	**189**	**893,895.65**	**564,635.53**	**168,852.97**	**12,068.0 0**

Student Numbers and Disbursements by School for 1997

School Code	Host School	Students	Received in Total $	Host School $	ELC $	VSL $
70010583	South Yarra Primary School	2	2,200.00	1,700.00		
70010734	Clayton North Primary School	3	1,599.99	1,189.99		
70010776	Bright P12 College	1	3,250.00	2,677.50		
70011508	Glenferrie Primary School	2	4,200.00	3,400.00		
70012815	Middle Park Primary School	1	2,100.00	1,700.00		
70012870	Elsternwick Primary School	1	1,225.00	956.25		
70012897	Carnegie Primary School	1	1,587.51	1,264.38		
70012948	Auburn Primary School	1	1,850.00	1,487.50		
70012955	Princess Hill Primary School	5	8,087.51	6,619.38		
70013820	Caulfield North Primary School	1	1,062.51	818.13		
70014687	Moorabbin Primary School	1	1,900.00	1,530.00		
70014747	Clayton Primary School	1	1,587.51	1,264.38		
70014840	Clayton West Primary School	1	2,250.00	1,912.50		
70014863	Laburnum Primary School	2	4,600.00	3,825.00		
70014924	Syndal South Primary School	3	6,750.00	5,737.50		
70014989	Wooranna Park Primary School	1	2,012.51	1,625.63		
70015094	Wheelers Hill Primary School	1	2,350.00	1,912.50		
70015213	Berwick Lodge Primary School	1	2,271.18	1,930.50		
70015288	Boroondara Park Primary School	3	6,850.00	5,737.50		

School Code	Host School	Students	Received in Total $	Host School $	ELC $	VSL $
70015419	Roberts McCubbin Primary School	1	1,750.00	1,487.50		
70015436	Glen Waverley South Primary School	1	2,350.00	1,912.50		
	Primary Schools Total	**34**	**61,833.69**	**50,688.64**	**0.00**	
70016212	Collingwood College	7	21,849.99	14,085.93	4,146.56	
70016242	Macleod P12 College	4	6,569.46	4,207.40	1,036.64	
70016244	Coburg Preston P12 College	1	4,100.00	3,400.00		
70017105	Corio Community College	1	4,100.00	3,400.00		
70017120	Doveton Secondary College	2	7,150.00	6,077.50		
70017183	Grovedale Secondary College	3	4,261.00	3,366.85		
70017300	Northland Secondary College	2	7,200.00	5,950.00		
70017540	Ballarat High School	8	21,849.99	9,339.21	8,638.28	
70017550	Balwyn High School	2	7,250.00	5,040.86	1,036.64	
70017610	Blackburn High School	2	6,100.00	3,787.00	1,313.00	
70017635	Box Hill High School	9	28,839.22	20,108.23	3,109.92	1,023.75
70017650	Brighton Secondary College	2	4,452.51	2,577.99	1,036.64	
70017670	Buckley Park Secondary College	1	3,150.00	2,677.50		
70017680	Camberwell High School	10	28,649.93	13,788.91	8,638.28	1,365.00
70017712	Chandler Secondary College	4	14,815.00	11,432.50		1,365.00
70017720	Cheltenham Secondary College	4	13,712.51	5,749.71	5,735.92	
70017723	Cleeland Secondary College	2	7,453.44	5,670.30		682.50
70017760	Dandenong High School	1	3,250.00	2,677.50		
70017773	East Doncaster Secondary College	6	17,524.99	8,735.32	5,735.92	
70017776	Doncaster Secondary College	15	47,860.38	34,114.39	4,146.56	2,047.50
70017810	Elwood College	14	34,369.53	11,369.06	16,655.04	
70017865	Glen Waverley Secondary College	4	13,850.00	9,359.22	2,073.28	
70017950	Kew High School	22	72,317.71	54,230.21	6,219.84	
70017954	Koonung Secondary College	1	2,777.51	2,275.88		
70017965	Kyabram Secondary College	1	4,100.00	3,400.00		
70018017	Maroondah Secondary College	2	8,073.25	6,572.20		341.25
70018064	Monash Secondary College	1	1,552.80	1,234.88		
70018075	Mordialloc Chelsea Secondary College	1	4,100.00	3,400.00		
70018102	Mount Eliza Secondary College	1	4,100.00	3,400.00		
70018105	Mount Waverley Secondary College	17	56,183.69	39,348.39	6,772.56	1,023.75
70018130	Macleod High School	3	5,930.30	2,507.41	2,073.28	341.25
70018180	Northcote High School	1	1,675.00	302.11	1,036.64	
70018245	Princes Hill Secondary College	1	1,800.00	1,445.00		
70018330	St. Albans Secondary College	1	3,250.00	604.22	2,073.28	
70018345	Strathmore Secondary College	3	8,216.25	3,812.75	2,626.00	341.25
70018428	Wantirna Secondary College	5	18,400.00	12,929.00	2,626.00	
70018462	Wellington Secondary College	5	16,375.00	6,847.48	6,646.27	
70018470	Westall Secondary College	5	11,899.99	6,388.71	3,386.28	
70018474	Wheelers Hill Secondary College	2	5,450.01	3,084.48	1,378.03	
70018704	Glen Eira College	7	20,499.98	8,536.86	8,293.12	
70018709	Hampton Park Secondary College	2	4,800.00	3,910.00		
70018715	Keilor Downs Secondary College	13	42,756.86	27,416.60	7,256.48	1,365.00
70018724	Forest Hill Secondary College	20	54,067.79	26,738.44	17,484.12	341.25
70018730	St. Helena Secondary College	1	4,100.00	3,400.00		
70018733	Hobsons Bay Secondary College	6	24,714.50	20,172.20		682.50
70018739	Sandringham Secondary College	20	64,764.65	44,374.02	8,085.56	2,047.50
70018744	Mullauna Secondary College	1	3,250.00	2,677.50		

School Code	Host School	Students	Received in Total $	Host School $	ELC $	VSL $
70018747	Blackburn English Language School	2	8,200.00	749.00	6,051.00	
70018783	The Grange Secondary College	2	6,430.19	3,102.32	2,073.28	341.25
70018801	South Oakleigh Secondary College	1	3,732.00	3,172.20		
70018807	Brunswick Secondary College	6	21,971.96	10,983.48	6,772.56	682.50
70018808	Glen Waverley Secondary College	15	51,674.98	37,465.53	5,183.20	
70018811	Warrnambool College	1	4,100.00	3,400.00		
70018816	Heathmont College	4	13,748.25	10,274.31	1,036.64	341.25
70018819	Melbourne Girls College	17	62,562.14	45486	6,841.82	
70018823	Templestowe College	1	4,100.00	3,400.00		
	Secondary School Total	**295**	**930,032.74**	**593,956.56**	**167,218.64**	**14,332.50**
	Grand Total	**329**	**991,866.43**	**644,645.20**	**167,218.64**	**14,332.50**

Disbursements to Victorian School of Languages for Non-Government Students in 1996

Host School	Students	Disbursed to VSL $
Access & Preparatory Studies Dept	1	455.00
Billanook College	2	910.00
Billanook College	1	455.00
Camberwell Anglican GGS	2	682.50
Camberwell Grammar	1	455.00
Carey Baptist Grammar School	1	455.00
Christian Brothers College	1	455.00
Eltham College	1	455.00
Firbank Anglican School	2	910.00
Geelong Grammar School	3	1,365.00
Huntingtower School	1	455.00
Ivanhoe Grammar School	2	910.00
Kingswood College	1	455.00
Knox Grammar	6	2,730.00
Korowa Anglican Girls School	1	455.00
Lilydale Adventist Academy	2	682.50
Luther College	1	455.00
Marcellin College	2	910.00
Mater Christi College	2	910.00
Mazenod College	3	1,365.00
Melbourne Girls Grammar School	1	455.00
Melbourne Grammar School	5	2,275.00
Mount St Joseph Girls' College	1	455.00
Nunawading Adventist College	1	455.00
Oxley College	9	4,095.00
Presbyterian Ladies College	1	455.00
Redden Catholic College	1	455.00
RMIT	5	2,275.00
St Catherine's School	3	1,365.00
St Kevin's College	3	1,137.50
St Margaret's School	1	227.50
St Michael Grammar School	1	455.00
Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar School	3	1,365.00
Swinburne Uni – TAFE	1	455.00

Host School	Students	Disbursed to VSL $
Taylor's College	3	1,365.00
The Geelong College	1	455.00
The Peninsula School	5	2,275.00
Westbourne & Williamstown Grammar School	9	4,095.00
Total	**90**	**40,040.00**

Disbursements to Victorian School of Languages for Non-Government Students in 1997

Host School	Students	Disbursed to VSL $
Ballarat GS	2	910.00
Billanook College	1	455.00
Braemar College	1	455.00
Camberwell GGS	2	910.00
Camberwell Grammar	1	455.00
Carey Grammar	1	227.50
Caulfield Grammar School	4	1,820.00
Firbank AGS	1	455.00
Geelong College	3	1,365.00
Goulburn Valley GS	1	455.00
Heathdale Christian College	1	455.00
Kilvington GGS	2	910.00
Kingswood College	1	455.00
Korowa AGS	1	455.00
Lauriston Girls'	3	1,365.00
Loyola College	1	455.00
Luther College	3	1,365.00
Maranatha Christian School	1	455.00
Mater Christi College	2	910.00
Melbourne GGS	3	1,365.00
Melbourne Grammar	2	910.00
Mentone GGS	1	455.00
Mentone GS	1	455.00
MLC	1	455.00
Nazareth College	2	910.00
Oxley College	14	6,370.00
PLC	2	910.00
RMIT Foundation Course	1	455.00
St Catherine's	3	1,365.00
St Kevin's College	1	455.00
St Paul's School "Woodleigh"	3	1,365.00
Taylor's College	2	910.00
The Knox School	5	2,275.00
The Peninsula School	1	455.00
Tintern AGGS	1	455.00
University HS	1	455.00
Unknown	1	455.00
Vaucluse College	1	455.00
Wesley College	1	455.00
Westbourne & Williamstown Grammar	9	4,095.00
Total	**88**	**33,897.50**

Premier: grants

1354. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Premier, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me (including Arts Victoria, the Victorian Multicultural Commission and the Community Support Fund) is not provided for the following reasons:

(i) information on current grants made by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 and 1996-97 is provided in the Budget Papers for each of those financial years;

(ii) information on grants for projects approved in 1995-96 and 1996-97 is provided in the annual reports of the Department and agencies responsible to me for each of those financial years; and

(iii) due to the large number of grants involved, the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

Agriculture and Resources: grants

1356. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me can only be provided in part because there are a large number of often small grants involving a range of agencies and the time and resources required to assemble this information cannot be justified.

The summary information provided in the following attachments is for those that are readily available within the Department of Natural Resources and Environment which relate to the Agriculture and Resources portfolio. However, the Honourable Member may wish to narrow her enquiry and I will reconsider her request.

AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCES COMMUNITY GRANTS

ORGANISATION	AMOUNT	PURPOSE OF GRANT
1995/96		
McAllister Research Farm	$25,000	Contribution towards meeting room to enhance educational services provided to farmers, interest & community groups.
Victorian Young Farmers	$60,000	Contribution towards organisational funding.
Victorian Farmers Federation	$5,000	Sponsorship of Open Farms Scheme.
Victorian Farmers Federation	$4,000	Contribution towards Information Technology Expo.
Young Achievement Australia	$4,000	Sponsorship of Business Skills program for Warracknabeal/Murtoa Young Achievement Australia group.

ORGANISATION	AMOUNT	PURPOSE OF GRANT
1995/96		
Exhibition of Victorian Winemakers	$6,500	Contribution towards Hong Kong exhibition of Victorian Winemakers.
Teaching Farms Organising Committee	$25,000	Attendance of Melbourne children at rural schools.
Rural Women's Development Group	$650	Sponsorship of transport for Rural Women's Day.
Vizard Corporation	$20,000	The World's Finest Ram Competition. Grant to assist in establishing international event to identify finest wooled ram in the world.
Bettina & Associates	$5,000	Victorian food promotions for Sydney Wine Festival.
RSPCA	$100,000	Funding of activities of inspectorate services.
Lost Dog's Home	$10,000	Contribution towards organisational funding.
1996/97		
Kids Construction Inc. (Susie O'Neill)	$10,000	Sponsorship of child safety display - Melbourne Central. Specifically contribution to activity relating to farm safety.
Bettina & Associates	$4,000	Sponsorship of gourmet food component of Victorian Wine & Food Exhibition 27/10 - 1/11/96, Melbourne
The Aquarian Marketing Group	$6,000	Sponsorship of the exhibition of Victorian Winemakers, Happy Valley, Hong Kong.
Horsham Rural City Council	$9,000	Contribution to consultancy for feasibility study of relocation - Horsham Saleyards (to include generic methodology for use by other councils considering saleyards relocation).
Victorian Farmers Federation	$5,000	Funding of the 1997 VFF-ABC Open Farm Scheme.
Teaching Farms Organising Committee	$25,000	Funding of 1997 Teaching Farms Program which enables Year 6 Melbourne students to spend a week attending a small rural school and living with a farming host family.
Young Achievement Australia	$4,000	Sponsorship of Business Skills program in Warracknabeal & Camperdown areas.
Victorian Young Farmers	$62,000	Contribution towards organisational funding.
Victorian Farmers Federation	$40,000	Victorian Farms Safe Alliance (Rural Victoria 2001 initiative)
Royal Society of Victoria	$6,000	Publishing costs of annual volume and various journals.
RSPCA	$100,000	Funding of activities of inspectorate services.
Lost Dog's Home	$10,000	Contribution towards organisational funding
Rural Women's Leadership Bursaries	$20,000	Provision of 10 Bursaries to rural women to attend an approved leadership training course. Project jointly funded with the Office of Women's Affairs.
Foundation of Australian Agriculture	$5,000	To assist with transport costs associated with the Rural Women for Cultural and Community Leadership Project.

AGRICULTURAL AND PASTORAL GRANTS

ORGANISATION	AMOUNT	PURPOSE OF GRANT
1995/96		
Cobram Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$8,000	To assist with construction of multi purpose pavilion.

ORGANISATION	AMOUNT	PURPOSE OF GRANT
Hamilton Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$8,000	To assist with construction of portable cattle yards.
Korumburra Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$8,000	Contribution towards extensions to exhibit pavilion.
Mildura Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$8,000	Contribution towards extension to existing agricultural hall.
Natimuk Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$5,000	To assist with completion of poultry pavilion/multi purpose shed.
Traralgon Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$3,552	To assist with construction of horse wash & dairy cattle tie ups.
Ballarat Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$8,000	To assist with construction of steel pens for stud sheep display.
Berwick & District Agricultural Society	$2,000	To assist with construction of sheep pens.
Gippsland Field Days	$7,000	Contribution towards extension of existing shed to house exhibitions.
Heathcote Agricultural and Pastoral and Horticultural Society	$3,262	Contribution towards extension to sheep, dairy goat & angora pavilion.
Heytesbury Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$5,334	Contribution towards dairy cattle wash area.
Maldon & Baringup Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$2,831	To assist with purchase & erection of secretaries office.
Mansfield Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$3,262	Contribution towards supply of electric power to trade stand area.
Orbost Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$7,000	To assist with construction of shed for cattle during show.
Pyramid Hill and District Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$8,000	To assist with construction of toilet block.
Sale Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$8,000	To assist with construction of multi purpose exhibition pavilion.
St Arnaud Agricultural Society Inc	$2,800	To assist with upgrading of shearing area (floor, walls & tiered seating).
Shepparton Agricultural Society Inc	$7,396	To assist with renewing existing sheep/goat/alpaca exhibition pavilion.
1996/97		
Ballarat Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$10,000	To assist with replacement of timber sheep pens with steel.
Benalla Agriculture and Pastoral Society	$10,000	To assist with construction of sheep pavilion.
Casterton Pastoral and Agricultural Society	$10,000	To assist with construction of sheep pavilion and MP building.
Cooryong & Upper Murray Agricultural & Pastoral Society	$2,000	Contribution towards bull wash down yard and loading ramp.
Dandenong Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$800	Contribution towards storage area for shearing equipment.
Hamilton Pastoral & Agricultural Society	$8,000	Contribution towards construction of toilet block.
Jeparit Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$2,900	Contribution towards improvement to poultry pavilion.
Kerang Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$6,560	Contribution towards concrete floor in pavilion.
Koroit Agricultural Society	$4,067	Contribution towards extension of cattle shed.
Kyabram Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$5,400	Contribution towards steel arena fence for exhibition of horses and cattle.
Lilydale Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$800	Contribution towards upgrading facilities for judging poultry.

ORGANISATION	AMOUNT	PURPOSE OF GRANT
Red Hill Agricultural and Horticultural Society	$4,400	To assist with construction of toilet for disabled.
Rupanyup Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$4,912	Contribution towards upgrading facilities to house fleece exhibits.
Tyrendarra Pastoral and Agricultural Society	$3,000	Assistance to build sheep pens.
Wangaratta Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$8,000	Contribution towards upgrading of toilet block.
Warrnambool Agricultural Society	$2,800	Assistance to construct additional sheep pens.
Wonthaggi and District Agricultural Pastoral and Historical Society	$5,676	Contribution towards facilities for exhibiting poultry.
Yea Agricultural and Pastoral Society	$6,300	Contribution towards facilities for judging cattle.

AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCES RURAL COUNSELLING SERVICE GRANTS

ORGANISATION	AMOUNT	PURPOSE OF GRANT
1995/96		
Wimmera Rural Counselling Service	$22,000	Support for rural counselling program.
Sunraysia Rural Counselling Service	$27,098	Support for rural counselling program.
Murray Valley Rural Industry Assistance Group	$9,900	Support for rural counselling program.
South Gippsland Farmers Support Group	$8,827	Support for rural counselling program.
Mallee Support and Development Group	$24,615	Support for rural counselling program.
Loddon Valley Community Support Group	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.
Central Highlands Barwon Rural Response Committee	$30,000	Support for rural counselling program.
GV AGCARE	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.
Central Victorian Rural Awareness Committee	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.
South Western Rural Counselling Committee	$9,575	Support for rural counselling program.
Gippsland Rural Financial Counselling Service	$15,200	Support for rural counselling program.
NE AGCARE - Benalla	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.
NE AGCARE - North East	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.
Upper Goulburn Rural Financial Counselling Service	$10,000	Support for rural counselling program.
1996/97		
Wimmera Rural Counselling Service	$22,000	Support for rural counselling program.
Sunraysia Rural Counselling Service	$29,552	Support for rural counselling program.
Murray Valley Rural Industry Assistance Group	$9,900	Support for rural counselling program.
South Gippsland Farmers Support Group	$7,709	Support for rural counselling program.
Mallee Support and Development Group	$30,000	Support for rural counselling program.
Loddon Valley Community Support Group	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.
Central Highlands Barwon Rural Response Committee	$30,000	Support for rural counselling program.
GV AGCARE	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.
Central Victorian Rural Awareness Committee	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.

ORGANISATION	AMOUNT	PURPOSE OF GRANT
South Western Rural Counselling Committee	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.
Gippsland Rural Financial Counselling Service	$30,000	Support for rural counselling program.
NE AGCARE – Benalla	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.
NE AGCARE - North East	$15,000	Support for rural counselling program.
Upper Goulburn Rural Financial Counselling Service	$10,000	Support for rural counselling program.

Education: grants

1357. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The collation of the relevant information would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Hon. M. M. Gould, MLC, may wish to submit a more focussed and specific question on the matter.

Health: grants

1359. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me can only be provided in part in the attached documents, and due to the large number of grants involved the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

(The information referred to in answer (319 pages) sent to honourable member and copy tabled in parliamentary library.)

Youth and Community Services: grants

1370. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me can only be provided in part in the attached documents, and due to the large number of grants involved the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

(The information referred to in answer (670 pages) sent to honourable member and copy tabled in parliamentary library.)

Education: employment initiatives, Casey

1378. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Casey.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Casey

1379. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Casey.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Casey

1380. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Casey.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Greater Dandenong

1386. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Greater Dandenong

1387. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97) and 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Greater Dandenong

1388. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Monash

1394. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Monash.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Monash

1395. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Monash.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Monash

1396. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Monash.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Frankston

1402. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Frankston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Frankston

1403. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Frankston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97) and 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Frankston

1404. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Frankston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Kingston

1410. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Kingston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Kingston

1411. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Kingston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Kingston

1412. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Kingston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, ,Glen Eira

1418. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Glen Eira

1419. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97) and 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Glen Eira

1420. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Hobsons Bay

1426. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hobson's Bay.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Hobsons Bay

1427. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hobson's Bay.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Hobsons Bay

1428. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hobson's Bay.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Wyndham

1434. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Wyndham

1435. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Wyndham

1436. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Greater Geelong

1442. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Greater Geelong

1443. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Greater Geelong

1444. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Greater Bendigo

1450. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Greater Bendigo

1451. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Greater Bendigo

1452. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Yarra Ranges

1458. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Yarra Ranges

1459. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97) and 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Yarra Ranges

1460. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Knox

1466. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Knox.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Knox

1467. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Knox.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Knox

1468. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Knox.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Banyule

1474. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Banyule.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Banyule

1475. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Banyule.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Banyule

1476. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Banyule.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Hume

1482. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hume.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Hume

1483. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hume.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Hume

1484. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Hume.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, La Trobe

1490. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of La Trobe.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, La Trobe

1491. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of La Trobe.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97) and 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, La Trobe

1492. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of La Trobe.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Manningham

1498. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Manningham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Manningham

1499. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Manningham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Manningham

1500. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Manningham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Stonnington

1506. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Stonnington

1507. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Stonnington

1508. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Whittlesea

1514. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Whittlesea

1515. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Whittlesea

1516. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Brimbank

1522. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Brimbank

1523. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Brimbank

1524. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Ballarat

1530. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Ballarat

1531. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97) and 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Ballarat

1532. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Finance: employment initiatives, Ballarat

1534. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

No specific "employment initiatives" programs are directly undertaken by the Department.

Education: employment initiatives, Maroondah

1538. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Maroondah

1539. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within this LGA in 1995/96. A Community Business Employment project operates in the region covering this LGA.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Maroondah

1540. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Melbourne

1546. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Melbourne

1547. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Melbourne

1548. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Bass Coast

1554. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Bass Coast

1555. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Bass Coast

1556. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Nillumbik

1562. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Nillumbik

1563. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Nillumbik

1564. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Swan Hill

1570. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Swan Hill

1571. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within this LGA in 1995/96 and in 1997/98. A Community Business Employment project operates in the region covering this LGA.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Swan Hill

1572. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Greater Shepparton

1578. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Greater Shepparton

1579. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Greater Shepparton

1580. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Wangaratta

1586. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Wangaratta

1587. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Wangaratta

1588. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Mildura

1594. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Mildura

1595. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Mildura

1596. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Horsham

1602. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Horsham

1603. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Horsham

1604. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Boroondara

1610. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Boroondara

1611. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Boroondara

1612. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Cardinia

1618. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Cardinia

1619. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97) and 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Cardinia

1620. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Darebin

1626. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Darebin.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Darebin

1627. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Darebin.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97) and 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Darebin

1628. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Darebin.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Port Phillip

1634. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Port Phillip

1635. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Port Phillip

1636. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Maribyrnong

1642. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Maribyrnong

1643. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Maribyrnong

1644. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Moonee Valley

1650. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Moonee Valley

1651. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97) and 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Moonee Valley

1652. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Melton

1658. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Melton

1659. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1997/98. A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Melton

1660. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Mitchell

1666. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Mitchell

1667. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Mitchell

1668. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Moreland

1674. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moreland.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Moreland

1675. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moreland.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Moreland

1676. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Moreland.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Mornington Peninsula

1682. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Mornington Peninsula

1683. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Mornington Peninsula

1684. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Wodonga

1690. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Wodonga

1691. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Wodonga

1692. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Education: employment initiatives, Yarra

1698. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Yarra.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Education undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long term flow on effect on employment.

The collation of the relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: employment initiatives, Yarra

1699. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Yarra.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

A Streetlife program grant was allocated within these LGAs in 1995/96 (continuing in 1996/97). A community business employment project operates in the regions covering these LGAs.

Roads and Ports: employment initiatives, Yarra

1700. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) What employment initiatives has the Minister's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Yarra.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure undertakes or contributes to a wide range of initiatives or programs throughout Victoria which have a long-term flow-on effect on employment.

The collation of relevant information on such a wide range of matters would require an inordinate amount of time, public funds and departmental resources and cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Casey

1706. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Casey

1711. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Casey

1717. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Casey — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Greater Dandenong

1719. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Greater Dandenong

1724. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Greater Dandenong

1730. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Monash

1732. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Monash

1737. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Monash

1743. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Monash — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Frankston

1745. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Frankston

1750. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Frankston

1756. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Frankston — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Kingston

1758. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Kingston

1763. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Kingston

1769. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Kingston — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Glen Eira

1771. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Glen Eira

1776. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Glen Eira

1782. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii)

robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Hobsons Bay

1784. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Hobsons Bay

1789. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Hobsons Bay

1795. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Wyndham

1797. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Wyndham

1802. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Wyndham

1808. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Wyndham — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Greater Geelong

1810. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Greater Geelong

1815. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Greater Geelong

1821. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Greater Bendigo

1823. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Greater Bendigo

1828. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Greater Bendigo

1834. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Yarra Ranges

1836. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Yarra Ranges

1841. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Yarra Ranges

1847. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Knox

1849. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Knox

1854. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Knox

1860. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Knox — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Banyule

1862. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Banyule

1867. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Banyule

1873. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Banyule — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Hume

1875. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Hume

1880. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Hume

1886. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Hume — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, La Trobe

1888. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, La Trobe

1893. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, La Trobe

1899. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Manningham

1901. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Manningham

1906. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Manningham

1912. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Manningham — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Stonnington

1914. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Stonnington

1919. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Stonnington

1925. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Stonnington — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii)

robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Whittlesea

1927. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Whittlesea

1932. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Whittlesea

1938. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Brimbank

1940. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Brimbank

1945. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Brimbank

1951. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Brimbank — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Ballarat

1953. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Ballarat

1957. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put

forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Ballarat

1963. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Ballarat — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Maroondah

1965. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Premier: capital works, Maroondah

1969. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Maroondah

1975. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Maroondah — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Melbourne

1977. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

The capital works project for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the City of Melbourne was the Melbourne Exhibition Centre development (note that part of the land for the centre is in the City of Port Phillip).

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Melbourne

1979. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Melbourne

1980. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

The capital works projects for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne were as follows:

PROJECT	1995/96 expenditure
DTF IT Systems and Equipment – Purchase	$192,000
2 Treasury Place - External Repairs and Lift Upgrade	$1,540,000
2 Treasury Place - Airconditioning and Internal Upgrade	$2,763,000
IT Strategic Plan Implementation	$792,000
Integrated Geographic System Implementation	$300,000
State GIS Digital Map Base	$1,035,000
436 Lonsdale St – Refurbishment	$3,039,000
Co-ordinated Digital GIS	$500,000
1 Macarthur Pl/1 Treasury Reserve – Refurbishment	$10,987,000
1 Treasury place Workstations Purchase	$2,000,000
Govt. Office Accommodation - City Precinct Strategic Plan	$8,830,000
Financial Management System – Development and Purchase	$236,000
IT Business Systems – FMS	$240,000
Financial Management System Project	$1,212,000
1/35 Spring Street Fitout	$577,000

PROJECT	1995/96 expenditure
Public Offices - Energy Retrofitting	$17,000
283 Queen St - Facade Repairs	$440,000
State Map Base - Upgrade Road Centreline Mapbase	$500,000
Survey and Mapping - Data Conversion of Central Plan Office	$322,000
3-5 Macarthur Place - Upgrade and refit	$948,000
Federation Square Stage 1 - Demolition of Princes Gate Towers	$1,606,000
Treasury and Finance - Local Area Network	$200,000
Property Division - Financial Reporting System	$93,000
Surveyor General - Satellite Based Position Fixing System	$252,000
Controller - General Consolidated Central Agency Asset Register	
Whole of Government - Introduction of Accrual Accounting	$3,777,000
Casino - Site Consolidation	$280,000

Premier: capital works, Melbourne

1981. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Melbourne

1986. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

I am informed that Vicroads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Melbourne

1987. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Melbourne — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Bass Coast

1988. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Bass Coast

1989. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Bass Coast

1991. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Bass Coast

1992. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken by the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

Premier: capital works, Bass Coast

1993. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Bass Coast

1998. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Bass Coast

1999. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Nillumbik

2000. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Nillumbik

2001. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Nillumbik

2003. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Nillumbik

2004. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

Premier: capital works, Nillumbik

2005. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Nillumbik

2010. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Nillumbik

2011. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported

to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Swan Hill

2012. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Swan Hill

2013. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Swan Hill

2015. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Swan Hill

2016. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

Premier: capital works, Swan Hill

2017. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Swan Hill

2022. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Swan Hill

2023. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Greater Shepparton

2024. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Greater Shepparton

2025. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Greater Shepparton

2027. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Greater Shepparton

2028. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

Premier: capital works, Greater Shepparton

2029. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Greater Shepparton

2034. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Greater Shepparton

2035. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Wangaratta

2036. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Wangaratta

2037. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Wangaratta

2039. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Wangaratta

2040. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wangaratta.

Premier: capital works, Wangaratta

2041. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Wangaratta

2046. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Wangaratta

2047. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Mildura

2048. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Mildura

2049. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Mildura

2051. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Mildura

2052. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

The capital works project for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura was as follows:

PROJECT	1995/96 expenditure
Public Offices - Energy Retrofitting	$1,000

Premier: capital works, Mildura

2053. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Mildura

2058. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Mildura

2059. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Horsham

2060. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Horsham

2061. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Horsham

2063. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Horsham

2064. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

The capital works projects for the Department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham were as follows:

PROJECT	1995/96 expenditure
Public Offices - Energy Retrofitting	$3,000
Horsham Public Offices - Extension and Upgrade	$644,000

Premier: capital works, Horsham

2065. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Horsham

2070. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Horsham

2071. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Boroondara

2072. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Boroondara

2073. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Boroondara

2075. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Boroondara

2076. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

Premier: capital works, Boroondara

2077. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Boroondara

2082. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Boroondara

2083. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Boroondara — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Cardinia

2084. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Cardinia

2085. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Cardinia

2087. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Cardinia

2088. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

Premier: capital works, Cardinia

2089. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Cardinia

2094. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Cardinia

2095. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Darebin

2096. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Darebin

2097. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Darebin

2099. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Darebin

2100. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

Premier: capital works, Darebin

2101. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Darebin

2106. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Darebin

2107. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Darebin — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Port Phillip

2108. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Port Phillip

2109. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

Capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the City of Port Phillip were the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre and the Australian Grand Prix construction.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Port Phillip

2111. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Port Phillip

2112. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

Premier: capital works, Port Phillip

2113. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put

forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Port Phillip

2118. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Port Phillip

2119. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Maribyrnong

2120. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Maribyrnong

2121. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Maribyrnong

2123. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Maribyrnong

2124. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

Premier: capital works, Maribyrnong

2125. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Maribyrnong

2130. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Maribyrnong

2131. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Moonee Valley

2132. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Moonee Valley

2133. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Moonee Valley

2135. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Moonee Valley

2136. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

Premier: capital works, Moonee Valley

2137. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Moonee Valley

2142. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Moonee Valley

2143. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Melton

2144. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Melton

2145. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Melton

2147. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Melton

2148. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

Premier: capital works, Melton

2149. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Melton

2154. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Melton

2155. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Shire of Melton — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii)

robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Mitchell

2156. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Mitchell

2157. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Mitchell

2159. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Mitchell

2160. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

Premier: capital works, Mitchell

2161. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Mitchell

2166. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Mitchell

2167. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Moreland

2168. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Moreland

2169. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Moreland

2171. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Moreland

2172. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

Premier: capital works, Moreland

2173. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Moreland

2178. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Moreland

2179. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Moreland — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Mornington Peninsula

2180. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Mornington Peninsula

2181. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Mornington Peninsula

2183. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Mornington Peninsula

2184. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

Premier: capital works, Mornington Peninsula

2185. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Mornington Peninsula

2190. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Mornington Peninsula

2191. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Wodonga

2192. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Wodonga

2193. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Wodonga

2195. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Wodonga

2196. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wodonga.

Premier: capital works, Wodonga

2197. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Wodonga

2202. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Wodonga

2203. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Health: capital works, Yarra

2204. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Human Services in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided in response to question on notice no. 1705.

Industry, Science and Technology: capital works, Yarra

2205. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What were the capital works projects for the Department of State Development in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Police and Emergency Services: capital works, Yarra

2207. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Justice in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

By convention a capital works project is a project costing in excess of $100,000. This information is readily available in the 1996-97 Budget Information Paper No. 1, "1996-97 Public Sector Capital Works".

Finance: capital works, Yarra

2208. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: What were the capital works projects for the Department of Treasury and Finance in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

No capital works programs were undertaken for the department in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

Premier: capital works, Yarra

2209. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

The information requested cannot be provided by municipalities.

Information on capital works projects costing over $100 000 are listed in Budet Information Paper No. 1, which details works in progress and new works for commencement in 1995-96. Further, projects put forward and granted approval for funding from the Community Support Fund in 1995-96 are detailed in the department's annual report of that year.

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Yarra

2214. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many motor vehicle accidents have been reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1993 to date in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

I am informed that VicRoads manages a database containing motor vehicle information involving casualty accidents provided by the Victoria Police. It does not contain details of all accidents reported to the police. I am therefore unable to provide the information required.

Police and Emergency Services: crime, Yarra

2215. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What were the total figures reported to the police in each of the calendar years from 1992 to date for the following categories of crime in the local government area of the City of Yarra — (i) burglary; (ii) aggravated burglary; (iii) robbery; (iv) armed robbery; (v) assault; (vi) aggravated assault; and (vii) destroying or damaging of property.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the response to the honourable member's question is:

This information is not available by municipality and is not supplied as the cost of assembling the information would be $1800.

Planning and Local Government: free publication

2216. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication Rating Issues in

Non-Metropolitan Melbourne Areas: Local Government Board Resource Paper in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

The report was prepared by a consultant to the Local Government Board in 1994 and was published in August 1994.

No record was kept by the Local Government Board of the number of reports which were distributed. However, they were made available to all councils and any person who requested a copy of the report.

The report was prepared within the budget resources of the Local Government Board. No separate budget allocation was identified for the preparation of the report.

The time and resources required to provide an estimate of the cost of the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication cannot be justified.

Planning and Local Government: free publication

2217. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication Progress Report - Local Government Benching Project in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

No report of this title has been prepared by the Office of Local Government.

Planning and Local Government: free publication

2218. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication Local Government Budget Notices in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

A report was published in June 1993 for the 1992/93 financial year and in October 1994 for the 1993/94 financial year. The reports were published jointly by the Office of Local Government and the Standing Committee on Local Government Financial Management.

The Committee printed and distributed the reports and the Office of Local Government does not have details on the number of reports distributed nor the costs of preparation, printing or distribution of the reports.

The time and resources required to provide an estimate of the cost of the preparation, printing and distribution of these publications cannot be justified.

Planning and Local Government: free publication

2219. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication Local Government Auditing in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

This report was prepared in October 1993 and was published jointly by the Office of Local Government and the Standing Committee on Local Government Financial Management.

The Committee printed and distributed the report and the Office of Local Government does not have details on the number of reports distributed nor the costs of preparation, printing or distribution of the report.

The time and resources required to provide an estimate of the cost of the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication cannot be justified.

Planning and Local Government: free publication

2220. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication Local Government Administration: A Guide in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

Several editions of the Guide were produced in 1994 and 1995.

No record was kept by the Office of Local Government of the number of reports which were distributed. However, they were made available to all Commissioners who were appointed to councils and any person who requested a copy of the report.

The report was prepared within the budget resources of the Office of Local Government. No separate budget allocation was identified for the preparation of the report.

The time and resources required to provide an estimate of the cost of the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication cannot be justified.

Planning and Local Government: free publication

2221. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication Guide for Councillors in Victoria in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

The Guide was only produced in 1996.

No record was kept by the Office of Local Government of the number of reports which were distributed. However, they were made available to all Councillors who were elected to councils in March 1996 and any person who requested a copy of the report.

The report was prepared within the budget resources of the Office of Local Government. No separate budget allocation was identified for the preparation of the report.

The time and resources required to provide an estimate of the cost of the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication cannot be justified.

Planning and Local Government: free publication

2222. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication Compulsory Competitive Tendering: Local Government Board Report in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

An Interim Report and Final Report were prepared and published by the Local Government Board in 1993.

No record was kept by the Local Government Board of the number of reports which were distributed. However, they were made available to all councils and any person who requested copies of the reports.

The reports were prepared within the budget resources of the Local Government Board. No separate budget allocation was identified for the preparation of the reports.

The time and resources required to provide an estimate of the cost of the preparation, printing and distribution of these publications cannot be justified.

Planning and Local Government: free publication

2223. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication CCT Audit Report in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

No report of this title has been prepared by the Office of Local Government.

Roads and Ports: free publication

2224. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of the free publication The Roads Corporation Victoria, Australia in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

This publication was not produced during the period 1993-96.

Roads and Ports: free publication

2225. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of the free publication VicRoads - A Guide to its Services in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

This publication was not produced during the period 1993-96.

Roads and Ports: free publication

2226. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of the free publication Victorian Boating Guide (Marine Board) in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

(a) The number of the Victorian Boating Guide distributed were -

1992/93	50,000 }	1995/96	75,000
1993/94	60,000 } - est	1996/97	105,000
1994/95	120,000 }		

(b) The budgets (costs) for the preparation, printing and distribution were -

1992/93	$30,233	1995/96	$10,787
1993/94	$908	1996/97	$69,697
1994/95	$1,985		

NOTES:

The numbers listed in 1992/93, 1993/94 and 1994/95 are broad production estimates - details for this period have been archived and would involve considerable time to retrieve.

Pre 1993/94 the cost of production and printing was met from funds provided to the State Boating Council. From 1993/94 onwards these costs have largely been met from advertising revenue obtained by a publisher appointed to produce the Guide.

The 1995/96 cost includes a subsidy of $10,000 to the publisher to offset a short fall in advertising revenue.

The 1996/97 costs include additional copies of the Guide ($19,519) and the cost of a direct mail out to all registered boat owners ($50,178).

Excluding the direct mailout in 1996/97, postage costs are met from general administration and are not separately identified.

Roads and Ports: free publication

2227. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of the free publication Legal Studies Kit (Roads Corporation) in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

Four thousand kits were printed in 1993 at a cost of $15,000. Most of these kits were distributed over the period 1993-96. Distribution figures for each year are not available.

Roads and Ports: free publication

2228. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of the free publication Motoring Bulletin (Weekly) (Roads Corporation) in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

The Motoring Bulletin is now called 'Roadworks'. The Bulletin is written, printed and despatched by VicRoads at an estimated cost of approximately $30,000 per annum. Approximately 400 copies of the bulletin are distributed each week (including twice weekly despatch to media and emergency services).

Roads and Ports: free publication

2229. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of the free publication World Class Taxi for Victoria in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

The free publication *World Class Taxis for Victoria* was printed in 1994 at a cost of $3589 for the preparation, printing and distribution of 20,000 copies.

The free publication *World Class Taxis for Victoria* was re-printed in 1996 at a cost of $2900 for the preparation, printing and distribution of 10,000 copies.

Agriculture and Resources: water authority payments

2230. **THE HON. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): What is the estimated payment from each water authority which comprises the $314.8 million at page 383 of Budget Paper No. 3, 1997-98.

ANSWER:

On page 383 of 1997/98 Budget Paper No. 3, Table 3.9 "Public Authority Income", a 1997/98 Budget estimate of $314.8 million is provided for the water industry. This includes:

estimated payments of $21.7 million by non-metropolitan water authorities;

estimated payments by the 4 metropolitan water businesses of $293.1 million.

It should be noted that the definition of "Public Authority Income" excludes financial accommodation levy payments (estimated $7.1 million).

Thus, the 1997/98 Budget estimate for total payments to the Consolidated Fund by the four metropolitan water businesses (including financial accommodation levy payments) is $300.2 million (c.f. forecast $305.6 million in 1996/97).

The Corporate Plans (including projected profitability and payments to Government) of the metropolitan water businesses (including the 3 retail businesses which are subject to performance appraisal on a "competition by comparison" basis) are submitted for the consideration of the Government on a commercial-in-confidence basis.

As the dividend payments in 1997/98 by individual businesses remain subject to negotiation in the context of relevant commercial considerations, including actual and projected profit and cash flow, it is not appropriate to identify projections in respect of individual businesses.

The estimated payments of $21.7 million by non-metropolitan water authorities is based on the forecast total payments made in 1996/97. As the dividend payments in 1997/98 are subject to the actual number of assessments, as at 30th June 1997, it is not appropriate to identify projections for each individual non-metropolitan water authority.

Treasurer: Victorian Power Exchange

2231. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer): In relation to the Victorian Power Exchange:

(a) When did the Exchange complete netting off all the transactions for the 1994-95 financial year.

(b) What was the difference between the preliminary and the final price for this financial year.

(c) What was the major source of the volatility between the preliminary and final prices and which parties in the market bear the costs of this volatility.

(d) When is it anticipated that the Exchange will complete netting off the financial year 1996-97.

ANSWER:

The settlement for the final week involving 1994-95 transactions (week ending 1 July 1995) occurred on 28 July 1995.

The System Marginal Price (SMP) that is used for preliminary settlement is normally the final SMP. There is only a change if an error has been found in the calculation of the SMP, or if there has been a change as a result of a dispute process.

Settlement occurs on the basis of the actual SMP. There have been relatively few instances where the SMP has been revised after settlement. The risk of any revision of SMP is carried by the participants in the wholesale market.

The settlement for the final week involving 1996-97 transactions (week ending 5 July 1997) occurred on 1 August 1997. There are some revisions of earlier weeks that are still being processed and should be completed by November 1997 subject to settlement of any outstanding disputes.

Treasurer: prepayment meters

2232. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer): In relation to prepayment meters:

(a) What will be the cost of the meters.

(b) How are residential consumers with prepayment meters to access the non-franchised electricity market when they become contestable and how are system losses to be allocated to customers with such meters.

(c) What arrangements have been made to ensure that consumers have adequate access to facilities so that they can prepay their bills.

(d) How are the eligible group of residential customers with prepayment meters to access the Winter Energy Concession and the Energy Relief Grants.

ANSWER:

The terms and conditions under which prepayment meters may be provided by a distribution business to electricity customers are subject to oversight by the Office of the Regulator-General. No proposal has been received by the Office from a distribution business to install prepayment meters, consequently no decision has been made on questions (a) - (d). In making any such decision, the Office would first consult with affected stakeholders, including its Customer Consultative Committee, and would ensure that the terms and conditions it approves are fair and reasonable.

Treasurer: Regulator-General's Customer Consultative Panel

2235. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer): In relation to the Customer Consultative Panel:

(a) What has been the attendance record of the various members of the Regulator-General's Customer Consultative Panel.

(b) What payments have been made to participants for the 1995-96 and 1996-97 financial years, indicating any payments received by members other than sitting fees over this period.

ANSWER:

(a) The attendance record of representatives of the members of the Office of the Regulator General's Customer Consultative Committee from February 1995 to July 1997 inclusive (29 monthly meetings) was as follows :

Consumers' Federation of Australia - 29 meetings attended
Financial & Consumer Rights Council - 25 meetings attended
Australian Chamber of Manufactures - 23 meetings attended
Victorian Farmers Federation - 23 meetings attended
Property Council of Australia - 22 meetings attended
Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce & Industry - 21 meetings attended
Victorian Council of Social Service - 20 meetings attended
Environment Victoria - 15 meetings attended.

(b) The sitting fee payments made to members of the Customer Consultative Committee for the financial years ending 1995-96 and 1996-97 were as follows:

MEMBERS	1995/96	1996/97
Financial & Consumer Rights Council	$5700	$3890
Consumers' Federation of Australia	$8550	$11,320
Victorian Council of Social Service	$8400	$1420
Environment Victoria	$3300	$1330

No other type of payment has been made to Customer Consultative Committee members.

Roads and Ports: bridges and crossings

2239. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What are the locations of bridges and crossings which have had — (i) speed limits; and (ii) load limits, imposed since 1 November 1992.

ANSWER:

I am advised that VicRoads records show load limits have been imposed on the following bridges on Declared roads since 1 November 1992:

1. Dargo Road over Wonnangatta River (north of Bairnsdale);
2. Mitchell Road over Bendigo-Echuca Railway (Bendigo);
3. Woolsthorpe-Heywood Road over Spring Creek (Woolsthorpe);
4. Spencer Road over Moyne River (west of Koroit);
5. Lavers Hill-Cobden Road over Skinners Creek (Chapple Vale);
6. McKillops Road over Snowy River (east of Wulgulmerang);
7. Omeo Highway over Livingstone Creek (Omeo);
8. Sunraysia Highway over Hines Creek (Redbank).

Repairs and replacement works subsequently led to the removal of the load limits on the bridges on the Omeo Highway and the Sunraysia Highway.

Load limits for bridges on local roads are the responsibility of municipal councils and therefore details are not available.

Information regarding speed limits on specific bridges cannot be provided. It would require the diversion of limited resources to the task of identifying each bridge in the State which has a speed limit. Should the Honourable Member require information on a particular bridge, I will be happy to consider his request.

Roads and Ports: regional taxi licences

2240. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many vehicles were licensed by the Victorian Taxi Directorate to operate as a taxi in each year from 1993 to 1996 within the — (i) City of Greater Geelong; (ii) City of Greater Bendigo; (iii) City of Ballarat; (iv) City of Warrnambool; (v) Rural City of Mildura; and (vi) La Trobe Shire.

ANSWER:

The Victorian Taxi Directorate was established on 14 February 1994.

The table below indicates the number of taxi licences on issue in the areas requested from 1993 to 1996.

Location	1993	1994	1995	1996
City of Greater Geelong	122	122	122	122
City of Greater Bendigo	42	42	42	43
City of Ballarat	53	53	53	54
City of Warrnambool	17	17	17	18
Rural City of Mildura	18	18	18	18
La Trobe Shire	35	36	36	36

Roads and Ports: road accidents, Wyndham

2241. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many road accidents in the City of Wyndham were reported to Victoria Police in 1995 and 1996, respectively, in which — (i) more than one occupant of the vehicle was killed; (ii) an occupant was killed; and (iii) an occupant required attendance of an ambulance.

ANSWER:

Year	(i) - More than one killed	(ii) - One killed	(iii) - Ambulance attendance
1995	Nil	3	N/A
1996	1	1	N/A

N/A - VicRoads is unable to provide this information as the accident database only records whether an occupant was hospitalised, based on the accident reports prepared by the Victoria Police.

Housing: Casey

2242. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

CITY OF CASEY*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,709

**New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's informationsystems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are*

Housing: Casey

2243. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

The Office of Housing public rental waiting lists operate on an aggregation of suburbs (broadbanded area) which may vary from LGA boundaries and may include more than one LGA. The OOH does not collect waiting list information aggregated by the new LGA's.

Prior to the implementation of broadbanded areas waiting list information was collected by the old LGA's.

Attachment A shows the Human Services regions and the individual broadbanded wait turn waiting lists, by accommodation type, within each region as at 30 September 1997.

Attachment B shows the Human Services regions and the individual broadbanded priority waiting lists, by accommodation type, within each region as at 30 September 1997.

ATTACHMENT A

RENTAL GENERAL STOCK WAIT TURN WAITING LIST
BY BROADBANDED AREA (September 1997)

Region	Office	Broadband	1 BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	TOTAL
Western Metro	Footscray/Flemington/Ascot Vale	ALTONA DISTRICT	311	223	253	64	851
		FLEMINGTON DISTRICT	1,026	774	849	98	2,747
	North Melbourne/Carlton/Kensington	INNER METRO NORTH	1,172	693	359	51	2,275
	Sunshine	KEILOR/ST ALBANS DISTRICT	211	464	862	102	1,639
		MELTON/WERRIBEE DISTRICT	194	309	439	84	1,026
		SUNSHINE DISTRICT	446	334	796	82	1,658
Northern Metro	Broadmeadows	BROADMEADOWS DISTRICT	664	1,025	1,253	319	3,261
		SUNBURY DISTRICT	37	50	53	9	149
	Fitzroy/Richmond/Collingwood	INNER METRO EAST	1,162	888	608	40	2,698
	Heidelberg	HEIDELBERG DISTRICT	185	193	222	45	645
	Preston	PRESTON DISTRICT	738	1,020	1,384	175	3,317
		WATSONIA TO KINGLAKE	69	161	188	17	435
Southern Metro	Cheltenham	CHELTENHAM DISTRICT	1,598	1,428	1,305	142	4,473
	Dandenong	BERWICK/PAKENHAM DISTRICT	262	448	510	107	1,327
		CRANBOURNE DISTRICT	159	274	330	39	802
		DANDENONG DISTRICT	992	1,078	1,320	277	3,667
Southern Metro	Frankston	BASS COAST DISTRICT	31	42	26	4	103
		FRANKSTON DISTRICT	434	549	364	63	1,410
		MORNINGTON PENINSULA	203	223	184	28	638
		WESTERNPORT DISTRICT	51	92	58	21	222
	South Melbourne/Prahran	INNER METRO SOUTH	1,860	1,069	502	21	3,452
Eastern Metro	Box Hill	BOX HILL DISTRICT	609	444	483	37	1,573

Region	Office	Broadband	1 BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	TOTAL
		WAVERLEY DISTRICT	106	262	258	26	652
	Ringwood	KNOX DISTRICT	208	367	355	25	955
		MAROONDAH DISTRICT	586	707	642	53	1,988
		YARRA RANGES RURAL	38	82	105	5	230
Barwon South West	Geelong	ANGELSEA DISTRICT	4	30	11	-	45
		APOLLO BAY	-	-	1	-	1
		BARWON HEADS DISTRICT	15	21	21	5	62
		BELLARINE DISTRICT	8	7	32	2	49
		COLAC	28	10	28	-	66
		DEANS MARSH	-	-	2	-	2
		GEELONG NORTH DISTRICT	232	236	176	40	684
		GEELONG SOUTH DISTRICT	115	178	96	23	412
		LARA DISTRICT	-	2	16	5	23
		QUEENSCLIFF DISTRICT	3	-	7	-	10
		WINCHELSEA	2	-	2	-	4
	Portland	HEYWOOD	4	-	-	-	4
		PORTLAND	54	7	-	1	62
	Warrnambool	CAMPERDOWN DISTRICT	1	4	-	1	6
		CASTERTON	-	1	-	-	1
		COBDEN	1	1	-	-	2
		COLERAINE	-	-	1	-	1
		DARTMOOR	-	-	1	-	1
		DUNKELD	1	-	-	-	1
		HAMILTON	7	1	1	-	9
		KOROIT	-	-	1	-	1
		LISMORE	-	-	1	-	1
		PORT FAIRY	2	6	2	-	10
		WARRNAMBOOL	128	77	61	5	271
Loddon Mallee	Bendigo	BENDIGO DISTRICT	371	212	191	35	809
		CALDER SOUTH DISTRICT	23	31	19	3	76
		CHARLTON	-	-	2	-	2
		DONALD	2	-	1	-	3
		DUNOLLY	3	-	4	-	7
		ECHUCA DISTRICT	50	75	75	6	206
		GISBORNE DISTRICT	5	3	9	-	17
		HEATHCOTE	-	-	2	-	2
		INGLEWOOD	-	-	2	-	2
		KYABRAM	25	32	18	6	81
		KYNETON DISTRICT	32	11	30	1	74
		MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT	32	21	15	3	71
		ROCHESTER	1	7	2	-	10
		RUSHWORTH	7	-	1	1	9
		TONGALA	-	1	2	-	3
		WEDDERBURN	7	-	1	-	8
	Mildura	MILDURA DISTRICT	154	214	104	21	493
		OUYEN	1	-	-	-	1
		ROBINVALE DISTRICT	4	25	27	10	66
	Swan Hill	COHUNA	4	1	-	-	5
		KERANG/MALLEE DISTRICT	4	3	5	3	15
		LAKE BOGA	-	-	1	-	1
		NYAH WEST	1	1	4	-	6
		SEA LAKE	1	-	2	-	3
		SWAN HILL DISTRICT	33	11	66	7	117
		WYCHEPROOF	2	-	-	-	2
Grampians	Ballarat	ARARAT DISTRICT	11	14	9	2	36
		AVOCA	2	-	2	-	4
		BACCHUS MARSH	8	28	60	8	104
		BALLAN	1	4	-	-	5
		BEAUFORT	1	-	-	-	1
		CENTRAL HIGHLANDS	264	210	143	41	658
		CLUNES	2	-	1	-	3
		CRESWICK	12	-	11	1	24
		DAYLESFORD	21	18	12	4	55
Grampians	Horsham	DIMBOOLA DISTRICT	-	-	3	-	3
		EDENHOPE/APSLEY	1	-	1	-	2
		HORSHAM DISTRICT	23	25	23	2	73
		NHILL/KANIVA	1	-	3	-	4
		STAWELL/ST ARNAUD	9	17	17	3	46
		WARRACKNABEAL DISTRICT	2	3	1	-	6
Hume	Benalla	BENALLA DISTRICT	28	15	7	4	54

Region	Office	Broadband	1 BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	TOTAL
		COBRAM	18	15	8	2	43
		MANSFIELD	8	3	-	-	11
		TUNGAMAH	-	-	1	-	1
		YARRAWONGA	28	19	15	1	63
	Seymour	ALEXANDRA DISTRICT	1	14	4	1	20
		BROADFORD DISTRICT	18	18	21	5	62
		NAGAMBIE	4	-	-	-	4
		SEYMOUR	36	43	31	6	116
		YEA	1	-	1	-	2
	Shepparton	MURCHISON	2	-	5	-	7
		NATHALIA DISTRICT	4	4	8	-	16
		SHEPPARTON DISTRICT	151	174	117	21	463
	Wangaratta	BEECHWORTH	8	21	7	-	36
		RUTHERGLEN	3	8	8	-	19
		WAHGUNYAH	1	-	-	-	1
		WANGARATTA/GLENROWAN	90	105	47	6	248
	Wodonga	BRIGHT	10	-	21	-	31
		CORRYONG	-	-	1	-	1
		MOUNT BEAUTY	2	-	-	-	2
		MYRTLEFORD	4	9	9	1	23
		TALLANGATTA	4	1	1	-	6
		WODONGA	142	136	31	26	335
Gippsland	Bairnsdale Housing	BAIRNSDALE DISTRICT	74	14	74	3	165
		LAKES ENTRANCE DISTRICT	36	23	44	8	111
		OMEO	-	-	2	-	2
		ORBOST	6	1	5	-	12
	Morwell Housing	CENTRAL LATROBE VALLEY	36	41	17	9	103
		FOSTER	-	1	4	-	5
		TOORA	-	-	1	-	1
		WEST GIPPSLAND	12	34	19	6	71
		WEST LATROBE VALLEY	24	34	8	1	67
		WEST SOUTH GIPPSLAND	20	6	6	-	32
	Sale Housing	HEYFIELD	2	-	-	-	2
		MAFFRA	3	1	3	-	7
		ROSEDALE	-	-	2	-	2
		WELLINGTON	37	5	26	5	73
		YARRAM	9	-	2	-	11
Grand Total			15,899	15,492	15,593	2,278	49,262

ATTACHMENT B

RENTAL GENERAL STOCK PRIORITY WAITING LIST BY BROADBANDED AREA (September 1997)

Region	Office	Broadband	1 BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	TOTAL
Western Metro	Footscray/Flemington/Ascot Vale	ALTONA DISTRICT	3	5	4	3	15
		FLEMINGTON DISTRICT	14	18	13	3	48
	North Melbourne/Carlton/Kensington	INNER METRO NORTH	35	22	11	18	86
	Sunshine	KEILOR/ST ALBANS DISTRICT	7	2	11	3	23
		MELTON/WERRIBEE DISTRICT	3	0	3	2	8
		SUNSHINE DISTRICT	20	12	6	8	46
Northern Metro	Broadmeadows	BROADMEADOWS DISTRICT	16	30	27	31	104
		SUNBURY DISTRICT	1	4	4	0	9
	Fitzroy/Richmond/Collingwood	INNER METRO EAST	50	52	28	4	134
	Heidelberg	HEIDELBERG DISTRICT	12	8	27	8	55
	Preston	PRESTON DISTRICT	26	28	48	18	120
		WATSONIA TO KINGLAKE	4	10	12	2	28
Southern Metro	Cheltenham	CHELTENHAM DISTRICT	17	3	16	11	47
	Dandenong	BERWICK/PAKENHAM DISTRICT	13	10	7	10	40
		CRANBOURNE DISTRICT	2	6	6	3	17
		DANDENONG DISTRICT	11	11	9	4	35

Region	Office	Broadband	1 BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	TOTAL
	Frankston	BASS COAST DISTRICT	0	1	0	0	1
		FRANKSTON DISTRICT	0	1	0	0	1
		MORNINGTON PENINSULA	3	1	1	0	5
		WESTERNPORT DISTRICT	0	1	5	1	7
	South Melbourne/Prahran	INNER METRO SOUTH	61	44	20	3	128
Eastern Metro	Box Hill	BOX HILL DISTRICT	12	11	16	4	43
		WAVERLEY DISTRICT	2	4	5	3	14
	Ringwood	KNOX DISTRICT	31	12	9	5	57
		MAROONDAH DISTRICT	13	10	15	3	41
		YARRA RANGES RURAL	2	1	3	1	7
Barwon South West	Geelong	ANGELSEA DISTRICT	1	0	0	0	1
		APOLLO BAY	0	0	0	0	0
		BARWON HEADS DISTRICT	0	1	1	0	2
		BELLARINE DISTRICT	0	0	0	0	0
		COLAC	1	2	1	0	4
		DEANS MARSH	0	0	0	0	0
		GEELONG NORTH DISTRICT	2	3	3	4	12
		GEELONG SOUTH DISTRICT	7	1	1	1	10
		LARA DISTRICT	0	0	0	0	0
		QUEENSCLIFF DISTRICT	0	0	0	0	0
		WINCHELSEA	0	0	0	0	0
	Portland	HEYWOOD	0	0	0	0	0
		PORTLAND	0	0	0	0	0
	Warrnambool	CAMPERDOWN DISTRICT	0	0	1	0	1
		CASTERTON	0	0	0	0	0
		COBDEN	0	0	0	0	0
		COLERAINE	0	0	0	0	0
		DARTMOOR	0	0	0	0	0
		DUNKELD	0	0	0	0	0
		HAMILTON	0	0	0	0	0
		KOROIT	0	0	0	0	0
		LISMORE	0	0	0	0	0
		PORT FAIRY	0	0	0	0	0
		WARRNAMBOOL	0	0	3	1	4
Loddon Mallee	Bendigo	BENDIGO DISTRICT	0	3	12	2	17
		CALDER SOUTH DISTRICT	0	1	0	0	1
		CHARLTON	0	0	0	0	0
		DONALD	0	0	0	0	0
		DUNOLLY	0	0	0	0	0
		ECHUCA DISTRICT	0	1	2	0	3
		GISBORNE DISTRICT	0	0	2	0	2
		HEATHCOTE	0	0	0	0	0
		INGLEWOOD	0	0	0	0	0
		KYABRAM	0	0	0	0	0
		KYNETON DISTRICT	1	1	0	0	2
		MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT	0	1	1	0	2
		ROCHESTER	0	0	0	0	0
		RUSHWORTH	0	0	0	0	0
		TONGALA	0	0	0	0	0
		WEDDERBURN	0	0	0	0	0
	Mildura	MILDURA DISTRICT	1	0	2	0	3
		OUYEN	0	0	0	0	0
		ROBINVALE DISTRICT	0	0	0	0	0
	Swan Hill	COHUNA	0	0	0	0	0
		KERANG/MALLEE DISTRICT	0	0	0	0	0
		LAKE BOGA	0	0	0	0	0
		NYAH WEST	0	0	0	0	0
		SEA LAKE	0	0	0	0	0
		SWAN HILL DISTRICT	0	0	1	0	1
		WYCHEPROOF	0	0	0	0	0
Grampians	Ballarat	ARARAT DISTRICT	0	0	0	0	0
		AVOCA	0	0	0	0	0
		BACCHUS MARSH	1	1	1	0	3
		BALLAN	0	0	0	0	0
		BEAUFORT	0	0	0	0	0
		CENTRAL HIGHLANDS	2	0	2	2	6
		CLUNES	0	0	0	0	0
		CRESWICK	1	0	0	0	1
		DAYLESFORD	0	0	1	0	1

Region	Office	Broadband	1 BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	TOTAL
	Horsham	DIMBOOLA DISTRICT	0	0	0	0	0
		EDENHOPE/APSLEY	0	0	0	0	0
		HORSHAM DISTRICT	0	0	1	1	2
		NHILL/KANIVA	0	0	0	0	0
		STAWELL/ST ARNAUD	0	1	1	0	2
		WARRACKNABEAL DISTRICT	0	0	0	0	0
Hume	Benalla	BENALLA DISTRICT	1	0	0	0	1
		COBRAM	0	0	0	0	0
		MANSFIELD	0	0	0	0	0
		TUNGAMAH	0	0	0	0	0
		YARRAWONGA	0	0	0	0	0
	Seymour	ALEXANDRA DISTRICT	0	0	0	0	0
		BROADFORD DISTRICT	0	1	2	0	3
		NAGAMBIE	0	0	0	0	0
		SEYMOUR	1	0	1	1	3
		YEA	0	0	0	0	0
	Shepparton	MURCHISON	0	0	0	0	0
		NATHALIA DISTRICT	2	0	0	0	2
		SHEPPARTON DISTRICT	3	2	0	0	5
	Wangaratta	BEECHWORTH	0	0	0	0	0
		RUTHERGLEN	0	0	0	0	0
		WAHGUNYAH	0	0	0	0	0
		WANGARATTA/GLENROWAN	1	1	2	0	4
	Wodonga	BRIGHT	0	0	0	0	0
		CORRYONG	0	0	0	0	0
		MOUNT BEAUTY	0	0	0	0	0
		MYRTLEFORD	0	0	0	0	0
		TALLANGATTA	0	0	0	0	0
		WODONGA	2	4	1	0	7
Gippsland	Bairnsdale Housing	BAIRNSDALE DISTRICT	5	0	0	0	5
		LAKES ENTRANCE DISTRICT	0	0	0	0	0
		OMEO	0	0	0	0	0
		ORBOST	0	0	0	0	0
	Morwell Housing	CENTRAL LATROBE VALLEY	0	0	1	0	1
		FOSTER	0	0	0	0	0
		TOORA	0	0	0	0	0
		WEST GIPPSLAND	0	1	1	0	2
		WEST LATROBE VALLEY	0	0	0	0	0
		WEST SOUTH GIPPSLAND	0	0	0	0	0
	Sale Housing	HEYFIELD	0	0	0	0	0
		MAFFRA	0	0	0	0	0
		ROSEDALE	0	0	0	0	0
		WELLINGTON	0	0	0	1	1
		YARRAM	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total			390	332	350	161	1233

Housing: Greater Dandenong

2244. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,925

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Greater Dandenong

2245. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists;

and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Monash

2246. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

CITY OF MONASH*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,232

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Monash

2247. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Frankston

2248. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

CITY OF FRANKSTON*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,413

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Frankston

2249. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Kingston

2250. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

CITY OF KINGSTON*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,275

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Kingston

2251. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Glen Eira

2252. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

CITY OF GLEN EIRA*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	327

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Glen Eira

2253. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Hobsons Bay

2254. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

CITY OF HOBSONS BAY*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,032

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Hobsons Bay

2255. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Wyndham

2256. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

CITY OF WYNDHAM*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	610

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Wyndham

2257. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Greater Geelong

2258. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
CITY OF GREATER GEELONG*	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	3,332

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Greater Geelong

2259. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Greater Bendigo

2260. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO*	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,481

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Greater Bendigo

2261. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Yarra Ranges

2262. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

SHIRE OF YARRA RANGES*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	433

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Yarra Ranges

2263. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Knox

2264. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

CITY OF KNOX*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,067

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Knox

2265. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Banyule

2266. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

CITY OF BANYULE*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	2,029

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Banyule

2267. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Hume

2268. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

CITY OF HUME*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,853

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Hume

2269. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: La Trobe

2270. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

SHIRE OF LA TROBE*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	2,084

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: La Trobe

2271. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Manningham

2272. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

CITY OF MANNINGHAM*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	125

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Manningham

2273. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Stonnington

2274. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

CITY OF STONNINGTON*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,543

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Stonnington

2275. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Whittlesea

2276. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

CITY OF WHITTLESEA*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	491

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Whittlesea

2277. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Brimbank

2278. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

CITY OF BRIMBANK*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,272

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Brimbank

2279. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Ballarat

2280. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

CITY OF BALLARAT*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,728

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Ballarat

2281. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Maroondah

2282. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

CITY OF MAROONDAH*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	779

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Maroondah

2283. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Melbourne

2284. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

CITY OF MELBOURNE*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	2,580

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Melbourne

2285. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Bass Coast

2286. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

SHIRE OF BASS COAST*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	244

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Bass Coast

2287. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Nillumbik

2288. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

SHIRE OF NILLUMBIK*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	85

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Nillumbik

2289. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Swan Hill

2290. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

RURAL CITY OF SWAN HILL*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	445

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Swan Hill

2291. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Greater Shepparton

2292. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

CITY OF GREATER SHEPPARTON*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,161

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Greater Shepparton

2293. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Wangaratta

2294. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

RURAL CITY OF WANGARATTA*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	514

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Wangaratta

2295. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Mildura

2296. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

RURAL CITY OF MILDURA*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	945

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Mildura

2297. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Horsham

2298. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
RURAL CITY OF HORSHAM*	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	424

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Horsham

2299. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Boroondara

2300. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
CITY OF BOROONDARA*	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	661

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Boroondara

2301. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Cardinia

2302. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

SHIRE OF CARDINIA*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	236

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Cardinia

2303. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Darebin

2304. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

CITY OF DAREBIN*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	3,004

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Darebin

2305. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Port Phillip

2306. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

CITY OF PORT PHILLIP*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	2,452

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Port Phillip

2307. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Maribyrnong

2308. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

CITY OF MARIBYRNONG*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,989

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Maribyrnong

2309. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Moonee Valley

2310. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
CITY OF MOONEE VALLEY*	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	3,155

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Moonee Valley

2311. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Melton

2312. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
SHIRE OF MELTON*	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	277

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Melton

2313. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Mitchell

2314. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

SHIRE OF MITCHELL*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	423

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Mitchell

2315. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Moreland

2316. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

CITY OF MORELAND*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,708

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Moreland

2317. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Mornington Peninsula

2318. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
SHIRE OF MORNINGTON PENINSULA*	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,106

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Mornington Peninsula

2319. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Wodonga

2320. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
RURAL CITY OF WODONGA*	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	1,065

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Wodonga

2321. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Housing: Yarra

2322. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What was the total number of public housing stock for each year since 1992 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

CITY OF YARRA*	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	4,384

* *New LGA boundaries were implemented on the Office of Housing's information systems in 1997, therefore time series by the new LGAs for 1992 to 1996 are unavailable.*

Housing: Yarra

2323. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): For each year since 1992, how many people were on — (i) waiting lists; and (ii) priority waiting lists, by type of accommodation, for public housing in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

Please refer to the answer provided to Question on Notice No. 2243.

Education: *Community News* advertisement

2324. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): Were State Government funds used to pay for the advertisement featuring a photograph of Mr B T C Finn, MP, which appeared in the Community News on 26 November 1996 and, if so, how much did the advertisement cost.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

No State Government funds were used to pay for this advertisement.

Agriculture and Resources: meat regulation infringements

2325. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): How many prosecutions have there been for infringement of Victorian regulations governing the production of meat for human consumption in domestic abattoirs since the Victorian Government resumed responsibility for domestic meat inspection in 1994.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to this question has been incorporated within the response in the Legislative Assembly to Question on Notice No. 340, tabled on September 16, 1997, a copy of which is attached.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

QUESTION 340

Mr Cameron - To ask the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture: How many prosecutions there have been for infringements of the regulations governing the production of meat for human consumption in domestic abattoirs since the Victorian Government resumed responsibility for domestic meat inspection in 1994.

ANSWER

The Honourable P McNamara MP - The answer is:

There has been one prosecution relating to a domestic abattoir (poultry processing facility) under the Meat Industry Act 1993.

Agriculture and Resources: bovine tuberculosis

2326. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): In what month and in what year was bovine tuberculosis last detected in a domestic abattoir in Victoria.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to this question has been incorporated within the response in the Legislative Assembly to Question on Notice No. 341, tabled on September 16, 1997, a copy of which is attached.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

QUESTION 341

Mr Cameron - To ask the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture: In what month and in what year bovine tuberculosis was last detected in a domestic abattoir in Victoria.

ANSWER

The Honourable P McNamara MP - The answer is:

The last cow condemned because of bovine tuberculosis in a domestic abattoir in Victoria was in August 1985.

Agriculture and Resources: Safeway sausage recall

2327. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): Was blue crayon or blue food dye found in sausages recalled by Safeway in April 1997 in accordance with the food recall notice published on 7 April 1997.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to this question has been incorporated within the response in the Legislative Assembly to Question on Notice No. 342, tabled on September 16, 1997, a copy of which is attached.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

QUESTION 342

Mr Cameron - To ask the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture, whether it was blue crayon, as reported on 6 April 1997 in the Sunday Herald Sun, or blue food dye, as reported in the Food Recall Notice published on 7 April 1997, which was found in sausages recalled by Safeway in April 1997.

ANSWER

The Honourable P McNamara MP - The answer is:

It was blue crayon found in the sausages recalled by Safeway in April 1997 as reported on 6 April 1997 in the Sunday Herald Sun. Blue crayon is used to mark containers for traceability purposes. This case involved blue crayon inadvertently falling into the alleged sausage mix. Once heated, the substance changes into a dye state. The Food Recall Notice published on 7 April 1997 referred to blue food dye to reassure food consumers that the substance was not harmful.

These issues are covered under the Food Act 1984 and national Food Standards Code which are administered by the Department of Human Services.

Agriculture and Resources: Safeway sausage recall

2328. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): Why was blue crayon or blue food dye present during the production by Chisholm Manufacturing of sausages which were subsequently recalled by Safeway on 7 April 1997.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to this question has been incorporated within the response in the Legislative Assembly to Question on Notice No. 343, tabled on September 16, 1997, a copy of which is attached.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

QUESTION 343

Mr Cameron - To ask the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture, to indicate why blue crayons or food dye was present during the production by Chisholm Manufacturing of sausages which were subsequently recalled by Safeway in April 1997.

ANSWER

The Honourable P McNamara MP - The answer is:

Blue crayon was reported found in sausages from Chisholm Manufacturing. The source of the actual crayon contaminating the raw material received at Chisholm Manufacturing has been investigated.

Blue crayons were used at Chisholm Manufacturing to mark the outside of product containers for traceability purposes. It was found that the blue crayon had inadvertently fallen into the sausage mix.

Agriculture and Resources: Safeway sausage recall

2329. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): Why are blue crayons or blue food dye used during the production of meat products.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to this question has been incorporated within the response in the Legislative Assembly to Question on Notice No. 344, tabled on September 16, 1997, a copy of which is attached.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

QUESTION 344

Mr Cameron - To ask the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture, to indicate why blue crayons or food dye are used during the production of meat products.

ANSWER

The Honourable P McNamara MP - The answer is:

In the food processing industry, blue crayons have been used to mark containers for traceability purposes.

Brilliant blue dye is used to stain pet meat under the Meat Industry Regulations 1994 to differentiate pet meat from meat for human consumption.

Solubility tests indicate whether meat is for pet consumption as the brilliant blue dye used is soluble while other blue dye is insoluble.

Agriculture and Resources: meat regulations

2330. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): What procedures are currently in place to ensure that meat which is intended for pet foods is not diverted to human consumption.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to this question has been incorporated within the response in the Legislative Assembly to Question on Notice No. 345, tabled on September 16, 1997, a copy of which is attached.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

QUESTION 345

Mr Cameron - To ask the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture, to indicate what procedures are currently in place to ensure that meat which is intended for pet food is not diverted to human consumption.

ANSWER

The Honourable P McNamara MP - The answer is:

There are a number of requirements under the Meat Industry Act 1993 and Meat Industry Regulations 1994 and in licence conditions for meat processing facilities licensed by the Victorian Meat Authority that require procedures to ensure that meat intended for pet food is not diverted for human consumption. These procedures are extensively documented and must be observed by licensed meat processing facilities during processing, which includes transport and storage. Procedures are in place for systematic auditing of statutory requirements and a total of 10,000 audits have been conducted since the Meat Industry Act 1993 was introduced in 1993. In addition, the Victorian Meat Authority has procedures for random and unannounced inspections.

Procedures for branding, identification, staining, separation, packaging, labeling and transport of pet food protects the public from pet meat being sold for human consumption.

Being an enforcement agency the Victorian Meat Authority also investigates reports of illegal activities and prosecutes offenders. In addition, officers authorised under the Food Act 1984 are also empowered to investigate alleged meat substitution activities.

Conservation and Land Management: East Gippsland logging

2331. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the sale of 800,000 M3 of logs from East Gippsland by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, what companies have been awarded contracts, what is the average royalty price over the next three years, and on what basis was the royalty negotiated.

ANSWER:

At this stage contract negotiations are continuing with four companies (Harris-Daishowa (Australia) Pty Ltd, Misal Technologies Pty Ltd, Midway Wood Products Pty Ltd and TJ Andrews Pty Ltd). Prices to be included in the contracts are therefore yet to be determined.

Conservation and Land Management: East Gippsland logging

2332. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the sale of logs from East Gippsland, is a royalty as low as 20 cents per tonne being considered in ongoing negotiations.

ANSWER:

Prices are yet to be determined, but a royalty as low as 20 cents per tonne is not being considered.

Conservation and Land Management: East Gippsland logging

2333. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the sale of logs from East Gippsland by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, will these contracts allow whole logs to be taken out of Victoria to interstate woodchippers.

ANSWER:

A proportion of the logs is likely to be sold to Harris-Daishowa (Australia) Pty Ltd which is an interstate woodchipper.

Conservation and Land Management: woodchipping

2334. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In each month for the last 12 months what quantity of whole logs has been taken out of Victoria to interstate woodchippers with no value adding in Victoria.

ANSWER:

The following volumes of residual logs were sold and transported interstate for processing as wood chips. The column headed "m^3" refers to cubic meters of residual logs.

Month	**m^3**
June 1996	2,094.75
July 1996	1,724.55
August 1996	1,716.93
September 1996	1,950.54
October 1996	3,184.79
November 1996	8,326.03
December 1996	5,702.50
January 1997	11,046.37
February 1997	11,956.47
March 1997	5,853.07
April 1997	6,504.62
May 1997	5,654.52
Total Volume	**65,715.14**

The total volume of 65,715.14m^3 transported interstate over the last 12 months is 3.6% of the total production of 1.84 million m^3 from Victoria's native State forests. There were no Victorian markets for the volume concerned, which arose as a consequence of harvesting for sawlogs.

Education: school charter review contracts

2335. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In relation to the Minister's undertaking to investigate claims that current or recently retired principals had been given commercial contracts to review School Charters, can the Minister give a guarantee that no currently serving principal has received one of these commercial contracts.

ANSWER:

No currently serving principals of government schools have been given contracts to carry out triennial reviews of schools under the School Review Process.

Treasurer: Intergraph contract

2337. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer): Was the Treasurer aware at the time he gave approval to the Intergraph contract, of the fact that if Intergraph was not awarded this contract the Government faced a $12 million compensation claim from Intergraph.

ANSWER:

The BEST contract was awarded to Intergraph on the basis of advice that it was the best tender.

Industry, Science and Technology: Point Lillias storage proposal

2339. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): How much will the proposed Pt Lillias Hazardous Chemical Facility cost.

ANSWER:

This Question was asked of the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, however, I am the responsible Minister. The answer is:

The Government is not proceeding with the Point Lillias project following a Ministerial Determination by the Minister for Planning and Local Government on the project's Environment Effects Statement.

Industry, Science and Technology: Point Lillias storage proposal

2340. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): How much will the Government contribute to the cost of the Pt Lillias hazardous chemical and petroleum storage project.

ANSWER:

This Question was asked of the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, however, I am the responsible Minister. The answer is:

See answer to Question 2339.

Industry, Science and Technology: Point Lillias storage proposal

2341. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the proposed Pt Lillias hazardous chemical and petroleum storage, who will pay for the following extra items not budgeted for — (i) Cheetham saltwater intake channel; (ii) silk screen dredge required by EPA; (iii) local environs management plan; (iv) internal floating roofs; (v) Bund construction to confirm to EPA standards; (vi) Bund sealing to conform to EPA standards; (vii) fire; (viii) road incident management system; (ix) habitat enhancement; (x) buffer zone; (xi) good neighbour policies; (xii) the cost of a clean-up after a spill; (xiii) compensation for Avalon Airport; and (xiv) compensation for Coode Island.

ANSWER:

This Question was asked of the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, however, I am the responsible Minister. The answer is:

See answer to Question 2339.

Industry, Science and Technology: Point Lillias storage proposal

2342. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the proposed Pt Lillias hazardous chemical and petroleum storage, what impact has the withdrawal of the infrastructure band aid had on the project.

ANSWER:

This Question was asked of the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, however, I am the responsible Minister. The answer is:

See answer to Question 2339.

Industry, Science and Technology: Point Lillias storage proposal

2343. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the proposed Pt Lillias hazardous chemical and petroleum storage, what is the impact of the withdrawal of the Commonwealth investment allowance on the costs of the project.

ANSWER:

This Question was asked of the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, however, I am the responsible Minister. The answer is:

See answer to Question 2339.

Industry, Science and Technology: Point Lillias storage proposal

2344. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the proposed Pt Lillias hazardous chemical and petroleum storage, what is the estimated cost of the ongoing use of the silk screen dredge.

ANSWER:

This Question was asked of the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, however, I am the responsible Minister. The answer is:

See answer to Question 2339.

Industry, Science and Technology: Point Lillias storage proposal

2345. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the proposed Pt Lillias hazardous chemical and petroleum storage, will community groups such as the Geelong Environment Council and Friends of Point Lillias have the opportunity to view the recommendations and make comment, if appropriate, before the Quantative Risk Assessment is finalised.

ANSWER:

This Question was asked of the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, however, I am the responsible Minister. The answer is:

See answer to Question 2339.

Industry, Science and Technology: Point Lillias storage proposal

2346. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the proposed Pt Lillias hazardous chemical and petroleum storage, has the Victorian Government considered a Chemical Reduction Strategy; if so, will a copy of the report on this option be made publicly available.

ANSWER:

This Question was asked of the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, however, I am the responsible Minister. The answer is:

See answer to Question 2339.

Industry, Science and Technology: Point Lillias storage proposal

2347. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the proposed Pt Lillias hazardous chemical and petroleum storage is there a document reporting on all sites considered for the Hazardous Chemical & Petroleum Storage Facility which recommends Pt Lillias; if so, is it publicly available or will be made available.

ANSWER:

This Question was asked of the Minister for Conservation and Land Management, however, I am the responsible Minister. The answer is:

See answer to Question 2339.

Health: ambulance service contracts

2348. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: When did the Honourable M T Tehan, MP, while she was Minister for Health first know of irregularities or breaches of proper practice in the handing out of contracts by the Ambulance Service.

ANSWER:

I am not able to respond for the previous Minister for Health.

Gaming: Crown Casino

2351. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Gaming: Given that some media interests currently have active shareholdings in both Crown Casino and the Sydney Harbour Casino, does the Government have a policy in relation to the issue, and has the Minister received any briefing papers or such documents on the issue; if so, will he make such documents available.

ANSWER:

I am informed that

(i) section 9(2) of the *Casino Control Act* 1991, which was assented to on 25 June 1991, specifies the matters that the Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority must consider in determining whether an applicant and each of its associates is a suitable person to be concerned in or associated with the management and operation of a casino.

(ii) persons with media interests, who also own shares in both the Crown and Sydney Harbour Casinos, would not automatically be regarded as "associates".

(iii) for any person who owns shares in Crown Limited to be considered as an "associate", the Authority is required to determine whether that person, by virtue of that ownership, is able or will be able to exercise significant influence over the management or operation of the casino.

(iv) the legislation governing the operation of the Casino was introduced by the Labor Government in 1991 and this Government is satisfied with the legislation relating to the definition and approval process of "associates" of the Casino Operator.

(v) I have not received any briefing papers or other such documents on the issue of persons with media interests having shareholdings in the Casino Operator.

Gaming: Crown Casino

2352. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): Is it proposed to hold any public inquiry into the proposed $350 million expansion of Crown Casino, as reported in The Australian and the Australian Financial Review on 7 March 1997; if not, why.

ANSWER:

Under the terms of the amended Casino (Management Agreement) Act 1993, Crown Limited is required to construct a 1,000 seat Lyric Theatre and the Southern Tower of the Hotel.

Construction of these two buildings is expected to commence early in 1998 and be completed by the end of 1999.

Approval of these developments will be in accordance with the provisions of the Melbourne Planning Scheme.

Agriculture and Resources: water industry privatisation

2353. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): Has the Minister had any briefing note, discussion paper, or similar document presented to him on the issue of involving the private sector in Victoria's water industry; if so, what are the details, indicating when they were received and from whom.

ANSWER:

Date Received	From Whom	Document Type	Summary of Details
11 June 1997	Mick Bourke Chief Executive, Coliban Water	Letter	Proposals by Coliban Water to investigate applying the BOOT process for infrastructure development and service improvement.
17 March 1997	Department of Natural Resources and Environment	Briefing Note	Update of previous advice of investigations into the proposals for private sector investment via BOO or BOOT schemes for Central Highlands Water.
24 December 1996	Department of Natural Resources and Environment	Briefing Note	Early advice of investigations into proposals to involve private sector investment via BOO or BOOT schemes for Central Highlands Water.
June 1994	Department of Treasury and Finance	Policy Document - Infrastructure Investment Policy for Victoria	These published guidelines are not specific to the water sector, but establish a framework within which the public sector will seek and develop project opportunities with the private sector. Policy is to assist Victorian Government agencies and private proponents seeking investment in State infrastructure facilities and services.

Notes: (1) BOO is acronym for Build, Own and Operate.
(2) BOOT is acronym for Build, Own, Operate and Transfer.

Agriculture and Resources: water relief grants

2354. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): Will the water relief grants now only available in Melbourne be extended to all Victorians.

ANSWER:

Consideration of extending the water rates and charges relief grant scheme beyond Melbourne is part of an overall concessions review being undertaken by the Government.

Water relief grants are being considered within the context of the overall provision of grants and concessions in Victoria. Further advice will be available when the review has been finalised and considered by the Government.

Education: former regional general manager

2355. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): Why was Mr Steve Macpherson dismissed from his position as General Manager of the North West Region and did this dismissal occurr on the personal instructions of the Minister.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Mr Macpherson was appointed as General Manager (Schools) North West Metropolitan Region on a three year performance contract from 6 March 1994.

Following a restructure of the Office of Schools late in 1996 a new regional structure was developed with new responsibilities for General Managers (Schools). Four metropolitan regions were created and the General Manager (Schools) positions redefined to include both regional and central office management responsibilities.

All new General Manager (Schools) positions were advertised on 29 October 1996 with the former incumbents eligible to apply.

The selection process for the new positions was carried out by the Director of Schools assisted by a selection panel. Mr Macpherson was not appointed to any of the new positions.

His former contract expired on 5 March 1997 and under the terms of that contract Mr Macpherson exercised his right of return to a public service position at a lower salary level.

Education: Berendale Special School

2356. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): In relation to complaints initiated by parents of students of Berendale Special School, based on advice from the Equal Opportunity Commission that the Government's 18+ program may breach sections 6, 8, 9, 37, 42 and 102 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1995, will he immediately undertake a review of this policy.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

As the matter is now the subject of legal proceedings, it is inappropriate to comment on the merits of the case or other aspects of the matter.

Health: outlays

2357. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What are the actual current outlays in the Department of Human Services for each of the financial years from 1991-92 to 1996-97 (to date) on — (i) acute care; (ii) ambulance; (iii) mental health; (iv) aged care; (v) community health; (vi) dental health; (vii) drug and alcohol services; and (viii) concessions to pensioners and beneficiaries.

ANSWER:

Due to the significant restructuring of the Department of Human Services since 1991-1992, program titles and components have changed.

Information on departmental and program outlays is contained in the Budget Papers and Departmental Annual Reports for the relevant years.

Health: outlays

2358. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What are the outlays made by the Department of Human Services for each of the financial years from 1991-92 to 1996-97 (to date) and what are current outlay estimates for 1997-98 in respect of the following areas of disability services — (i) accommodation support; (ii) client and family support and community participation; (iii) community access; (iv) system redevelopment; and (v) Aboriginal services.

ANSWER:

Due to the significant restructuring of the Department of Human Services since 1991-1992, program titles and components have changed.

Information on departmental and program outlays is contained in the Budget Papers and Departmental Annual Reports for the relevant years.

Health: outlays

2359. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): What were the outlays made by the Department of Human Services for each of the financial years from 1991-92 to 1996-97 (to date) and what are current outlay estimates for 1997-98 in respect of — (i) protective services; (ii) placement and support; (iii) juvenile justice; (iv) maternal and child health; (v) family support; (vi) early intervention; (vii) child-care; (viii) youth affairs; and (ix) pre-schools.

ANSWER:

Due to the significant restructuring of the Department of Human Services since 1991-1992, program titles and components have changed.

Information on departmental and program outlays is contained in the Budget Papers and Departmental Annual Reports for the relevant years.

Health: outlays

2360. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What were the outlays made by the Department of Human Services for each of the financial years from 1991-92 to 1996-97 (to date) and what are the current outlay estimates for 1997-98 in respect of — (i) protection and prevention; and (ii) health enhancement/development.

ANSWER:

Due to the significant restructuring of the Department of Human Services since 1991-1992, program titles and components have changed.

Information on departmental and program outlays is contained in the Budget Papers and Departmental Annual Reports for the relevant years.

Roads and Ports: executive payments

2361. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What remuneration and expenses were paid in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively, to the — (i) Chief Executive, Roads Corporation; (ii) Chairperson, Roads Corporation Board; (iii) General Manager, Roads and Ports; (iv) President, Marine Board of Victoria; (v) Chairperson, Street Lighting Committee; (vi) Chairperson, State Boating Council; (vii) Chairperson, Truck Operations Committee; and (viii) Chairperson, Victorian Road Freight Advisory Council.

ANSWER:

Position	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Chief Executive, Roads Corporation	122,761	159,267	164,311	172,853
Chairperson, Roads Corporation Board	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
General Manager, Roads and Ports	70,362	70,362	82,576	82,682
President, Marine Board of Victoria	69,251	69,848	71,212	68,731
Chairperson, Street Lighting Committee	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Chairperson, State Boating Council	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Position	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Chairperson, Truck Operations Committee	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Chairperson, Victorian Road Freight Advisory Council	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Roads and Ports: caravans

2362. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many new caravans were registered in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

NEW CARAVANS REGISTERED	
Year	**No.**
1993	3556
1994	3224
1995	3394
1996	3910

Roads and Ports: B-doubles

2363. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many new trucks approved to haul B-double trailers were registered in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

TRUCKS APPROVED FOR B-DOUBLE TRAILERS	
Year	**No.**
1993	20
1994	35
1995	35
1996	179

Roads and Ports: trucks

2364. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many new trucks were registered in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

NEW TRUCKS	
Year	**No.**
1993	6147
1994	6336
1995	6595
1996	5938

Roads and Ports: motor cars

2365. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many new motor cars were registered in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

NEW MOTOR CARS (SEDANS) REGISTERED	
Year	**No.**
1993	158829
1994	174334
1995	190656
1996	199193

Roads and Ports: driver licences

2366. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many persons in each licence catergory were — (i) suspended; and (ii) disqualified, in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

SUSPENDED/CANCELLED/DISQUALIFIED BY LICENCE CATEGORY FULL/PROBATIONARY				
	MOTOR CAR		MOTOR CYCLE	
Year	**Suspended**	**Cancelled/ Disqualified**	**Suspended**	**Cancelled/ Disqualified**
1993	26886	13507	2652	1202
1994	27258	13184	2727	1105
1995	22292	12629	2329	1104
1996	26085	12507	2722	1053
PERMITS				
	MOTOR CAR		MOTOR CYCLE	
Year	**Suspended**	**Cancelled/ Disqualified**	**Suspended**	**Cancelled/ Disqualified**
1993	441	1168	535	1588
1994	417	1218	521	1612
1995	302	1176	347	1317
1996	340	1086	445	1166

Roads and Ports: driver licences

2367. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many persons were granted licences in each category in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

FULL/PROBATIONARY/PERMIT LICENCE CATEGORIES			
MOTOR CAR			
Year	**Full**	**Probationary**	**Permit**
1993	19598	108585	82573
1994	20566	116674	79533
1995	24118	117829	80080
1996	27210	122892	83877
FULL/PROBATIONARY/PERMIT LICENCE CATEGORIES			
MOTOR CYCLE			
Year	**Full**	**Probationary**	**Permit**
1993	7400	3329	14460
1994	7332	3259	14804
1995	8497	3392	15295
1996	9154	3856	14653

Roads and Ports: black spots

2368. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In respect of works undertaken in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively, at designated "Black Spot" locations, what levels of funding were derived from federal and state sources, respectively.

ANSWER:

Blackspot/Blacklength Funding (1993/94 - 1996/97)				
Source of Funds	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97
State	$2.9m	$1.54m	$2.31m	$4.46m
*TAC (State)	$38.4m	$5.0m	$5.0m	Nil
Federal	$5.9m	Nil	Nil	$8.2m
Totals	$47.2m	$6.54m	$7.31m	$12.66m

*TAC - Transport Accident Commission

Roads and Ports: rail crossings

2369. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: How many road/rail crossings in 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, respectively, were — (i) controlled by boom gates; (ii) controlled by other electronic signalling; and (iii) not supported by boom gates or electronic signalling.

ANSWER:

(i) The total number of road/rail crossings controlled by boom gates for the years:
1993 265
1994 266
1995 266
1996 267

(ii) The total number of road/rail crossings controlled by other electronic signalling for the years:
1993 478
1994 476
1995 477
1996 485

(iii) The total number of road/rail crossings not controlled by boom gates or electronic signalling for the years:

Date	Country		Metropolitan		Overall Total
	Operating Line	Non-Operating Line	Operating Line	Non-Operating Line	
1993	1498	3	8	7	1526
1994	1497	13	8	7	1525
1995	1445	66	7	7	1525
1996	1419	84	3	11	1517

Education: special appropriations

2370. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the payments that are included as part of "Special Appropriation" for the Department of Education.

(b) What is the difference in the level of payments made under this category in 1996-97 and 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

(a) The Special Appropriation funding provided to the Department of Education relates to workers' compensation payments for volunteers injured whilst working in government schools. (In addition to this amount the Department of Education, along with other departments, has access to Special Appropriation funding provided to the Department of Justice for settlement of personal injury and property claims against the Department).

(b) The Special Appropriation budget for the Department of Education has increased from $180,000 in 1996-97 to $250,000 in 1997-98. The level of payments can vary significantly each year. The 1997-98 budget figure represents the best estimate of likely payments having regard to known claims on hand and previous years' costs.

Education: special appropriations

2371. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports:

(a) Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the payments that are included as part of "Special Appropriation" for the Department of Infrastructure.

(b) What is the difference in the level of payments made under this category in 1996-97 and 1997-98.

ANSWER:

(a) Provision for payments to be made under "Special Appropriations" in 1996-97 is as follows:

	$
Planning Schemes- Panels Act No 6849, Sec 28	695,000
Marine Board - Act No 52/1988	85,000*
Business Franchise (Petroleum Products)	
Better Roads Victoria	177, 400,000
TOTAL	178,180,000

(b) Payments budgeted to be made in 1997/98 under this category are as follows:

	$
Planning Schemes- Panels Act No 6849, Sec 28	715,000
Marine Board - Act No 52/1988	87,000*
Business Franchise (Petroleum Products)	
Better Roads Victoria	185,000,000**
TOTAL	185,802,000

* This amount is reimbursed to members of the Marine Board for their attendance at Board meetings.

** In 1997-98, the allocation from petroleum franchise fees to the Better Roads Victoria Fund is to be set at $185m. The Better Roads Fund was set up by this Government to maintain and improve rural and Metropolitan roads and is a way of redirecting charges made on motorists, directly back into the road system.

From 1 July 1998 the amount to be directed to Better Roads funding will be determined as a fixed proportion of franchise fee collections in the previous financial year. The fixed proportion is to be set at 45 per cent in respect of funding from 1998-99.

Health: special appropriations

2372. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health:

(a) Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the payments that are included as part of "Special Appropriation" for the Department of Human Services.

(b) What is the difference in the level of payments made under this category in 1996-97 and 1997-98.

ANSWER:

(a) The contribution to the Budget of the Department of Human Services from Special Appropriations is as follows:

	Actual 1996/97 $'000	Estimate 1997/98 $'000	Variance $'000
Totaliser Act No. 6353, Section 103			
Contribution to Hospitals and Charities Fund	114,030	113,600	(430)
Tattersalls Consultation Act No. 6390			
Contribution to Hospitals and Charities Fund	256,335	266,622	10,287
Contribution to Mental Hospital	54,492	53,572	(914)

	Actual 1996/97 $'000	Estimate 1997/98 $'000	Variance $'000
Casino Control Act No. 47 Contribution to Hospitals and Charities Fund	5,116	7,300	2,184
Club Keno Act No. 56 Contribution to Hospitals and Charities Fund	3,360	2,600	(760)
Gaming Machine Control Act No. 53 Contribution to Hospitals and Charities Fund	487,399	518,064	30,666
Gaming and Betting Act No. 37 Contribution to Hospitals and Charities Fund	387	-	(387)
On passing of Commonwealth funds received pursuant to *Section 10 of the Financial Management Act 1994*	230	-	230
Total Special Appropriations	921,348	961,764	40,416

(b) The above revenue is paid to the Hospitals and Charities Fund and the Mental Hospitals Fund by the Department of Treasury and Finance. The level of receipts under the Act identified above is based on estimates provided by the relevant authorities to the Department of Treasury and Finance. This Department is not involved in the preparation of the estimates.

The Department of Human Services receives its funding by way of an approved budget. Funds made available by way of special appropriations is a funding source. Increases and decreases against estimates do not generally impact on the Department's budget as other funding sources eg annual appropriations, will be adjusted to reflect these variances.

Education: education, planning and coordination service allocations

2373. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the allocation of the program previously known as "Education and Planning and Coordination Services" across each of the 1997-98 output groups.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The 1997-98 budget for the former Education Planning and Coordination Services Program has been allocated to the Department of Education's output groups as follows:

Output Group	**1997/98 Current Appropriation Budget**		**1997/98 Capital Appropriation Budget**	
	%	$ million	%	$ million
011 School Education Services	87.0	95.8	88.9	20.1
012 Vocational Education and Training Services	5.8	6.3	9.3	2.1
013 Adult, Community and Further Education Services	1.4	1.5	0.9	0.2
014 Higher Education Services	5.8	6.4	0.9	0.2
Total	100.0	110.0	100.0	22.6

Education: capital charge increase

2374. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What is the reason for the expected increase in the capital charge for the Department of Education between 1996-97 and 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The capital charge was introduced in 1994-95. It is calculated on the basis of 8% of a department's cumulative adjusted gross capital outlays since 1994-95 less proceeds from asset sales.

As the capital charge is calculated on a cumulative basis, the charge increases each year. This explains the increase in the Department of Education's capital charge from $31,463,000 in 1996-97 to $41,799,000 in 1997-98.

Departments are fully funded for the capital charge.

Transport: capital charge increase

2375. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What is the reason for the expected increase in the capital charge for the Public Transport Corporation between 1996-97 and 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The increase in the charge for the Public Transport Corporation in 1997-98 reflects the charging methodology applied by Treasury and Finance, which is calculated on a cumulative basis. It shows the cost of capital and is a method of directly comparing all costs incurred by the government sector with those of the private sector.

In addition, new projects worth $84.1m for the year are to be commenced and this will also have the effect of increasing the charge. The new capital works are detailed in page 144 of Budget Paper No.3.

Industry, Science and Technology: Investment Attraction program

2376. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology:

(a) What are the names of the companies that received funding under the "Investment Attraction" program.

(b) What are the names of the companies that received payroll tax concessions under the "Investment Attraction" program.

ANSWER:

(a) The names of the companies that received industry financial assistance in 1994/95 and 1995/96 are provided in the 1995/96 Annual Report of the Department of State Development. For the 1996/97 year the names of the companies will be published in the forthcoming Annual Report of the Department for that year.

(b) The Department does not provide payroll tax concessions.

Industry, Science and Technology: reducing impediments and improving regulations

2377. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the expenditure on output groups

previously known in the 1996-97 Budget as — (i) reducing impediments; and (ii) improving regulations.

ANSWER:

OUTPUT GROUPS **Period Ending: 30 June 97** **% Year Elapsed: 100%**	**0643 - Reducing Impediments** **YTD Actual**	**0644 - Improving Regulations** **YTD Actual**
	$'000	$'000
Expenses		
Direct Costs		
Employee Costs	1,481	5,561
Supplies & Services	1,656	3,809
Grants, Subsidies & Transfer Payments	184	3,062
Depreciation & Amortisation	-	-
Total	**3,321**	**12,432**

Education: investment proposals

2378. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date (ie. projects for 1996/97 capital budget). Accordingly the information requested cannot be supplied.

Health: investment proposals

2379. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy & Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date (ie projects for 1996/97 capital budget). Accordingly, the information requested cannot be supplied.

Youth and Community Services: investment proposals

2380. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): Will the Minister provide a list of all investment

proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy & Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date (ie projects for 1996/97 capital budget). Accordingly, the information requested cannot be supplied.

Transport: investment proposals

2381. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date, (ie projects for 1996-97 capital budget). Accordingly the information requested cannot be supplied.

Roads and Ports: investment proposals

2382. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date, (ie projects for 1996-97 capital budget). Accordingly the information requested cannot be supplied.

Planning and Local Government: investment proposals

2383. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date, (ie projects for 1996-97 capital budget). Accordingly the information requested cannot be supplied.

Police and Emergency Services: investment proposals

2384. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): Will the Minister provide a list of all

investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to the Honourable Member's question is:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy & Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date (ie. projects for 1996/97 capital budget). Accordingly the information requested cannot be supplied. Housing: investment proposals

Housing: investment proposals

2387. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to her portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance investment evaluation policy and guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the guidelines before this date. Under the guidelines, projects under $5 million are not required to be submitted to Department of Treasury and Finance. In addition, the funding arrangements associated with the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement do not require that individual projects be submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance for approval. No projects have been submitted for 1997-98.

Attorney-General: investment proposals

2388. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): Will the Attorney-General provide a list of all investment proposals relating to each of her portfolio responsibilities in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to the Honourable Member's question is:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date, (ie projects for 1996-97 capital budget). Accordingly the information requested cannot be supplied.

Agriculture and Resources: investment proposals

2390. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture and Resources): Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date, (ie projects for 1996-97 capital budget). Accordingly the information requested cannot be supplied.

Industry, Science and Technology: investment proposals

2391. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date, (ie projects for 1996-97 capital budget). Accordingly the information requested cannot be supplied.

Conservation and Land Management: investment proposals

2394. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to her portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date, (ie projects for 1996-97 capital budget). Accordingly the information requested cannot be supplied.

Police and Emergency Services: Victoria Police

2395. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): In relation to each year since 1990:

(a) How many Police Officers were employed by the Victoria Police.

(b) What was the operational strength of the force.

(c) How many employees were employed pursuant to the Public Sector Management Act or its antecedent.

(d) What was the operational strength of the force by region.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in response to the Honourable Member's question is:

(a) Number of Police Officers

Number of Police and Recruits in Training 1990 - 1997

	30-Jun-90	30-Jun-91	30-Jun-92	30-Jun-93	30-Jun-94	30-Jun-95	30-Jun-96	30-Jun-97
Total Police	9,948	9,957	9,958	9,954	10,120	10,278	10,457	10,225

(b) The operational strength of the Force

The table below shows the operational strength of the Force:

Number of Operational Police including Recruits in Training 1992-1997

	Sep-92	30-Jun-95	30-Jun-96	30-Jun-97
Total Operational Police	8,110	8,859	9,103	8,839

(c) Number of staff employed pursuant to the Public Sector Management Act or its antecedent

Number of staff 1990 - 1997

	30-Jun-90	30-Jun-91	30-Jun-92	30-Jun-93	30-Jun-94	30-Jun-95	30-Jun-96	30-Jun-97
Employees	1,758	1,692	1,618	1,736	1,742	1,840	1,853	1,892

(d) The operational strength of the Force by region

Operational Strength by Police District 1992 - 1997*

	Sep-92	30-Jun-95	30-Jun-96	30-Jun-97
A - Melbourne♣	784	729	761	664
B - Prahran	424	337	378	384
C - Moorabbin	506	462	485	484
D - Frankston	459	455	467	451
E - Dandenong	315	408	419	405
F – Knox	418	440	466	482
G - Nunawading	511	474	496	493
H - Heidelberg	484	518	532	540
I – Broadmeadows	627	609	607	624
J – Altona North	474	502	515	499
K - Geelong	279	294	293	299
L - Warrnambool	240	229	245	244
M - Ballarat	270	303	315	311
N - Mildura	158	177	180	182
O - Bendigo	374	409	399	406
P - Wangaratta	319	349	346	357
Q - Morwell	336	393	389	393
Transit	133	227	225	224
Ops Support	-	150	150	152
Ops Central	26	34	45	85
Total	**7,137**	**7,499**	**7,713**	**7,679**

* Excludes recruits in training and non-regionalised operational police in Ethical Standards Dept, Crime Dept & Traffic Operations Dept.

♣ Probationary police officers are allocated to A District initially. At present there is a reduction in the number of probationary police officers.

Since 1992, there has been a major redeployment of sworn police officers from non-operational areas, particularly administrative areas, to operational duties, as a result of a number of initiatives including the outsourcing of non-core police work, including D24. At the same time, there has been a significant increase in the number of public sector staff employed pursuant to the Public Sector Management Act.

Corrections: Metropolitan Corrections Centre, Coburg

2397. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): Were inmates at the Metropolitan Corrections Centre at Coburg told they could only have additional family visits over Christmas 1996 if they paid $20 per hour for the guard.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

Prisoners at the Coburg Prisons Complex were not informed that they would have to bear the cost of staff wages if they wished to have additional family visits over the period of Christmas 1996.

CORE - The Public Correctional Enterprise inform me that the only event at that location close to that period for which prisoners were asked to contribute money was a family barbecue to commemorate the closure of the Drug Treatment Unit. Management and prisoners of the Unit agreed that prisoners would pay the cost of the barbecue meat for their family members. This amounted to $2.10 for each prisoner who had family members joining them for the barbecue.

Corrections: Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre

2398. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): How many fire evacuation drills have been conducted at the Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre since it opened and on what dates.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

The Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre (MWCC) was reviewed extensively for fire preparedness as part of the commissioning tests administered by the New Prisons Project. During the initial training at the time of commissioning the MWCC all staff undertook a joint exercise with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade to ascertain the effectiveness of MWCC staff in responding to a fire and emergency. Since the prison opened it has been working with the Country Fire Authority regarding fire procedures.

The CFA recently conducted a Post Occupancy Review of the centre and its procedures to evaluate the management and review systems in place to prevent and minimise the effects of fire. The CFA and MWCC management are currently making arrangements for regular drills to be conducted with the CFA present in order to continually assess, and if necessary improve upon, fire preparedness.

It should be noted that one of the advantages of having a new facility is that the new buildings incorporate modern safety standards. The consortium constructing the facility was required under its contract to include a comprehensive fire prevention system.

Corrections: Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre

2399. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections):

(a) Have staff at the Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre at Deer Park had refresher courses or ongoing training in disarming prisoners or in the use of breathing apparatus; if so, what are the details.

(b) During an armed siege on or around 3 February 1997, did a number of staff need to be assisted in fitting their breathing apparatus.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

During the initial training at the time of commissioning the Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre (MWCC) all staff undertook certificated training in Weaponless Control and the use of Breathing Apparatus. This training was undertaken by the Security and Emergency Services Group attached to the Department of Justice.

Training at the MWCC is ongoing. Scheduled training sessions are held weekly.

On 21 May 1997 a full day was dedicated to refresher training in the use of Breathing Apparatus. This was provided by a CFA trained Officer. Refresher training in Weaponless Control is also scheduled as part of the ongoing training program.

On 2 February 1997 two prisoners refused to leave their unit when requested and incited other prisoners to stay in the unit with them. The Security and Emergency Services Group were contacted for assistance. Two MWCC officers wore breathing apparatus for approximately ten minutes during the incident as a precaution against fire. I am advised that these two officers had no problems fitting the breathing apparatus, and that one of the officers concerned is a qualified fire fighter who holds the position of Captain in the CFA.

Corrections: Mr Peter Hannay

2400. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): Was Mr Peter Hannay moved from operational duties at the Coburg Prison complex pending an investigation of allegations of misappropriation and unauthorised use of departmental vehicles and staff to move furniture for non-official purposes; if so, when were those investigations completed.

ANSWER:

I am advised that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

In 1991 there were circumstances at the Coburg Prison Complex that gave rise to concern about the management of the Pentridge Prison and this led to the transfer of a Governor from the Pentridge Prison to the Head Office of the then Office of Corrections.

I am advised that the transfer was effected in July 1991 after the completion of an investigation by the then Office of Corrections.

Corrections: Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre

2401. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): Is the Minister aware of any instances relating to false reporting of incidents involving drugs and assaults as lesser incidents to the Office of Corrections Commissioner by management at the Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre and; if so, what are the details of each such incident.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

Prison providers are required to notify the Commissioner, Correctional Services when a serious incident occurs. They are also required to report daily and monthly on incidents and events. The Commissioner oversees a comprehensive monitoring program to ensure the validity of this information, including: near full time on site presence and observation since the facility commenced operations; systematic on site reviews of services to determine compliance with legislation and contracts; analysis of provider reports; and monitoring of the prison's progress against required service delivery outcomes.

As part of the monitoring program, the Commissioner's office extensively investigated the allegations of under-reporting. The review examined 135 records, including all records entered as "acting contrary to the good order and security" of the prison between 22 August 1996 and 28 February 1997.

The review found that there is not widespread mis-reporting or under-reporting of incidents. Well under half of the errors related to assaults, and one related to drugs. The errors appeared to be due to the fact that there was initially not a shared understanding of the meaning of all of the codes, which had been developed to meet the operational needs of the public provider. The Commissioner's office has implemented a process to streamline and clarify code usage by all providers.

Corrections: transport and escort services

2402. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): Was the contract for the transport and escort of prisoners for medical treatment tendered for; if not, who provided this service and by which means did this organisation come to assume this responsibility.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

Under the Prison Services Agreements in place with each prison provider, it is they who are responsible for providing escorts for medical treatment or assessment.

I presume the Honourable Member is referring to the contract for perimeter security and medical escorts at the Coburg Prisons Complex. I am informed by CORE - The Public Correctional Enterprise that the contract for perimeter security was tendered for, and an Agreement made between CORE and the Corrections Corporation of Australia on 3 December 1996. This Agreement was broadened in February 1997 to include medical escorts. This was done to allow prison staff to perform core prison duties designed to maintain a high level of operational efficiency during the critical decommissioning phase at the location.

Corrections: transport and escort services

2403. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): Is Corrections Corporation of Australia now responsible for the transport and escort of prisoners for medical treatment; if so, is the Corporation — (i) using two Government owned vehicles for this work; and (ii) compensating Victorian taxpayers for the use of these vehicles and paying for the petrol.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

Under the Prison Services Agreements in place with each prison provider, it is they who are responsible for providing escorts for medical treatment or assessment.

I presume the Honourable Member is referring to the contract for perimeter security and medical escorts at the Coburg Prisons Complex. The Corrections Corporation of Australia is responsible for this contract.

In relation to medical escorts, considerable savings have been made by allowing the contractor to use two existing government vehicles compared to the quote provided by the contractor for the cost of fitting out and running two vehicles themselves. Had the contractor provided these vehicles, the costs would have been passed on to government through a higher contract fee.

The use of government assets forms part of other agreements. In the corrections area, for example, contractors now use existing court facilities previously utilised by public prison staff, rather than providing separate, privately managed infrastructure. Arrangements for contracting out should be

designed to gain the maximum effectiveness and the best value for money. In some cases this may involve a combination of public and private facilities and assets.

Police and Emergency Services: KPMG firearm consultancy

2404. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): In relation to the Minister's decision to appoint KPMG to investigate allegations of widespread rorting, looting and mismanagement in the firearm buy-back scheme:

(a) What special expertise has KPMG in the gun industry and what special criminal investigative skills do they have to qualify them for this appointment.

(b) When is the report due for completion and will it be publicly released.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

KPMG were engaged in February 1997 to review the firearm compensation and surrender process, following a number of allegations being made.

I reported to the House on 22 April 1997, that there was no overpayment or maladministration in our surrender and compensation system. This statement to the House followed the receipt of the KPMG Report.

KPMG found no evidence of incorrect or inflated payment. Commonwealth guidelines had been closely followed and the average compensation payment was in line with national averages.

KPMG found no evidence to substantiate media speculation and allegations apart from those few cases previously identified by the Firearm Reform and Compensation Project, and subsequently reported to Victoria Police for investigation and necessary action.

KPMG is a highly respected accountancy and auditing firm with experience in a wide range of industries. Criminal investigatory skills are the domain of Victoria Police.

The report also dealt with a review of security arrangements in Collection Centres and due to security issues surrounding the subject matter of the report, I do not propose to release it at this time.

Police and Emergency Services: KPMG fire brigade consultancy

2405. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): What was the cost to Victorian taxpayers of the KPMG review of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

The cost of the KPMG review of the Emergency Services system of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade was $136,514.65. The cost was borne by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board from its regular budget.

Police and Emergency Services: KPMG fire brigade consultancy

2406. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): In relation to the KPMG review of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, and in particular its recommendation for privatisation of at least eight Metropolitan Fire Stations and a further reduction of at least 400 in the operational strength of the MFB:

(a) Has the Minister made any decisions based on this review.

(b) Will the Minister fully consult with the community before any decisions are made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

The answer to

(a) is "no";

(b) is "yes" - the Minister will ensure that the MFB consults with key stakeholders in any reorganisation of its service delivery strategy.

Corrections: Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre

2407. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): Is it the policy of the Public Correctional Enterprise that convicted criminals serving orders are not to be granted visitors' passes to prisons in Victoria; if not, what action has been taken to penalise and discipline management of the Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre over the visit of Peter Gibb to former prison officer Heather Parker following his release on 14 April 1997.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

Under the *Corrections Act* 1986 it is the Governor of a prison who has the power to make decisions relating to the banning of visits to prisoners by relatives or friends where the Governor "believes on reasonable grounds that the person's entry into the prison or visit to the prisoner might endanger the good order or security of the prison or the safety of the prisoners." There is no ban placed on any category of individual, such as convicted criminals serving orders. Decisions are taken in relation to the individual circumstances of each case.

While, under the Act, the Secretary may exercise any of the powers of a Governor of a prison, and therefore make decisions concerning visits, it is considered preferable that such decisions are made at the prison level.

The MWCC allowed Peter Gibb to visit at the MWCC on two occasions (15 and 16 March 1997) after his release from prison on 14 March 1997. The MWCC had allowed the visits after consideration of all the applicable criteria. However, they reviewed this decision and notified Heather Parker on the 27 March 1997 that visits would no longer be permitted with Peter Gibb.

The Commissioner, Correctional Services has asked the MWCC to review their criteria relating to visits.

Corrections: Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre

2408. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): Was the resignation of the General Manager of the Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre forced; if so, why.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

I am advised that the General Manager of the Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre resigned of his own accord. The Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre inform me that his resignation was in no way forced.

Women's Affairs: female representation on boards and committees

2409. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): What steps will the Minister take to ensure that there is a significant increase in female representation on department boards and committees over the next three years.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

As detailed in the March 1996 policy for women the Government is committed to increasing the representation of women on boards and committees. The Government is committed to ensure that its legislation, programs and policies take account of the diverse and changing needs, interests and skills of the women in Victoria and recognises that this can best be achieved by involving women in the relevant decision making processes at all levels.

Over the next twelve months a number of initiatives will be implemented to increase the number of women on boards and committees. These include changes to the Women's Register strategy, the release of an annual publication that will report on the strategic programs and achievements which affect women and the provision of twenty leadership bursaries to women from rural and remote Victoria.

A comprehensive evaluation and review of the Women's Register is close to completion. Options for changes to the Register are being considered and assessed. It is expected that the revised Register strategy, providing greater access and increased flexibility, will be operational by the end of 1997.

The *Two Year Action Plan for Women* (the Plan) is another initiative which will be implemented in 1997 that is designed, amongst other things, to increase the focus on the representation of women in public decision making roles.

The Plan will be based on four priority themes one of which is the promotion of women to decision making and leadership positions. Initiatives across Departments will be reported in the Plan and progress and achievements recorded in a status report that will be published at the end of each financial year.

In the March 1996 policy for women the Government announced that it would provide twenty bursaries for women from rural and remote Victoria to develop leadership skills enabling greater participation in public decision making roles. Applications have been received. The Minister for Agriculture and Resources and I will make an announcement shortly about the successful applicants.

Women's Affairs: female representation in management

2410. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to the representation of women in management in 1995-96, how does the Minister explain the 'departmental restructuring' that resulted in a decrease of female representation in management during 1995-96 in the Department of Human Services, Department of Premier and Cabinet and Department of State Development and what steps will the Minister take to increase the level of women at management level in government departments.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in response to the Honourable Member's question is:

As stated in the Government's March 1996 policy statement for women, the representation of women at all levels of public decision-making is important to ensure that government policy takes into account the needs and values of women.

The departmental restructuring by this Government following the 1996 election from eleven (11) to eight (8) has resulted in changes to the number of senior executive positions in all Departments. The restructuring rationalised the public sector in order to bring about economy of efficiencies by avoiding duplications within the public sector and to deliver a more streamlined service.

Because of the degree of restructuring within departments it is difficult to make direct comparisons between figures for women at the senior executive level over the years (that is, between 1995-96 and 1994-95). The Department of Human Services now incorporates the Department of Housing; the Department of Premier and Cabinet now incorporates Arts Victoria; while the Department of State Development is an amalgamation of sections of two previous departments (the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism and the Department of Business and Employment) with the incorporation of Multimedia Victoria.

It should be noted that while there has been an apparent decrease in the representation of women in senior management in these three departments, the representation of women at the senior executive level increased in the Departments of Education, Infrastructure, Justice, Natural Resources and Environment, and Treasury and Finance.

The net result was that the representation by gender amongst executive officer appointees across the public service in 1995/1996 remained at 22%. As I stated in my forward to the *Women's Budget 1996*, while it is pleasing to note there have been some incremental gains for women in management I regret that Victoria has not progressed more significantly in this respect.

Towards the end of 1997, the Government will introduce a *Two Year Action Plan for Women* which will include a section on the representation of women in public decision-making and leadership roles. Through this *Action Plan* a focus will be maintained on the representation of women at executive levels. Progress will be reported annually in a status report which will be published at the end of each financial year.

Women's Affairs: adult education

2411. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96 and adult education:

(a) What are the recommendations referred to on page 3 that were made by the Adult Community and Further Education Board regarding adult education in the community.

(b) What is the amount of funding allocated for each Adult or Community Education program.

(c) What programs are specific to women and their needs.

(d) What is the amount of funding allocated to programs that are specific to women and their needs.

(e) What is the amount of funding allocated to promote training or further education of Koori women and women from a non-English speaking background.

(f) What steps have been taken so far in developing a policy on general adult education as was referred to on page 4 and — (i) who will have input into developing this policy; (ii) during what time frame will this policy be formulated; and (iii) will additional funding be provided.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs, information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister representing the Minister responsible, in this case the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training.

Women's Affairs: small business training

2412. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to training for women in small business referred to on page 9 of the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96:

(a) What is the amount of funding allocated to the Office of Training and Further Education to develop a curriculum to meet the needs of women in small business.

(b) Who will the Office of Training and Further Education consult when developing this curriculum and, in developing such a curriculum, is the Office taking a pro-active role or is it responding to problems faced by women in small business.

(c) When is this curriculum due to be finalised.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs, information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister representing the Minister responsible, in this case the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training.

Women's Affairs: Healthy Families project

2413. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96, what amount of funding has been allocated to the Healthy Families Project referred to on page 12, and will the Government fund this beyond June 1997.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs, information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister representing the Minister responsible.

Women's Affairs: 'Health Status of Victorian Women'

2415. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to the report on the Health Status of Victorian Women referred to on page 24 of the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96:

(a) Who formulated the report.

(b) What were its terms of reference.

(c) Did the report invite public submissions.

(d) What are the recommendations of the report.

(e) What amount of funding will be allocated to achieve the recommendations outlined in the report.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs,

information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister responsible, in this case the Minister for Health.

Women's Affairs: sexual assault services

2416. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to Sexual Assault Services referred to on page 24 of the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96:

(a) What are the Standards of Practice for Sexual Assault Centres that have been developed.

(b) Who developed these standards.

(c) When will these standards be implemented.

(d) What amount of funding has been allocated to implement these standards.

(e) Is the funding from — (i) the Commonwealth Government; (ii) from the State Government; or (iii) from both.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs, information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister representing the Minister responsible, in this case the Minister for Community Services.

Women's Affairs: sexual assault services

2417. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to Sexual Assault Services for women from a non-English speaking background, what are the 'models of service' referred to on page 25 of the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96 that will improve sexual assault services for women from a non-English speaking background, and what additional funding has been allocated for this service.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs, information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister representing the Minister responsible, in this case the Minister for Community Services.

Women's Affairs: domestic violence outreach services

2418. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): In relation to outreach services for women escaping domestic violence:

(a) Has additional funding been allocated to expand outreach services.

(b) How many staff are employed at each outreach service.

(c) What is the salary range for outreach workers at each service.

(d) How many additional staff have been employed to specifically address the needs of women from a non-English speaking background.

(e) What are the terms and conditions of funding for outreach services.

ANSWER:

a) Since June 1994 recurrent funding of approximately $850,000 has been provided for an additional twenty-five outreach positions. The family violence initiatives arising from the 1996 election policy are also expected to boost the funding for family violence outreach services.

b) Domestic violence outreach funding is provided for six effective full time (EFT) staff in each metropolitan region and four EFT staff in each rural region. Each region varies in the way these staff are distributed according to regional needs.

c) The actual salary range is determined by agency management committees. The outreach services are funded to a standard salary of $30,445 plus oncost and operating costs per each EFT. This allows for an appropriate level of skill to address the needs of women and children escaping family violence.

d) All domestic violence outreach services have standards and policies in place to address the needs of women from a non- English speaking background. This may take the form of employing bi-lingual, bi-cultural staff, having good links and protocols with ethno-specific services and using the services of the Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service (IWDVS). IWDVS is a funded service which provides cultural and linguistic support to women in refuge and telephone information and support to immigrant women experiencing family violence. IWDVS has 9.5 EFT.

e) The domestic violence outreach services receive funding from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and as such are governed by the Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994, and the SAAP program guidelines.

Health: alcohol and drug programs for women

2419. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): In relation to alcohol and drug programs for women as referred to on page 26 of the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96:

(a) What are the 'new arrangements' for drug and alcohol services that have been agreed to.

(b) Where are the locations of the new community drug withdrawal units and which drug or alcohol centres have been closed or replaced.

(c) What amount of funding has been allocated to these new community drug withdrawal units.

(d) How many staff work at each unit.

(e) What is the salary range of staff at each unit.

(f) What are the terms and conditions of the funding.

(g) Will all recommendations from the Premier's Drug Advisory Council be implemented.

ANSWER:

This Question would have been more appropriately directed to me as the Minister for Health as these matters fall within my responsibility as Minister for Health. The response to the matters raised is as follows:

(a) The 1995-96 Victoria Women's Budget referred to the first phase of the Redevelopment of alcohol and drug services in Victoria. This involved redeploying resources made available by the closure of two government-run services towards new models of withdrawal, counselling and support.

The Redevelopment has been consolidated with the launch of *Victoria's Alcohol and Drug Treatment Services - The Framework for Service Delivery* in March 1997, which addressed gaps in the service system. Every component of Victoria's specialist drug treatment service system will be located in a way which is accessible to people throughout the State. This will ensure that all Victorians will be able to access services without experiencing barriers on the basis of location, age, cultural background or gender.

The range of available regional services now include residential, home-based, outpatient and rural withdrawal services; specialist methadone; residential rehabilitation; counselling, consultancy and continuing care; youth outreach; supported accommodation; peer support; and services for Koori people.

In addition, Statewide services will include a Youth Substance Abuse Service; ante and post-natal support; specialist family program; information and support services; training and research; and services for community-based offenders and persons newly released from prison.

In accordance with the key service requirements outlined in the Framework for Service Delivery, all services are required to facilitate child care arrangements and operate under age, gender and culturally sensitive protocols in relation to client care.

The Government gave a commitment under *Turning the Tide* to "fill the gaps" in the service system with funds of approximately $4 million on a recurrent basis. The whole service system, excluding those services which were already tendered during the initial redevelopment, has now been tendered.

(b) Community Residential Drug Withdrawal Units are operating in Dandenong, Box Hill, Moreland, St Vincent's Hospital in Fitzroy, Windana in St. Kilda and Footscray.

These Units replace services originally provided within two Government alcohol and drug services - Drug Services Victoria and Heatherton Hospital, which have been closed as part of the redevelopment of alcohol and drug services which commenced in 1993-94.

(c) The funding allocated in 1997/98 to each of these 12-bed Community Residential Drug Withdrawal Units is $780,000. This is an increase of 14.65% on the funding available in 1995/96.

(d) The funded agencies employ their own staff, so the Honourable Member should seek from individual agencies specific information regarding the number of staff employed by that agency. However, the Government would expect that on average, each 12-bed Community Residential Drug Withdrawal Unit would employ approximately 16 equivalent-full-time staff.

(e) The Government does not directly employ the staff of Community Residential Drug Withdrawal Units, thus information concerning staff salaries can only be obtained from the individual agencies. However the Government would expect that a Community Residential Drug Withdrawal Unit would employ a combination of welfare officers, registered nurses, alcohol and drug clinicians such as psychologists, administration and domestic staff.

(f) The terms and conditions of the funding provided to Community Residential Drug Withdrawal Units are the same as for all Funding and Service Agreements between my Department and hospitals or funded agencies.

Youth and Community Services: housing for women leaving refuges

2420. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): What steps have been taken, and what funding has been allocated to providing more medium term housing for women leaving refuges.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services has created a major new transitional housing program for homeless people including women and children escaping family violence. This is designed to significantly relieve the pressure on short term services such as women's refuges. It is also designed to expand the options available across Victoria, providing professional and timely housing services linked to community based support services.

Fifteen transitional housing managers (THM's) including a specialist women's service have been selected through public tender. All women's refuges will establish Inter-Agency Agreements with THMs regarding access for women and children escaping family violence.

The Minister of Housing has allocated $100 million over two years for the acquisition of new stock, which will almost double the number of transitional housing properties to about 2,000 by 1999.

In addition Women In Supportive Housing (WISH) have been contracted to conduct a joint research project for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program and the Housing Assistance Program on the support and housing needs of women escaping family violence.

Youth and Community Services: places for domestic violence victims

2421. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): How many places/beds can currently be supported for victims of domestic violence.

ANSWER:

There are eighty-one properties supported by family violence specific staff for women and children escaping family violence.

30 properties offer high security to women in significant danger from violent partners with capacity for approximately 107 women and children. 53 properties provide transitional accommodation with capacity for approximately 151 women and children.

In addition there are a wide variety of other supported accommodation facilities which support women with housing and other personal crises. Many of these women present with family violence issues.

Youth and Community Services: Supported Accommodation Assistance Program

2422. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): In relation to funding being allocated to Supported Accommodation Assistance Programme (SAAP):

(a) What is the total amount of grants given.

(b) What is the amount of Commonwealth Government funding.

(c) What is the amount of State Government funding.

ANSWER:

a) The total grant under the Commonwealth State SAAP Agreement for 1997/98 is $52.3 million.

b) The amount of Commonwealth Government funding is $28.35 million.

c) The amount of State Government funding is $23.9 million

Women's Affairs: Women in Supportive Housing

2423. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to Women in Supportive Housing (WISH), as referred to on page 36 of the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96:

(a) What is the amount of funding allocated to (WISH) to research and develop a proposal for a Women's Housing Association.

(b) What are the terms and conditions of the funding.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in response to the Honourable Member's question is:

The Office of Housing, through the Community Housing Group, funded Women in Supportive Housing (WISH) Inc. to research and develop a proposal for a Women's Housing Association.

The project was originally approved for funding of $46,700. WISH were offered funding on the standard terms and conditions for Office of Housing project funding, and a standard agreement was signed. A variation to the original funding of an additional $9,200 was subsequently approved, and a further standard funding agreement signed. Total funds advanced were $55,900.

WISH contracted Ecumenical Housing Inc to act as consultants to the project. A rationale and options paper was produced, followed by a proposed model paper in July 1996. An implementation plan was completed in August 1996. These three reports fulfilled the requirements of the project.

Women's Affairs: Trish's Place

2424. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to the review of the Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Centre as outlined on page 35 of the Victoria Women's Budget and the relocation of Trish's Place:

(a) Who is heading the review and what are its terms of reference.

(b) Did it involve submissions from community groups and other domestic violence services.

(c) What are the recommendations of the review.

(d) When will Trish's Place be relocated.

(e) What additional funding has been provided for the — (i) relocation of Trish's Place; and (ii) upgrade of the services which Trish's Place provides.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs, information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister representing the Minister responsible, in this case the Minister for Community Services.

Women's Affairs: Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre

2425. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96:

(a) What amount of funding was allocated for the Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre for training, telephone support and advice, and community education.

(b) What funding was allocated for staff of the centre.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs, information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister representing the Minister responsible, in this case the Minister for Community Services.

Women's Affairs: Court Network Intervention Order/Community Access program

2426. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96 and the Court Network Intervention Order/ Community Access Program referred to on page 42:

(a) What amount of funding was provided for this program.

(b) How many staff are employed by this program.

(c) What is the salary range of all staff employed.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs, information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister representing the Minister responsible, in this case is the Minister for Community Services.

Youth and Community Services: women's refuges

2427. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): In relation to women's refuges for victims of domestic violence:

(a) How many staff are employed at each refuge.

(b) What is the salary range of all the staff employed.

(c) How many refuges are funded and staffed for 24 hours.

(d) How many refuges are high security.

(e) How many people have utilized each refuge.

(f) What amount of funding is from the Commonwealth Government.

(g) What amount of funding is from the State Government.

(h) What are the terms and conditions of the funding.

ANSWER:

a) Each refuge is funded for five effective full time (EFT) staff.

b) Actual salary levels are determined by management committees. Services are funded salaries of $29,126 plus oncosts and operating for each EFT. This allows for an appropriate level of skill to address the needs of women and children escaping family violence.

c) Three refuges are funded and staffed 24 hours.

d) The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program funds twenty five high security refuges.

e) In the first six months of data collected in Victoria from the National Data Collection Agency for the period July - December 1996 women's refuges provided support to 1,557 women and 1,868 children.

f) The total SAAP grant for women's refuges is $6.05 million. The Commonwealth component of this, based on the Commonwealth State Agreement matching arrangements, is approximately $3.14 million.

g) The total SAAP grant for women's refuges is $6.05. The State component of this, based on the Commonwealth State Agreement matching arrangements, is approximately $2.9 million.

h) The women's refuges receive funding from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and as such are governed by the Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994, and the SAAP program guidelines.

Youth and Community Services: Men's Referral Service and Victorian Network for the Prevention of Male Family Violence

2428. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): In relation to domestic violence services, what funding was allocated to the Men's Referral Service and the Victorian Network for the Prevention of Male Family Violence.

ANSWER:

The 1997/98 funding allocation from the Family Violence Prevention and Support Program to the Men's Referral Service is $130,000 and to the Victorian Network for the Prevention of Male Family Violence is $50,000.

Women's Affairs: Family Violence Networks

2429. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96, what funding was allocated to the nine regional Family Violence Networks in 1995-96.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs, information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister representing the Minister responsible, in this case the Minister for Community Services.

Women's Affairs: Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Services

2430. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96, what level of funding was provided to the Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Services to produce multi-lingual information kits for women entering refuges from a non-English speaking background.

ANSWER:

The Women's Budget is an amalgamation of accounts from all Ministers providing a comprehensive statement of the policies and programs which have implications for the women of Victoria. Whilst the preparation of the document falls within the responsibilities of the Minister for Women's Affairs, information concerning specific programs referred in the budget does not. The Honourable Member may wish to refer her question to the Minister representing the Minister responsible, in this case the Minister for Community Services.

Youth and Community Services: programs for young women

2431. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): What programs did the Office of Youth Affairs fund that were relevant to young women and what was the allocation of funding for each specific program.

ANSWER:

The Office of Youth Affairs has been incorporated into the Department of Human Services in order to promote an integrated approach to youth services across the state.

The Youth Services Grants program 1997/98 allocated over $5million to one hundred and thirty organisations to promote young people's wellbeing and social health status by improving their participation in school, family and community activities that offer prevention and early intervention services. The target group is young people aged 10 to 25 years, with a particular focus on those aged 10 to 17 years.

The following organisations were funded for projects specific to the needs of young women:

Mission of St.James and St. John (Western Metropolitan Region) Centre based and outreach sexual assault counselling service to young women.	$15,000
St.Kilda Theos Youth Outreach (Southern Metropolitan Region) Outreach and intensive support to young women who are victims of sexual abuse or family breakdown.	$22,500
YWCA Victorian State Council (Statewide) YWCA of Victoria Project delivers training on family/ parenting, employment and leadership.	$60,000
Hume City Council Youth Services (Northern Metropolitan Region) Support and referral service to unemployed young women.	$47,500
YWCA Wonthaggi (Gippsland Region) Lifeskills, education and support program.	$22,658
Cambodian, Laos & Vietnamese Young Women's Accommodation Service (Northern Metropolitan Region) Vietnamese School Support Project - case work, family mediation, parent groups, community links to promote school retention.	$30,000
Gippsland Women's Health Service (Gippsland Region) Young Women's Health Educator to provide advocacy, information and advice.	$20,000

While the above projects total $217,658, it should be noted that young women are included in the target group for all funded projects.

Attorney-General: Project for Legal Action against Sexual Assault

2432. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): In relation to the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96 and the Project for Legal Action Against Sexual Assault referred to on page 72, the development of which was 'facilitated' by the Office of Women's Affairs as a new training program for providers of legal advice to victims of sexual assault delivered by Victoria Legal Aid:

(a) What amount of funding has been allocated to this project.

(b) Have any extra staff been employed at Victoria Legal Aid to cover this extra workload.

(c) What are the terms and conditions of funding.

(d) What amount of funding is Commonwealth funding.

(e) What amount of funding is State Government funding.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to the Honourable Member's question is:

The Project for Legal Action Against Sexual Assault (PLAASA) has recently been tendered. The successful tender is the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) who have undertaken the delivery of the training program.

In 1996 $69,000 was issued to the project with a further $75,000 per annum allocated. This has the potential for further extension subject to training needs.

No extra staff have been employed at Victoria Legal Aid specifically to assist with the project. The staffing involvement of Victoria Legal Aid in this project has been through administration of the tender process which was absorbed by current employees. The project is managed by the successful tenderer, CASA.

The terms and conditions of the funding for the project are bound by a standard tendering agreement.

The funding for this project is solely State Government funding. None of the funding has been provided by the Commonwealth Government.

Women's Affairs: strategy to address violence

2433. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): When will the Government finalise its development of a Government wide strategy to address violence against women as mentioned on page 82 of the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96, and what funding will be available to finance this strategy.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in response to the Honourable Member's question is:

In 1996 the Victorian Community Council Against Violence (appointed by the Attorney General to advise on community perspectives on violence) released a report entitled Violence Against Women An Integrated Response. On receipt of this report the Government asked that an Interdepartmental Committee be convened for a period of three years to develop recommendations on how an integrated response may be achieved, aiming to enhance the experience of victims in both the service support and justice systems and also improve effectiveness in responses to offenders. The Committee includes input from Police, Women's Affairs, Education, Human Services, Justice and Premier and Cabinet.

The Departments participating in this committee will commit resources as appropriate, subject to recommendations approved by the Cabinet.

Attorney-General: legal aid

2434. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): In relation to Victoria Legal Aid funding pressures and Commonwealth Government budget cuts on legal aid:

(a) What additional funding, if any, will the Victorian Government supply to make up some of the shortfall in legal aid funding in Victoria.

(b) What level of additional funds has the Women's Legal Resource Group received to expand its services and what amount of this funding is from the — (i) Victorian Government; and (ii) Commonwealth Government.

(c) What level of funding will be allocated to telephone interpreter services.

(d) Will the Victorian Government develop a strategy so that more women will receive legal aid grants of assistance.

(e) Does the Victorian Government intend to initiate an inquiry into the impact on women of ceilings being imposed on legal aid grants.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to the Honourable Member's question is:

The Victorian Government does not intend to make up the shortfall in legal aid funding in Victoria as a result of the Commonwealth Government legal aid budget cuts. Since 1992/93 following the collapse of the Solicitors Guarantee Fund, the Victorian Government has contributed approximately $90.5m to legal aid funding under the previous legal aid agreement with the Commonwealth. The Victorian Government is committed to maintaining an appropriate future level of funding to Victoria Legal Aid.

The Women's Legal Resource Group is one of approximately 31 Community Legal Centres which receive funding through the CLC Funding Program administered by Victoria Legal Aid. Funds for individual CLCs are determined by the Program, not by Government.

Telephone interpreter services are not funded through the legal aid program and have no relation to VLA funding pressures and Commonwealth Government budget cuts on legal aid.

It is the duty of VLA to determine the matters or classes of matters for which legal aid may be granted and to determine guidelines for the provision of legal aid. The Attorney-General will continue to monitor the proportion of women receiving legal assistance and consider new initiatives for the better provision of legal aid in areas of concern. In this regard, the most recent VLA annual report states that the number of approvals for females in civil and family law cases exceeds those of males.

Fee ceilings are the result of guidelines imposed by VLA as part of its strategy to manage the reduction in Commonwealth legal aid funding and the operating deficit it inherited from the Legal Aid Commission. The Victorian Government is satisfied with the way VLA has dealt with these two issues.

Attorney-General: community legal centre funding program

2435. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): In relation to the plan to review the Community Legal Centre Funding Program outlined on page 90 of the Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96:

(a) Who will head the review and who will it involve.

(b) What will be the terms of reference of the review.

(c) By what date would the review have to be finalised.

(d) Will the Government undertake not to cut any funding to the Centres pending the outcome of the inquiry.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to the Honourable Member's question is:

The review will be overseen by a steering committee made up of nominees from the Victorian Government (Dr John Lynch), the Commonwealth Government (Dr Margaret Brown), the Federation of Community Legal Centres (Ms Mary Anne Noone) and Victoria Legal Aid (Ms Kay Robertson).

The review has 8 terms of reference. These are summarised as follows:

description of current CLC services;
analysis of cost effectiveness and cost-efficiency of current CLC services;
description and analysis of current CLC structures and distribution and recommendation of optimum model;
consideration of current patterns of need and emerging trends;
description and analysis of the Federation of CLCs and recommendation of optimum model;
identification of CLC service delivery best practice methodology;
description and analysis of current accountability, reporting and management mechanisms; and
consideration of the extent to which CLCs are meeting funding program objectives.

The review is in its preliminary stages. At present there are no timelines in place for the completion of the review.

Funding for Community Legal Centres is determined by the CLC Funding Program which is administered by Victoria Legal Aid. Funds for individual CLCs are determined by the Program, not by Government.

Corrections: Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre

2436. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable Minister for Corrections): Will the Government conduct an investigation into conditions at the Women's Correctional Centre at Deer Park.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in the response to the Honourable Member's question is:

The Commissioner, Correctional Services oversees a comprehensive monitoring program which includes:

near full time on-site presence and observation since the prison's commencement of operations;

systematic on-site reviews of services to determine compliance with legislation and contracts;

analysis of daily and monthly provider reports;

monitoring of the prison's progress against required service delivery outcomes; and

one off investigations into specific issues when appropriate.

These measures constitute ongoing investigation into conditions at the Metropolitan Women's Correctional Centre.

Independent scrutiny of prisons and the prison system has increased with the establishment of the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner. The Commissioner is charged under the *Corrections Act* 1986 with "monitoring performance in the provision of all corrective services to achieve the safe custody and welfare of all prisoners and offenders."

Attorney-General: Legal Practices Board

2442. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General):

(a) On what date and for what term was Mr Ken Marks, QC, appointed chair of the Legal Practices Board.

(b) Who made the appointment and on what advice or recommendation.

(c) What remuneration is attached to the position.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to the Honourable Member's question is:

(a) Mr Marks QC was appointed as Chairperson of the Legal Practice Board on 1 January 1997 for a five year period

(b) In accordance with usual practice the appointment was made by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the responsible Minister - in this case, the Attorney-General. Prior to submission to the Governor in Council, Cabiret's approval of the appointment was also obtained.

(c) The remuneration attached to the position is $45,000 per annum.

Education: employment of school leavers and tertiary graduates

2443. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) What employment opportunities have been provided by the Department of Education for — (i) school leavers; and (ii) tertiary graduates, in each year since 1992.

(b) What opportunities will be provided for — (i) school leavers; and (ii) tertiary graduates, in the Department in 1997.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The vast majority of staff employed by the Department of Education are teachers and so most employment opportunities are provided for tertiary graduates.

This Government has dramatically increased the number of new teachers recruited to our schools, many of whom would be new graduates.

The number of teachers recruited during each year (and still on pay at the end of the year) is shown below:

Year	Number	FTE
1993	256	214.9
1994	1,051	928.9
1995	1,323	1,093.3
1996	1,347	1,151.4
1997 to date	1,153	999.7

Every effort is being made to continue to provide opportunities for the employment of recent graduates. All principals are now responsible for determining their school's staffing profile and staff selection and it is expected that employment levels for young teachers will continue to grow.

Education: school refurbishments

2444. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education):

(a) With reference to Table 2.2.4 in Budget Paper No. 3, what allocations are proposed under the items "Various Schools — Refurbishment (various) $5.590 million", and "Standards and conditions for publicly owned buildings $1 million".

(b) What amounts, particularly those available for maintenance purposes, are held under delegation to the Regional Managers of the Department, or under their control.

(c) Which contractors and subcontractors/reviewers have been engaged to carry out the triennial reviews of schools under the Schools Review Process, and what amounts are to be paid under the contracts.

(d) Which contractors, the contract amounts, and the description of their tasks are to be carried out under the Physical Resource Management System (PRMS).

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Specific projects to be funded from the "Various Schools - Refurbishment (various) $5.590 million" and "Standards and conditions for publicly owned buildings $1 million" have not been determined as yet.

A total of approximately $55 million (1996/97 financial year) is held under delegation or under the control of the Regional Managers of the Department of Education. This amount covers salaries, operating and grant expenses, and the cost of school support services. $1.6 million of this is for maintenance and minor works within regions.

The names of the companies awarded contracts by the Department of Education to carry out triennial reviews of schools are:

Castlemaine Education Centre
Deakin University
EdPsych Services
Educational Development and Review
Educational Evaluators Australia
Kingfisher Management Services
Melbourne University
Monash University
National Curriculum Services
University of Ballarat

Contracts have been given in two categories: one year contracts with an option for a further two years and three year contracts subject to annual review. The total per annum cost over the 10 companies is $1.818 million.

The PRMS contractors are as follows:

Scientific Management Associates - prime contractor and project management services @ $462,661.
Building Services Agency - maintenance audit of all school buildings @ $1,505,205.
Maintenance Management Systems @ $205,498 - develop two computer programs that will:
allow schools to use the maintenance audit data and assist in managing their maintenance and minor works program; and
enable the Department evaluate maintenance strategies on a statewide basis.
Armstrong Flemming @ $1,235,331 - provide documentation and training for the school based system.

Wednesday, 15 October 1997

Education: ministerial officer pecuniary interests

1290. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Sport): Have all ministerial officers either currently or formerly employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest declaration; if so, on what date was the declaration signed and on what date did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

With the exception of the Ministerial Transport Officer, all staff employed in my office have signed a declaration of pecuniary interest.

These declarations were signed on 15/5/96, 20/5/96, 24/5/96, 1/1/97, 14/10/96.

Two staff and the Ministerial Transport Officer commenced duties with the Minister on his appointment as Minister for Sport. The other employees officially commenced on the 22/4/1996, 9/10/1996 and 1/1/1997.

Rural Development: ministerial officer pecuniary interests

1291. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): Have all ministerial officers either currently or formerly employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest declaration; if so, on what date was the declaration signed and on what date did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I refer the Honourable Member to my reply in the Legislative Council to Question on Notice No. 1290.

Rural Development: grants

1372. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The answer as provided by my Department is:

Information on grants is provided in the Budget Papers, annual reports of the department or listed in the annual reports of individual agencies.

Assistance by way of a grant is provided to those firms and agencies of significance to Victoria's economy. Due to the large number of grants involved, the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

Education: capital works, Casey

1714. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Casey.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Berwick Lodge Primary School	Bidet, hot water system	Casey (c)
Berwick Primary School	Major maintenance	Casey (c)
Berwick Primary School	Covered ways	Casey (c)
Berwick Secondary College	Major maintenance	Casey (c)
Coral Park Primary School	Covered ways	Casey (c)
Courtenay Gardens Primary School	Equipment	Casey (c)
Cranbourne Secondary College	Casey cluster technology	Casey (c)
Eumemmerring Secondary College	Covered ways (Myuna Farm)	Casey (c)
Eumemmerring Secondary College	Art/technology	Casey (c)
Eumemmerring Secondary College	New school stage 2	Casey (c)
Fountain Gate Primary School	Ramps, handrails	Casey (c)
Fountain Gate Primary School	Covered ways	Casey (c)
Hampton Park Secondary College	Covered ways	Casey (c)
Hampton Park Secondary College	Casey cluster technology	Casey (c)
Harkaway Primary School	Handrails, door handles	Casey (c)
Lyndhurst Secondary College	Covered ways	Casey (c)
Lyndhurst Secondary College	Casey cluster technology	Casey (c)
Mossgiel Park Primary School	Covered ways	Casey (c)
River Gum Primary School	Major maintenance	Casey (c)
Thomas Mitchell Primary School	Covered ways	Casey (c)

Education: schools, Casey

1715. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Casey as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 30 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Casey in February 1993. There were 32 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Casey in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: schools, Greater Dandenong

1728. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 27 Government primary schools and 10 Government secondary schools in the City of Greater Dandenong in February 1993. There were 25 Government primary schools, 6 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of Greater Dandenong in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Monash

1740. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Monash.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Amsleigh Park Primary School	Covered area	Monash (c)
Ashwood Secondary College	Major maintenance - stage 2	Monash (c)
Ashwood Secondary College	Ramp, rails, closers, heating	Monash (c)
Clayton West Primary School	Major maintenance	Monash (c)
Glen Waverley Secondary College	Major maintenance/refurbishment	Monash (c)
Jells Park Primary School	Covered ways	Monash (c)
Mount View Primary School	Modify existing toilet	Monash (c)
Mount Waverley Primary School	Ramps	Monash (c)
Mount Waverley Secondary College	Grounds development	Monash (c)
South Oakleigh Secondary College	Ramps, disabled toilet	Monash (c)
Sussex Heights Primary School	Disabled wc, shower, change	Monash (c)
Syndal South Primary School	Fire service & roof replacement	Monash (c)

Education: schools, Monash

1741. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Monash as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 36 Government primary schools and 10 Government secondary schools in the City of Monash in February 1993. There were 28 Government primary schools and 10 Government secondary schools in the City of Monash in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Frankston

1753. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Frankston.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Aldercourt Primary School	Major maintenance	Frankston (c)
Aldercourt Primary School	Multi-purpose room upgrade	Frankston (c)
Aldercourt Primary School	Ramps	Frankston (c)
Carrum Downs Primary School	Ramps	Frankston (c)
Frankston High School	Treatment to slippery ramp	Frankston (c)
Langwarrin Park Primary	Ramps, change table, art sink	Frankston (c)
Langwarrin Secondary College	Casey cluster technology	Frankston (c)
Mount Erin Secondary College	Major maintenance	Frankston (c)
Naranga Special School	Covered ways	Frankston (c)
Rowellyn Park Primary School	Covered ways	Frankston (c)

Education: schools, Frankston

1754. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Frankston as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 23 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Frankston in February 1993. There were 23 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the City of Frankston in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Kingston

1766. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Kingston.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Aspendale Primary School	Handrails	Kingston (c)
Chelsea Primary School	Major maintenance	Kingston (c)
Cheltenham Secondary College	Covered ways	Kingston (c)
Clarinda Primary School	Ramps	Kingston (c)
Edithvale Primary School	Handrail	Kingston (c)
Heatherton Primary School	Major maintenance	Kingston (c)
Mentone Autistic Special Developmental School	Covered ways	Kingston (c)
Mentone Park Primary School	Refurbishment	Kingston (c)
Mordialloc Chelsea Secondary College	Painting to stairways	Kingston (c)
Mordialloc Chelsea Secondary College	Redevelopment - stage 2 (art/technology facilities)	Kingston (c)
Mordialloc Primary School	Major maintenance - stage 2	Kingston (c)
Parkdale Secondary College	Ramps	Kingston (c)
Parkdale Secondary College	Major maintenance - stage 2	Kingston (c)
Parktone Primary School	Refurbishment	Kingston (c)
Patterson River Secondary College	Replacement of heating mains	Kingston (c)
Patterson River Secondary College	Major maintenance	Kingston (c)
Southmoor Primary School	Refurbishment	Kingston (c)
Southmoor Primary School	Ramps, modify disabled wc	Kingston (c)
Yarrabah School	Covered ways	Kingston (c)

Education: schools, Kingston

1767. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Kingston as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 24 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Kingston in February 1993. There were 23 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Kingston in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Glen Eira

1779. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Caulfield Primary School	Major maintenance - stage 2	Glen Eira (C)
Caulfield South Primary School	Covered ways	Glen Eira (C)
McKinnon Secondary College	Major maintenance	Glen Eira (C)
Murrumbeena Primary School	Canteen; student toilets	Glen Eira (C)

Education: schools, Glen Eira

1780. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Glen Eira as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 16 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the City of Glen Eira in February 1993. There were 15 Government primary schools and 4 Government secondary schools in the City of Glen Eira in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Hobsons Bay

1792. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Altona East Primary School	Staff admin upgrade	Hobsons Bay (C)
Altona North Primary School	Major maintenance - oil to gas conversion	Hobsons Bay (C)
Altona North Primary School	Toilet modifications	Hobsons Bay (C)
Altona West Primary School	Ramps & toilet	Hobsons Bay (C)
Bayside Secondary College	Major maintenance - Altona North Junior Campus	Hobsons Bay (C)
Laverton Primary School	Rails & repairs	Hobsons Bay (C)
Laverton Secondary College	Major maintenance- replace fire & domestic water service	Hobsons Bay (C)
Seabrook Primary School	New school	Hobsons Bay (C)
Williamstown High School	Major maintenance	Hobsons Bay (C)

Education: schools, Hobsons Bay

1793. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Hobsons Bay as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 17 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the City of Hobsons Bay in February 1993. There were 16 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the City of Hobsons Bay in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Wyndham

1805. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Wyndham.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Little River Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Wyndham (c)
Point Cook Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Wyndham (c)
The Grange Secondary College	New school stage 4	Wyndham (c)
Werribee Park Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Wyndham (c)
Werribee Secondary College	Staff admin facilities	Wyndham (c)

Education: schools, Wyndham

1806. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Wyndham as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 15 Government primary schools and 4 Government secondary schools in the City of Wyndham in February 1993. There were 15 Government primary schools and 4 Government secondary schools in the City of Wyndham in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Greater Geelong

1818. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Anakie Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Geelong (C)
Belmont Primary School	Replacement of external brickwork	Greater Geelong (C)
Ceres Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Geelong (C)
Corio Community College	6 ext ramps, int ramps, steel ramp (trade wing), door modifications	Greater Geelong (C)
Geelong High School	Ext & int maintenance all buildings	Greater Geelong (C)
Grovedale Secondary College	Ramps, home eco - benches	Greater Geelong (C)
Grovedale Secondary College	Roof replacement, external maintenance	Greater Geelong (C)
Grovedale West Primary School	Deaf facility	Greater Geelong (C)
Grovedale West Primary School	Ramps, railings, modifications to shower/toilet, change table	Greater Geelong (C)
Lara Lake Primary School	Additional classroom facilities	Greater Geelong (C)
Lara Primary School	Phys educ, music, canteen facilities	Greater Geelong (C)

Lovely Banks Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Geelong (C)
Mt Duneed Regional Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Geelong (C)
Nelson Park School	Ramp and handrail	Greater Geelong (C)
Newcomb Secondary College	Structural repairs, ext/int maintenance all buildings	Greater Geelong (C)
Newcomb Secondary College	Toilet adaptions	Greater Geelong (C)
Norlane High School	Disabled toilet & shower	Greater Geelong (C)
Norlane High School	Floor coverings, mechanical works and repairs	Greater Geelong (C)
North Geelong Secondary College	General building repairs, oil to gas conversion, roofing, floor coverings	Greater Geelong (C)
Oberon Primary School	Ext maintenance part main building, civil works	Greater Geelong (C)
Ocean Grove Primary School	Phys ed/music/library/staff/ administration facilities	Greater Geelong (C)
Ocean Grove Primary School	Roof repairs, restumping	Greater Geelong (C)
Portarlington Primary School	External maintenance	Greater Geelong (C)
Rollins Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Geelong (C)
South Barwon Secondary College	External/internal maintenance - stage 1	Greater Geelong (C)
St Leonards Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Geelong (C)
Wallington Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Geelong (C)
Western Heights Secondary College	Restumping, boiler conversion	Greater Geelong (C)
Whittington Primary School	Floor coverings, ext/int maintenance	Greater Geelong (C)

Education: schools, Greater Geelong

1819. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Greater Geelong as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 53 Government primary schools and 14 Government secondary schools in the City of Greater Geelong in February 1993. There were 45 Government primary schools and 12 Government secondary schools in the City of Greater Geelong in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Greater Bendigo

1831. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Axedale Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Bendigo East Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Bendigo North Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Bendigo Senior Secondary College	Upgrade c/rooms, s/admin facils (s 4)	Greater Bendigo (C)
Big Hill Primary School	C'rooms/admin/library/multi-purpose/toilets/art facilities	Greater Bendigo (C)
California Gully Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Camp Hill Primary School	Maintenance/upgrade	Greater Bendigo (C)
Comet Hill Primary School	Major maintenance	Greater Bendigo (C)
Drummartin Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Eaglehawk Primary School	Refurbishment	Greater Bendigo (C)
Eppalock Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Epsom Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Golden Square Secondary College	Disabled access to technology, music, drama & photography	Greater Bendigo (C)
Goornong Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Kalianna Special School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Kangaroo Flat Primary School	Major maintenance	Greater Bendigo (C)
Lockwood Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Lockwood South Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Mandurang South Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Marong Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
Redesdale Mia Mia Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Bendigo (C)
White Hills Secondary College	Major maintenance	Greater Bendigo (C)

Education: schools, Greater Bendigo

1832. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Greater Bendigo as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 37 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Greater Bendigo in February 1993. There were 34 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Greater Bendigo in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Yarra Ranges

1844. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Badger Creek Primary School	Handrails	Yarra Ranges (S)
Billanook Primary School	Covered ways (doorway section)	Yarra Ranges (S)
Bimbadeen Heights Primary School	Ramp	Yarra Ranges (S)

Birmingham Primary School	Ramps, handrails	Yarra Ranges (S)
Chirnside Park Primary School	Ramp	Yarra Ranges (S)
Don Valley Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Yarra Ranges (S)
Gladesville Primary School	Ramps	Yarra Ranges (S)
Gladysdale Primary School	Ramps, disabled toilet	Yarra Ranges (S)
Gladysdale Primary School	Major maintenance	Yarra Ranges (S)
Healesville High School	Gas conversion (connect sewer)	Yarra Ranges (S)
Lilydale Heights Secondary College	Major maintenance - stage 2	Yarra Ranges (S)
Lilydale High School	Major maintenance -stage 2	Yarra Ranges (S)
Lilydale West Primary School	Refurbishment	Yarra Ranges (S)
Menzies Creek Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Yarra Ranges (S)
Millwarra Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Yarra Ranges (S)
Monbulk College	Furniture	Yarra Ranges (S)
Monbulk Primary School	Fence	Yarra Ranges (S)
Montrose Primary School	Fence	Yarra Ranges (S)
Mount Evelyn Primary School	Library, gpcs refurb	Yarra Ranges (S)
Olinda Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Yarra Ranges (S)
Pembroke Primary School	Refurbishment	Yarra Ranges (S)
Pembroke Secondary College	Refurbishment	Yarra Ranges (S)
Sassafras Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Yarra Ranges (S)
Selby Primary School	Drop-off space for disabled	Yarra Ranges (S)
Sherbrooke Community School	Stirrup for disabled toilet	Yarra Ranges (S)
Tecoma Primary School	Disabled toilets, change table	Yarra Ranges (S)
Tecoma Primary School	Refurbishment	Yarra Ranges (S)
The Patch Primary School	Covered ways	Yarra Ranges (S)
Upper Yarra Secondary College	Ramp	Yarra Ranges (S)
Upwey High School	Hoist, minor alterations	Yarra Ranges (S)
Upwey High School	Ramps	Yarra Ranges (S)
Upwey Primary School	School facility upgrade	Yarra Ranges (S)
Upwey Primary School	Handrails	Yarra Ranges (S)
Wandin North Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Yarra Ranges (S)
Wandin Yallock Primary School	Sewer connection	Yarra Ranges (S)
Wesburn Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Yarra Ranges (S)
Wesburn Primary School	Refurbishment	Yarra Ranges (S)
Woori Yallock Primary School	Covered ways	Yarra Ranges (S)
Yarra Junction Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Yarra Ranges (S)
Yarra Junction Primary School	Painting of steps/poles for visually impaired	Yarra Ranges (S)
Yering Primary School	Major maintenance	Yarra Ranges (S)

Education: schools, Yarra Ranges

1845. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Shire of Yarra Ranges as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 54 Government primary schools, 10 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the Shire of Yarra Ranges in February 1993. There were 51 Government primary schools, 8 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the Shire of Yarra Ranges in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Knox

1857. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Knox.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Bayswater Primary School	Ramps, disabled toilet	Knox (c)
Bayswater Primary School	Purchase of computer equipment	Knox (c)
Bayswater Primary School	Installation and software	Knox (c)
Bayswater Primary School	Security	Knox (c)
Boronia Heights Secondary College	Refurbishment	Knox (c)
Boronia Primary School	Access to external areas	Knox (c)
Carrington Primary School	Ramp	Knox (c)
Ferntree Gully College	Modifications to wc & handrails	Knox (c)
Heany Park Primary School	Covered ways	Knox (c)
Karoo Primary School	Covered ways	Knox (c)
Lysterfield Primary School	Replacement school	Knox (c)
Park Ridge Primary School	Covered ways	Knox (c)
Park Ridge Primary School	Hoist, sling & change table	Knox (c)
Rowville Secondary College	Covered ways	Knox (c)
Rowville Secondary College	New school stage 2	Knox (c)
Scoresby Secondary College	Modifications to disabled toilet, ramps & handrails	Knox (c)
The Basin Primary School	Sewer connection	Knox (c)

Education: schools, Knox

1858. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Knox as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 31 Government primary schools and 8 Government secondary schools in the City of Knox in February 1993. There were 29 Government primary schools and 7 Government secondary schools in the City of Knox in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Banyule

1870. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Banyule.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Banksia Secondary College	Fittings	Banyule (c)
Banyule Primary School	Major maintenance	Banyule (c)
Bellfield Primary School	Staff admin upgrade	Banyule (c)
Bellfield Primary School	Major maintenance	Banyule (c)
Bundoora Secondary College	Major maintenance (inc water service)	Banyule (c)
Greensborough Secondary College	Major maintenance all buildings(inc oil-to-gas)	Banyule (c)
Macleod High School	Toilet	Banyule (c)
Montmorency Primary School	Staff administration upgrade	Banyule (c)
Norris Bank Primary School	Staff admin upgrade	Banyule (c)
Olympic Village Primary School	Fire reinstatement	Banyule (c)
Rosanna Golf Links Primary School	Major maintenance (inc heating)	Banyule (c)
Rosanna Golf Links Primary School	Establishment of deaf facility	Banyule (c)
Rosanna Primary School	Major maintenance - relocation of external student toilets	Banyule (c)
St Helena Secondary College	Railings	Banyule (c)
Streeton Primary School	Major maintenance - oil to gas conversion	Banyule (c)
Viewbank Primary School	Major maintenance	Banyule (c)

Education: schools, Banyule

1871. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Banyule as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 28 Government primary schools and 9 Government secondary schools in the City of Banyule in February 1993. There were 24 Government primary schools, 7 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of Banyule in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Hume

1883. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Hume.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Bethal Primary School	Major maintenance	Hume (c)
Broadmeadows Primary School	Ramps & fittings	Hume (c)
Broadmeadows Secondary College	Major maintenance - fire service upgrade	Hume (c)
Broadmeadows Special School	Major maintenance	Hume (c)
Broadmeadows West Primary School	Ramps & toilet	Hume (c)
Bulla Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Hume (c)
Craigieburn Primary School	Ramps & facilities	Hume (c)
Dallas North Primary School	Major maintenance	Hume (c)
Gladstone Park Primary School	Major maintenance	Hume (c)
Gladstone Views Primary School	Major maintenance	Hume (c)
Greenvale Primary School	Rails & footplates	Hume (c)
Meadow Heights Primary School	Toilet, ramp, rails	Hume (c)
Mickleham Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Hume (c)
Roxburgh Homestead Primary School	New school	Hume (c)
Sunbury Downs Secondary College	Toilet & parking modifications	Hume (c)
Sunbury Heights Primary School	Major maintenance	Hume (c)
Tullamarine Primary School	Rails, shower, ramp relocation	Hume (c)
Upfield Primary School	Major maintenance	Hume (c)
Upfield Secondary College	Major maintenance- conversion of heating & hot water system	Hume (c)

Education: schools, Hume

1884. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Hume as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 31 Government primary schools and 8 Government secondary schools in the City of Hume in February 1993. There were 30 Government primary schools and 8 Government secondary schools in the City of Hume in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, La Trobe

1896. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Baringa Special School	Establish annex at Leongatha SC	La Trobe (S)
Boolarra Primary School	Preventative maintenance	La Trobe (S)
Churchill North Primary School	Rural Schools Program	La Trobe (S)
Churchill Primary School	Preventative maintenance stage 2	La Trobe (S)
Churchill Primary School	Ramps to south wing	La Trobe (S)
Churchill Primary School	Upgrade of disabled toilet area	La Trobe (S)
Hazelwood North Primary School	Rural Schools Program	La Trobe (S)
Kurnai College	Ramps	La Trobe (S)
Kurnai College	Provision of ramps	La Trobe (S)
Kurnai College	Ramps	La Trobe (S)
Kurnai College	KODE Campus relocation	La Trobe (S)
Lowanna College	Replacement school stage 1	La Trobe (S)
Moe Primary School	Oil to gas, staff/admin refurbishment	La Trobe (S)
Moe Primary School	Multi-purpose, library, gpcs	La Trobe (S)
Morwell Park Primary School	Ramps to LTC building, disabled toilet	La Trobe (S)
Morwell Primary School	Preventative maintenance	La Trobe (S)
Morwell Primary School	Preventative maintenance	La Trobe (S)
Traralgon (Liddiard Rd) Primary School	Deaf facility	La Trobe (S)
Traralgon Primary School	Provision of ramps	La Trobe (S)
Traralgon Secondary College	Multiple ramping	La Trobe (S)
Traralgon Special Developmental School	Rural Schools Program	La Trobe (S)
Tyers Primary School	Preventative maintenance	La Trobe (S)
Yinnar South Primary School	Rural Schools Program	La Trobe (S)

Education: schools, La Trobe

1897. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Shire of La Trobe as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 27 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the City of La Trobe in February 1993. There were 24 Government primary schools, 2 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of La Trobe in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Manningham

1909. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Manningham.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Donburn Primary School	Refurbishment	Manningham (c)
Doncaster East Primary School	Major maintenance - stage 2	Manningham (c)
Manningham Park Primary School	Refurbishment	Manningham (c)

Templestowe Park Primary School	Covered ways	Manningham (c)
Wonga Park Primary School	Ramps	Manningham (c)

Education: schools, Manningham

1910. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Manningham as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 22 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the City of Manningham in February 1993. There were 16 Government primary schools and 4 Government secondary schools in the City of Manningham in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Stonnington

1922. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Stonnington.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Lloyd Street Primary School	Handrails	Stonnington (c)
Lloyd Street Primary School	Major maintenance	Stonnington (c)
Malvern Central School	Roofing	Stonnington (c)

Education: schools, Stonnington

1923. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Stonnington as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 7 Government primary schools, 3 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of Stonnington in February 1993. There were 6 Government primary schools, 1 Government secondary school and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of Stonnington in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Whittlesea

1935. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Bundoora Primary School	Portable ramp	Whittlesea (c)
Epping Secondary College	Major maintenance - fire service upgrade	Whittlesea (c)
Lalor Primary School	Staff admin upgrade	Whittlesea (c)
Lalor Primary School	Shower & toilet	Whittlesea (c)
Lalor Secondary College	Major maintenance (3 storey building)	Whittlesea (c)
Mernda Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Whittlesea (c)
Mill Park Heights Primary School	Fittings	Whittlesea (c)
Mill Park Heights Primary School	Covered way links	Whittlesea (c)
Mill Park Primary School	Ramps & hoist	Whittlesea (c)
Mill Park Primary School	Major maintenance	Whittlesea (c)
Mill Park Secondary College	New school - stage 2	Whittlesea (c)
Thomastown West Primary School	Staff administration upgrade	Whittlesea (c)
Whittlesea Primary School	Gym, music, canteen, staff admin, gpcs	Whittlesea (c)
Whittlesea Primary School	Major maintenance- LTC only	Whittlesea (c)
Yan Yean Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Whittlesea (c)

Education: schools, Whittlesea

1936. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Whittlesea as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 22 Government primary schools and 7 Government secondary schools in the City of Whittlesea in February 1993. There were 21 Government primary schools and 7 Government secondary schools in the City of Whittlesea in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Brimbank

1948. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Brimbank.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Albanvale Primary School	Ramp	Brimbank (c)
Ardeer Primary School	Toilet modifications	Brimbank (c)
Calder Rise Primary School	Major maintenance	Brimbank (c)
Glengala Park Primary School	Major maintenance	Brimbank (c)
Keilor Park Primary School	Major maintenance	Brimbank (c)
St Albans East Primary School	Access	Brimbank (c)
St Albans Meadows Primary School	Rails & ramp	Brimbank (c)
St Albans Primary School	Staff administration upgrade	Brimbank (c)
St Albans Primary School	Major maintenance - replace ventatherm heaters & oil to gas conversion	Brimbank (c)
Sunshine North Primary School	Major maintenance - oil to gas conversion	Brimbank (c)
Sunshine North Primary School	Step alterations	Brimbank (c)
Sunshine Primary School	Major maintenance	Brimbank (c)
Sunvale Primary School	Major maintenance	Brimbank (c)
Taylors Lakes Secondary College	Access	Brimbank (c)

Education: schools, Brimbank

1949. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Brimbank as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 32 Government primary schools and 8 Government secondary schools in the City of Brimbank in February 1993. There were 32 Government primary schools and 8 Government secondary schools in the City of Brimbank in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Ballarat

1960. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Ballarat.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Ballarat High School	Upgrade science block	Ballarat (c)
Ballarat North Primary School	Upgrade staff admin, c'rooms, specialist facilities stage 1	Ballarat (c)
Ballarat Primary School (Dana Street)	Rural Schools Program	Ballarat (c)
Ballarat Secondary College	Modification to home eco bench, sink oven and hotplates	Ballarat (c)
Ballarat Secondary College	Access ramps to technology classrooms	Ballarat (c)

Ballarat Secondary College	Ramp access to toilet block from north wing	Ballarat (c)
Ballarat Secondary College	Wheelchair access path to recreation centre	Ballarat (c)
Black Hill Primary School	Maintenance/upgrade staff/admin, c'rooms, library & art craft facilities	Ballarat (c)
Buninyong Primary School	Installation and software	Ballarat (c)
Buninyong Primary School	Purchase of computer equipment	Ballarat (c)
Buninyong Primary School	Art/craft, staff/administration facilities	Ballarat (c)
Buninyong Primary School	Security	Ballarat (c)
Canadian Lead Primary School	Provision of facilities	Ballarat (c)
Coghills Creek Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Ballarat (c)
Grevillea Park Primary School	Internal and external maintenance	Ballarat (c)
Grevillea Park Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Ballarat (c)
Invermay Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Ballarat (c)
Learmonth Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Ballarat (c)
Little Bendigo Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Ballarat (c)
MacArthur Street Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Ballarat (c)
Magpie Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Ballarat (c)
Mount Blowhard Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Ballarat (c)
Mount Clear Primary School	Internal/external maintenance, upgrade multi purpose facility	Ballarat (c)
Wendouree Primary School	Refurbishment/maintenance of buildings	Ballarat (c)
Windermere Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Ballarat (c)
Yuille Primary School	Internal and external maintenance	Ballarat (c)
Yuille Primary School	Repairs/building works re fire damage	Ballarat (c)

Education: schools, Ballarat

1961. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Ballarat as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 31 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Ballarat in February 1993. There were 27 Government primary schools and 4 Government secondary schools in the City of Ballarat in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Maroondah

1972. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maroondah.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Bayswater North Primary School	Covered ways	Maroondah (c)
Croydon Secondary College	Ramps	Maroondah (c)
Croydon Special Developmental School	Hydro therapy pool - rectification works	Maroondah (c)
Eastwood Primary School	Disabled wc, ramp & hoist	Maroondah (c)
Heathmont College	Technology facilities	Maroondah (c)
Heathmont College	Ramps	Maroondah (c)
Kalinda Primary School	Repair structural defects	Maroondah (c)
Maroondah Secondary College	Electrical upgrade	Maroondah (c)
Maroondah Secondary College	Ramps	Maroondah (c)
Norwood Secondary College	Refurbishment	Maroondah (c)
Ringwood Secondary College	Ramps	Maroondah (c)
Ruskin Park Primary School	Change table	Maroondah (c)

Education: schools, Maroondah

1973. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Maroondah as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 23 Government primary schools and 8 Government secondary schools in the City of Maroondah in February 1993. There were 21 Government primary schools and 7 Government secondary schools in the City of Maroondah in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Melbourne

1984. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Melbourne.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

South Yarra Primary School	Major maintenance	Melbourne (c)
University High School	Redevelopment - stage 3 (theatrette, l'scaping, upgrade substation)	Melbourne (c)

Education: schools, Melbourne

1985. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Melbourne as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 5 Government primary schools and 3 Government secondary schools in the City of Melbourne in February 1993. There were 4 Government primary schools and 3 Government secondary schools in the City of Melbourne in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Bass Coast

1996. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Newhaven Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Bass Coast (S)
San Remo Primary School	Refurbishment	Bass Coast (S)
Wonthaggi North Primary School	Ramps	Bass Coast (S)
Wonthaggi North Primary School	Refurbishment	Bass Coast (S)

Education: schools, Bass Coast

1997. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Shire of Bass Coast as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 9 Government primary schools and 1 Government secondary school in the Shire of Bass Coast in February 1993. There were 8 Government primary schools and 1 Government secondary school in the Shire of Bass Coast in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Nillumbik

2008. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Apollo Parkways Primary School	Installation and software	Nillumbik (s)
Apollo Parkways Primary School	Security	Nillumbik (s)
Apollo Parkways Primary School	Purchase of computer equipment	Nillumbik (s)
Arthurs Creek Primary School	Toilet & shower	Nillumbik (s)

Arthurs Creek Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Nillumbik (s)
Diamond Creek East Primary School	Major maintenance	Nillumbik (s)
Diamond Creek East Primary School	Toilet	Nillumbik (s)
Diamond Valley Secondary College	Major maintenance - Hurstbridge Junior Campus	Nillumbik (s)
Diamond Valley Secondary College	Fittings	Nillumbik (s)
Doreen Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Nillumbik (s)
Eltham East Primary School	Hand railings	Nillumbik (s)
Eltham High School	Major maintenance - fire service upgrade	Nillumbik (s)
Eltham High School	Major maintenance - admin building & gym only	Nillumbik (s)
Eltham Primary School	Major maintenance - fire service upgrade	Nillumbik (s)
Kangaroo Ground Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Nillumbik (s)
Panton Hill Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Nillumbik (s)
Panton Hill Primary School	Major maintenance (internal only)	Nillumbik (s)
Research Primary School	Gpc/music facilities	Nillumbik (s)
St Andrews Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Nillumbik (s)
Strathewen Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Nillumbik (s)
Wattle Glen Primary School	Staff administration upgrade	Nillumbik (s)

Education: schools, Nillumbik

2009. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Shire of Nillumbik as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 18 Government primary schools and 2 Government secondary schools in the Shire of Nillumbik in February 1993. There were 17 Government primary schools and 2 Government secondary schools in the Shire of Nillumbik in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Swan Hill

2020. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The Rural City of Swan Hill is the same as the Shire of Swan Hill.

Beverford District Primary School	Upgrade stage 2	Swan Hill (S)
Beverford District Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Swan Hill (S)
Nyah West Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Swan Hill (S)
Piangil Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Swan Hill (S)

Robinvale Consolidated School	Maintenance/upgrade stage 2	Swan Hill (S)
Swan Hill North Primary School	Major maintenance	Swan Hill (S)
Swan Hill Secondary College	Maintenance/upgrade stage 1	Swan Hill (S)

Education: schools, Swan Hill

2021. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Rural City of Swan Hill as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 18 Government primary schools, 2 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the Rural City of Swan Hill in February 1993. There were 10 Government primary schools, 2 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the Rural City of Swan Hill in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Greater Shepparton

2032. THE HON. M. M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Ardmona Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Shepparton (C)
Currawa Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Shepparton (C)
Dhurringile Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Shepparton (C)
Goulburn Special Developmental School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Shepparton (C)
Graham Street Special School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Shepparton (C)
Grahamvale Primary School	Clearing storm damage	Greater Shepparton (C)
Harston Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Shepparton (C)
Kialla Primary School	Ramp	Greater Shepparton (C)
Lemnos Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Shepparton (C)
Mooroopna Primary School	Repair roof/water damage	Greater Shepparton (C)
Mooroopna Secondary College	Fire reinstatement (administration facilities)	Greater Shepparton (C)
Mooroopna Secondary College	Performing arts stage 1&2	Greater Shepparton (C)
Mooroopna Secondary College	Automatic sliding doors to library	Greater Shepparton (C)
Shepparton East Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Shepparton (C)
St Georges Road Primary School Shepparton	Termite eradication & repair	Greater Shepparton (C)
Tallygaroopna Primary School	Internal/external painting & renovations	Greater Shepparton (C)
Tatura Primary School	Replace heating system	Greater Shepparton (C)
Wilmot Road Primary School Shepparton	Internal/external painting & renovations-stage 2	Greater Shepparton (C)
Zeerust Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Greater Shepparton (C)

Education: schools, Greater Shepparton

2033. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Greater Shepparton as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 37 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the City of Greater Shepparton in February 1993. There were 31 Government primary schools and 4 Government secondary schools in the City of Greater Shepparton in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Wangaratta

2044. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The Rural City of Wangaratta is the same as the Shire of Milawa.

Boorhaman Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Milawa (s)
Everton Primary School	Internal/external painting & renovations	Milawa (s)
Moyhu Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Milawa (s)
Tarrawingee Area Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Milawa (s)
Wangaratta District Specialist School	Rural Schools Program	Milawa (s)
Wangaratta High School	Replace hall floor	Milawa (s)
Whorouly Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Milawa (s)

Education: schools, Wangaratta

2045. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Rural City of Wangaratta as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 23 Government primary schools and 2 Government secondary schools in the Rural City of Wangaratta in February 1993. There were 18 Government primary schools and 2 Government secondary schools in the Rural City of Wangaratta in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Mildura

2056. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Cardross Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mildura (rc)
Irymple Primary School	Maintenance/upgrade	Mildura (rc)
Koorlong Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mildura (rc)
Merbein South Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mildura (rc)
Merbein West Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mildura (rc)
Meringur Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mildura (rc)
Mildura Primary School	Disabled toilet & shower	Mildura (rc)
Mildura Primary School	Urgent works - sewerage pipes	Mildura (rc)
Murrayville Community College	Rural Schools Program	Mildura (rc)
Ouyen Secondary College	Major maintenance	Mildura (rc)
Red Cliffs East Primary School	Replacement toilet block	Mildura (rc)
Sunnycliffs Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mildura (rc)
The Lake Primary School	Staff admin/gpc facility	Mildura (rc)
Underbool Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mildura (rc)
Walpeup Primary School	Major maintenance	Mildura (rc)
Werrimull P12 School	Rural Schools Program	Mildura (rc)

Education: schools, Mildura

2057. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Rural City of Mildura as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 24 Government primary schools, 7 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the Rural City of Mildura in February 1993. There were 21 Government primary schools, 6 Government secondary schools and 2 Government primary-secondary schools in the Rural City of Mildura in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Horsham

2068. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Haven Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Horsham (rc)
Horsham Primary School	Ramps and handrails to art room and library Ramps to front entrance, toilet access and classroom	Horsham (rc)
Horsham Primary School	Disabled toilet and shower facility	Horsham (rc)
Laharum Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Horsham (rc)
Natimuk Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Horsham (rc)
Quantong Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Horsham (rc)

Education: schools, Horsham

2069. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Rural City of Horsham as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 14 Government primary schools and 2 Government secondary schools in the Rural City of Horsham in February 1993. There were 8 Government primary schools and 1 Government secondary school in the Rural City of Horsham in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Boroondara

2080. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Boroondara.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Balwyn North Primary School	Major maintenance	Boroondara (c)
Canterbury Primary School	Major maintenance	Boroondara (c)
Kew High School	Major maintenance	Boroondara (c)
Kew Primary School	Installation of lift	Boroondara (c)

Education: schools, Boroondara

2081. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Boroondara as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 21 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Boroondara in February 1993. There were 20 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Boroondara in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Cardinia

2092. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Bayles Regional Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Cardinia (s)
Bunyip Primary School	Covered ways	Cardinia (s)
Cockatoo Primary School	Grounds development	Cardinia (s)
Emerald Secondary College	Ramps	Cardinia (s)
Garfield Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Cardinia (s)
Koo Wee Rup Secondary College	Casey cluster technology	Cardinia (s)
Lang Lang Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Cardinia (s)
Officer Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Cardinia (s)
Pakenham Consolidated School	Replacement school	Cardinia (s)
Pakenham Secondary College	Ramps	Cardinia (s)

Education: schools, Cardinia

2093. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Shire of Cardinia as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 17 Government primary schools and 3 Government secondary schools in the Shire of Cardinia in February 1993. There were 15 Government primary schools and 3 Government secondary schools in the Shire of Cardinia in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Darebin

2104. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Darebin.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Fairfield Primary School	Major maintenance - relocation of external student toilets	Darebin (c)
Northcote High School	Major maintenance - upgrade of power supply	Darebin (c)
Northcote High School	Technology centre	Darebin (c)

Northland Secondary College	Toilet, shower & ramps	Darebin (c)
Preston North East Primary School	Staff admin upgrade	Darebin (c)
Preston South Primary School	Ramps	Darebin (c)
Preston West Primary School	Major maintenance - relocation of external student toilets	Darebin (c)
Reservoir District Secondary College	Amalgamation	Darebin (c)
Thornbury Darebin Secondary College	Ramps & chairmate	Darebin (c)

Education: schools, Darebin

2105. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Darebin as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 22 Government primary schools and 7 Government secondary schools in the City of Darebin in February 1993. There were 19 Government primary schools, 6 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of Darebin in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Port Phillip

2116. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Elwood College	Ramps, disabled wc, hoist	Port Phillip (c)
Hobsons Bay Secondary College	Shower in disabled wc area	Port Phillip (c)
MacRobertson Girls High School	Prepare master plan	Port Phillip (c)
Port Phillip Specialist School	Relocation stage 2	Port Phillip (c)

Education: schools, Port Phillip

2117. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Port Phillip as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 7 Government primary schools, 3 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of Port Phillip in February 1993. There were 6 Government primary schools, 3 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of Port Phillip in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Maribyrnong

2128. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Braybrook Primary School	Platform & railings	Maribyrnong (c)
Yarraville West Primary School	Toilet modifications & ramp	Maribyrnong (c)

Education: schools, Maribyrnong

2129. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Maribyrnong as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 13 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the City of Maribyrnong in February 1993. There were 9 Government primary schools and 4 Government secondary schools in the City of Maribyrnong in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Moonee Valley

2140. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Aberfeldie Primary School	Major maintenance - relocation of student toilets	Moonee Valley (C)
Buckley Park Secondary College	Major maintenance	Moonee Valley (C)
Debney Meadows Primary School	Ramps & toilet	Moonee Valley (C)
Debney Park Secondary College	Upgrade - stage 1 (new c'rooms, staff/admin facilities)	Moonee Valley (C)
Debney Park Secondary College	Major maintenance	Moonee Valley (C)
Doutta Galla Primary School	Ramp	Moonee Valley (C)
Essendon East Keilor District College	Major maintenance - oil to gas conversion	Moonee Valley (C)
Essendon East Keilor District College	Hoist	Moonee Valley (C)
Essendon North Primary School	Installation and software	Moonee Valley (C)
Essendon North Primary School	Purchase of computer equipment	Moonee Valley (C)

Essendon North Primary School	Security	Moonee Valley (C)
Moonee Ponds West Primary School	Major maintenance	Moonee Valley (C)

Education: schools, Moonee Valley

2141. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Moonee Valley as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 19 Government primary schools, 5 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of Moonee Valley in February 1993. There were 15 Government primary schools, 5 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of Moonee Valley in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Melton

2152. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Melton.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Exford Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Melton (s)
Kurunjang Secondary College	Ramps & rails	Melton (s)
Melton Secondary College	Ramps	Melton (s)
Melton West Primary School	Ramps & access	Melton (s)
Rockbank Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Melton (s)
Toolern Vale and District Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Melton (s)

Education: schools, Melton

2153. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Shire of Melton as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 11 Government primary schools and 3 Government secondary schools in the Shire of Melton in February 1993. There were 10 Government primary schools and 3 Government secondary schools in the Shire of Melton in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Mitchell

2164. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Beveridge Primary School	Internal/external painting & renovations	Mitchell (s)
Broadford Primary School	Internal/external painting & renovations - stage 2	Mitchell (s)
Kilmore Primary School	Library	Mitchell (s)
Puckapunyal Primary School	Repair white ant damage	Mitchell (s)
Pyalong Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mitchell (s)
Seymour East Primary School	Replace fire service	Mitchell (s)
Seymour Special School	Rural Schools Program	Mitchell (s)
Tallarook Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mitchell (s)
Tooborac Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mitchell (s)
Wallan Primary School	Security system to relocatables	Mitchell (s)
Wallan Primary School	Covered ways	Mitchell (s)

Education: schools, Mitchell

2165. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Shire of Mitchell as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 13 Government primary schools and 2 Government secondary schools in the Shire of Mitchell in February 1993. There were 13 Government primary schools and 2 Government secondary schools in the Shire of Mitchell in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Moreland

2176. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Moreland.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Box Forest Secondary College	Technology - Hadfield Campus	Moreland (c)
Box Forest Secondary College	Major maintenance (excluding staff/admin area) - KODE Campus	Moreland (c)
Brunswick North West Primary School	Major maintenance- relocation of external student & staff toilets	Moreland (c)
Brunswick Secondary College	Toilet, ramps, chairmate	Moreland (c)
Gowrie Park Primary School	Handrails	Moreland (c)
Moreland Primary School	Ramps	Moreland (c)

Pascoe Vale Primary School	Stairwell modifications	Moreland (c)
Pascoe Vale South Primary School	Staff admin upgrade	Moreland (c)

Education: schools, Moreland

2177. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Moreland as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 26 Government primary schools and 6 Government secondary schools in the City of Moreland in February 1993. There were 21 Government primary schools, 4 Government secondary schools and 2 Government primary-secondary schools in the City of Moreland in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Mornington Peninsula

2188. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Balnarring Primary School	Covered ways	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Moorooduc Primary School	Covered ways	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Mornington Primary School	Ramps, disabled toilet	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Mornington Primary School	Major maintenance	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Mornington Secondary College	Ramps	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Mount Martha Primary School	Ramp	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Osborne Primary School	Ramps, disabled toilet	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Osborne Primary School	Covered ways	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Peninsula Special Developmental School	Covered ways	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Rosebud Primary School	Handrails	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Somers Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Somerville Primary School	Ramps	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Somerville Rise Primary School	Covered ways	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Tyabb Railway Station Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Tyabb Railway Station Primary School	Refurbishment	Mornington Peninsula (S)
Western Port Secondary College	Handrails, paint	Mornington Peninsula (S)

Education: schools, Mornington Peninsula

2189. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Shire of Mornington Peninsula as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 26 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the Shire of Mornington Peninsula in February 1993. There were 27 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the Shire of Mornington Peninsula in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Wodonga

2200. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Baranduda Primary School	Rural Schools Program	Wodonga (rc)
Belvoir Wodonga Special Developmental School	Rural Schools Program	Wodonga (rc)
Melrose Primary School	Internal/external painting & renovations	Wodonga (rc)
Mitchell Secondary College Wodonga	Internal/external painting & renovations -stage 2	Wodonga (rc)
Wodonga Primary School	Steps to toilet, canteen and drinking tap area modify classroom doors	Wodonga (rc)
Wodonga Primary School	Internal/external painting & renovations	Wodonga (rc)
Wodonga West Primary School	Phys/ed facility	Wodonga (rc)

Education: schools, Wodonga

2201. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the Rural City of Wodonga as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 6 Government primary schools, 3 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the Rural City of Wodonga in February 1993. There were 6 Government primary schools, 2 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the Rural City of Wodonga in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Education: capital works, Yarra

2212. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Yarra.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Abbotsford Primary School	Major maintenance	Yarra (c)
Carlton North Primary School	Roof replacement - junior school	Yarra (c)
Collingwood College	Major maintenance	Yarra (c)
Collingwood College	Refurbishment - "the island"	Yarra (c)
Collingwood College	Upgrade communication system	Yarra (c)
Fitzroy North Primary School	Major maintenance (particularly roof)	Yarra (c)
Lynall Hall Community School	Relocation s3 (upgrade c'rooms, car park, site works)	Yarra (c)
Princes Hill Primary School	Major maintenance	Yarra (c)

Education: schools, Yarra

2213. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the number of — (i) primary; and (ii) secondary schools in the local government area of the City of Yarra as at 31 December 1992 and 31 December 1996, respectively.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There were 13 Government primary schools and 5 Government secondary schools in the City of Yarra in February 1993. There were 12 Government primary schools, 3 Government secondary schools and 1 Government primary-secondary school in the City of Yarra in February 1997.

Data have been provided from the February census which is the closest date of data collection to 31 December. Schools that existed in February 1993 have been allocated to the new municipal boundaries as accurately as possible.

Tuesday, 28 October 1997

Conservation and Land Management: *Good Neighbour* advertising campaign

1137. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for Conservation and Land Management): In relation to the Good Neighbour advertising campaign:

(a) What is the total cost of advertising and public relations for the campaign.

(b) What the cost is to date of Good Neighbour Program Continues to Grow advertisements in the press, including daily, suburban and rural press.

(c) What is the total cost of operating the Good Neighbour Program information hotline, indicating the total number of staff employed in each regional office operating the hotline and total staffing costs.

ANSWER:

For information relating to advertising campaigns including the *Good Neighbour Program*, the Honourable Member is directed to the response to Question on Notice No. 1035 which has previously been lodged in the House. In that response the information about advertising campaigns which was readily available was provided.

Sport: grants

1371. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Sport): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

With respect to Sport and Recreation Victoria grants approved for 1995-96, I refer the Honourable Member to the answers provided in the Autumn Session, 1997 to Questions on Notice Nos. 970, 971, 972, 973 and 974 and printed in Legislative Council Weekly Hansard no. 8, Answers to Questions on Notice, 1 April to 29 May 1997.

Information regarding Sport and Recreation Victoria grants approved in 1996-97 is provided in the attached tables.

Grants were also made in the relevant financial years by the Harness Racing Board and the Greyhound Racing Control Board. Details of these are provided below.

The inordinate amount of time and resources required to provide further information other than that supplied cannot be justified.

(Information referred to in answer (16 pages) sent to honourable member and copy tabled in parliamentary library.)

Education: capital works, Greater Dandenong

1727. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What were the capital works projects for the Department of Education in 1995-96 in the local government area of the City of Greater Dandenong.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Carwatha College	Minor works	Greater Dandenong (C)
Dandenong South Primary School	Ramps	Greater Dandenong (C)
Dandenong South Primary School	Refurbishment	Greater Dandenong (C)
Dandenong West Primary School	Refurbishment	Greater Dandenong (C)
Heatherhill Primary School	Ramps, disabled toilet	Greater Dandenong (C)
Keysborough Park Primary School	Galleries	Greater Dandenong (C)
Noble Park English Language School	Relocation - stage 2	Greater Dandenong (C)
Rosewood Downs Primary School	Handrails	Greater Dandenong (C)
Wallarano Primary School	Hoist, c/chair, c/table, d/wc	Greater Dandenong (C)

Treasurer: electricity supply quality

2234. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer): In relation to the allocation to quality of supply:

(a) What consideration has been given to including time off supply due to system load shedding into the Office of the Regulator-General's statistics on quality of supply.

(b) In light of the statement of the ACCC in relation to possible breaches of the Trade Practices Act by the promotion of surge insurance by distribution businesses — (i) what is the status of Value of Loss of Load payments as a flow through charge to customers; (ii) what is the status of compensation for customers as a consequence of supply of low frequency or voltage; and (iii) what is the status of customers' problems caused by deformation of the electricity waveform.

(c) What compensation can customers expect from the failure of VPX to adequately forecast demand for the summer of 1997-98 who will pay the compensation.

(d) What procedures has the Office of the Regulator-General set in place to protect franchised customers from outages due to a low level of hedging to cover the increase in demand.

ANSWER:

The answer supplied by the Treasurer is :

(a) The Office of the Regulator-General requires all interruptions to be included in the supply reliability statistics which are reported to the Office by the distribution businesses. This includes interruptions due to load shedding.

(b) (i) Franchise customers are on maximum uniform tariffs and therefore the System Marginal Price has no impact on charges to franchise customers. The impact of VoLL on the charges to contestable customers depends on the contract between the customer and the retailer.

(ii) The system frequency is maintained by VPX within an acceptable range as specified in Clause 110.2.6 of the System Code and therefore no compensation is being considered. Under the Distribution Code, voltage is to be maintained within acceptable bands by the distribution businesses. Excursions outside of the Codes limits may be subject to compensation claims..

(iii) Electricity waveform is a quality of supply issue and is addressed in the System Code and the Distribution Code. All parties connected to the network have an obligation to ensure that they comply with the Code requirements. Excursions outside of the Code limits may be subject to compensation claims.

(c) VPX's role in the Victorian electricity industry includes controlling the system security of the electricity supply system and planning and directing augmentation of the transmission network. In order to undertake these functions VPX must make an assessment of customer demand. VPX publishes high, medium and low demand scenarios and provides extensive background information on the way in which these forecasts are determined and their interpretation.

VPX has provided the best estimates of demand available and have updated them as required. This information has been provided to the market in a timely and open manner. Hence compensation is not an issue.

(d) The hedge contracts are financial instruments only and are not related to the physical supply of electricity.

Treasurer: electricity consumer protection

2236. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What steps, if any, have been taken to ensure that Victorian electricity consumers have protection from a corporate failure in the Victorian electricity industry.

ANSWER:

The answer supplied by the Treasurer is :

The only form of corporate failure with the potential to impact on supply to consumers relates to an electricity retail business serving contestable (ie non-franchise) customers. Under the Electricity Industry Act 1993 distribution companies are required to supply electricity to those non-franchise customers whose electricity retailer has been suspended (or terminated) from operating in the wholesale electricity market. Were a retailer to be suspended, a "Retailer of Last Resort" (RLR) scheme would automatically commence which would enable continuity of supply to affected customers.

The Office of the Regulator-General is currently finalising details of the terms and conditions under which the RLR would supply affected customers. The terms will ensure that normal commercial arrangements were maintained as far as practicable.

As a further protection, under section 166 of the Electricity Industry Act 1993, the Office of the Regulator-General may appoint an administrator if the Office considers that contravention of the licence conditions threatens the security of electricity supply.

Treasurer: electricity tariff orders

2237. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer):

(a What mechanisms are in place to ensure that electricity costs and charges are minimised in setting a tariff order.

(b) What assessment has been made to compare in-house maintenance work with external contractors in setting the current tariff order.

ANSWIR:

The answer supplied by the Treasurer is :

a) Theelectricity Tariff Order, which has been in place since October 1994, was established under section 158A of the *Electricity Industry Act 1993* to regulate certain tariffs, charges and fees in respect of the elecricity supply industry in Victoria. The retail tariffs prescribed in the Tariff Order provide real price reductions for electricity customers prior to them being able to exercise choice of supplier. The fees and charges prescribed in the Tariff Order mainly relate to the use of the electricity network, and were designed to reflect the expected efficient costs for delivery of such services. These fees and charges may be amended at pre-determined time intervals, by the independent Office of the Regulator-General to ensure that prices remain efficient and protect customer interests. The next review is scheduled for the year 2000, and a further review in 5 years or longer. Other fees and charges relate to associated electricity services such as new connections, and are subject to ongoing ovesight by the Office of the Regulator-General.

b) The Tariff Order is designed to minimise the costs of electricity maintenance work undertaken by the electricity businesses. The Tariff Order stipulates a CPI-X price control regime which provides incentives for the electricity businesses to minimise their costs (while not diminishing standards) in providing these services, whether that be in house or by way of external contractors. Further the independent Office of the Regulator-General has recently issued guideline No. 2 *Distribution Systems Augmentation* which outlines tendering processes to ensure that the electricity businesses carry out maintenance work on a least cost basis, consistent with the relevant technical standards. In conjunction with regular reviews of network usage charges by the Office of the Regulator-General, these tender processes seek to ensure that the impacts of competition on overall network costs are passed through to customers.

Treasurer: Powernet

2238. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What work is under consideration to give power generators firm access to the market before the sale of Powernet and what are the costs.

ANSWER:

The answer supplied by the Treasurer is :

Currently, in the Victorian electricity supply industry, neither PowerNet Victoria or the Victorian Power Exchange offer firm access to any generators. The privatisation of PowerNet Victoria will not have an impact on the firm access issue.

Sport: investment proposals

2393. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Sport): Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date (ie projects for 1996/97 capital budget). Accordingly the information requested cannot be supplied.

Wednesday, 29 October 1997

Treasurer: grants

1355. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Treasurer, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The Department of Treasury and Finance

Note: The Grants identified are those that have been charged to the Department's "recurrent grants accounts codes". The same information is reproduced in relation to question 1362.

1995/96

Organisation Name	1995/96	Date	Principal	Reason
United Nations Association of Australia	$15,000	29/11/97	A Gelme	Defray Administrative costs
Australian Accounting Research Foundation	$15,000 $16,500	28/12/95 19/1/96		Funding for developing accounting standards
Victorian Council of Social Service	$61,000 $61,000	22/11/95 14/1/96		In support of the management support & training unit to promote & assist the development of more effective & efficient management of community groups
Federalism Research Centre	$21,450	24/7/97	L Gosnell	Contribution for research.
Southern Peninsula Rescue	$72,160	22/11/95	B Taylor	Insurance premium for helicopter

1996/97

Organisation Name	1996/97	Date	Principal	Reason
United Nations Association of Australia	$15,000	21/3/97	A Gelme	Defray Administrative costs
Walk Against Want Appeal	$20,000	18/4/97	J Hobbs	Donation to the appeal
Care Australia Appeal	$20,000	19/4/97	P Fraser	Donation to the appeal
Australian Accounting Research Foundation	$33,000	21/3/97		Funding for developing accounting standards

State Trustees Limited

Organisation Name	1995/96	1996/97	Payment Date	Reason
Victorian Scout Foundation	$5,000	Nil	18/6/96	Queens Scout Overseas Scholarship
Spastic Society of Victoria	Nil	$35,000	28/10/96	Sponsorship

Treasury Corporation Of Victoria (TCV)

Organisation Name	1995/96	1996/97	Payment Date	Reason
Financial Markets Foundation for Children	Nil	$3,000	2/7/97	General support to Voluntary organisation.

Transport Accident Commission (TAC)

Organisation Name	1995/96	1996/97	Payment Date	Reason
Head Injury Project Implementation Trust Fund (Brotherhood of St.Laurence - The Right Revd. M.B.Challen, Director)	$497,275	$76,693	Various	Contribution to the implementation of the Head Injury Services plan.

General Research Programs Funded by TAC

Organisation Name	1995/96	1996/97	Payment Date	Reason
Victorian Institute of Forensic Pathology	$180,000	$150,000	Various	Research relating to road traffic fatalities with the view to improve the integration of trauma services and clinical management of victims of major trauma.
Salvation Army Property Trust (Bethesda Hospital)	$28,014	$28,000	Various	Longitudinal study of head injured patients.
Royal Children's Hospital Research Foundation	$48,214	Nil	Various	Research study on retarded development following head injury in preschool children.

Organisation Name	1995/96	1996/97	Payment Date	Reason
Microsurgery Foundation	Nil	$500,000	20/6/97	Research and equipment for the purpose of accelerating rehabilitation through shorter hospital stays, reduction in time off work, improved outcome and quality of life.
Monash University Accident Research Centre	$205,000	$210,000	Various	Baseline research programs (payment made upfront and research programs then identified through the financial year).

Office of the Regulator-General, Victoria

Response : Nil.

State Revenue Office

Response : Nil

Rural Finance Corporation

Response : Nil

Housing: grants

1366. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The Office of Housing provides grants to government and non-government organisations and individuals involved in the provision of housing services to those on low incomes for:

the acquisition and upgrade of accommodation,

to subsidise the operation of the organisations for needs assessment, community consultation, policy feedback, training, research/policy projects and for the provision of rebates on rental charges, and

for clients to gain access to the private rental market.

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me can only be provided in part in the attached documents, and due to the large number of grants involved, the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

(Information referred to in answer (53 pages) sent to honourable member and copy tabled in parliamentary library.)

Women's Affairs: grants

1374. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in response to the Honourable Member's question is:

The information requested by the Honourable Member is extensive and the time and resources are not available to answer it in full for the Department and all the portfolio agencies. Also, there is no universal definition of what constitutes a grant.

Consequently, provided below is that information which is readily available from within the Department of Justice. In general, "grant" has been taken to be funding given to non-Government organisations or to Government organisations where it involves program initiatives. It does not generally include funding provided to a body within the Justice portfolios where the funding is part of annual budget allocation. However, instances of funding provided for program initiatives to Government agencies, whether within or outside the Justice portfolios, have been included where the information is readily available.

The Honourable Member should note that there is publicly available information on funding programs to organisations and it is provided in documents such as budget papers and annual reports of the respective agencies involved.

Grant 1:

(a) Victorian Arts Centre

(b) Ms Sue Nattrass

(c) $5000

(d) Sponsorship for Celebrating Women Festival in May 1996

(e) May 1996

Grant 2:

(a) Australian Broadcasting Corporation

(b)

(c) $2500

(d) Rural Woman of the Year Awards to raise the profile of women and recognise their contribution to rural life.

(e) July 1995

Grant 3:

(a) National Council of Women, Victoria

(b) Beverly Blythe-Bailey

(c) $23,000

(d) To assist funding objectives of a women's peak organisation with a significant number of affiliated organisations and with no political affiliation

(e) November 1995

Grant 4:

(a) National Council of Women, Victoria

(b) Mrs Beverly Blythe-Bailey, State President

(c) $23,000

(d) To assist funding objectives of a women's peak organisation with a significant number of affiliated organisations and with no political affiliation

(e) January 1997

Grant 5:

(a) Office of the Status of Women, Canberra

(b) Ms Pru Goward

(c) $4300

(d) Victoria's contribution to the Commonwealth/State Ministers Conference on the Status of Women Activities Trust Fund to be employed for research purposes

(e) April 1997

Grant 6:

(a) Department of Natural Resources and Environment

(b) Mr Michael Taylor, Secretary

(c) $20,000

(d) Contribution to Rural Women's Bursaries to develop leadership skills

(e) May 1997

Fair Trading: grants

1375. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Fair Trading): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in response to the Honourable Member's question is:

The information requested by the Honourable Member is extensive and the time and resources are not available to answer it in full for the Department and all the portfolio agencies. Also, there is no universal definition of what constitutes a grant.

Consequently, provided below is that information which is readily available from within the Department of Justice. In general, "grant" has been taken to be funding given to non-Government organisations or to Government organisations where it involves program initiatives. It does not generally include funding provided to a body within the Justice portfolios where the funding is part of annual budget allocation.

However, instances of funding provided for program initiatives to Government agencies, whether within or outside the Justice portfolios, have been included where the information is readily available.

The Honourable Member should note that there is publicly available information on funding programs to organisations and it is provided in documents such as budget papers and annual reports of the respective agencies involved.

(Information referred to in answer (31 pages) sent to honourable member and copy tabled in parliamentary library.)

Attorney-General: grants

1376. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Attorney-General, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in response to the Honourable Member's question is:

The information requested by the Honourable Member is extensive and the time and resources are not available to answer it in full for the Department and all the portfolio agencies. Also, there is no universal definition of what constitutes a grant.

Consequently, provided below is that information which is readily available from within the Department of Justice. In general, "grant" has been taken to be funding given to non-Government organisations or to Government organisations where it involves program initiatives. It does not generally include funding provided to a body within the Justice portfolios where the funding is part of annual budget allocation. However, instances of funding provided for program initiatives to Government agencies, whether within or outside the Justice portfolios, have been included where the information is readily available.

The Honourable Member should note that there is publicly available information on funding programs to organisations and it is provided in documents such as budget papers and annual reports of the respective agencies involved.

Grant 1:

(a) CASA House

(b) Ms Jean Cameron

(c) $17,789

(d) Develop display material to inform the general community regarding the incidence, nature and consequences of violence against women, is accessible to a range of groups and challenges prevailing community attitudes and myths surrounding violence against women. Two large visual displays and a number of posters were produced and are in regular use.

(e) Payment was made following completion of each stage of the project. Final payment was made prior to the end of the 1996-97 budget year.

Grant 2:

(a) Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices

(b) Margaret E Brown JP

(c) $3000

(d) Ongoing support to the operations of RVAHJ which provides significant information services to JPs and Bail Justices in relation to discharge of statutory duties.

(e) 16 May 1996

Grant 3:

(a) Royal Victorian Association of Honorary Justices

(b) Margaret E Brown JP

(c) $5000

(d) Ongoing support to the operations of RVAHJ which provides significant information services to JPs and Bail Justices in relation to discharge of statutory duties.

(e) 6 May 1997

Grant 4:

(a) Victorian Court Information Network

(b) Therese McCarthy, Executive Director

(c) Total - $144, 662

(d) Victorian Court Information and Welfare Network has received funding for the last 15 years to coordinate and develop services to people going to court within a number of jurisdictions.

(e) $37,602 - 20 May 1995
$38,160 - 19 October 1995
$38,160 - 30 January 1996
$30,740 - 18 April 1996

Grant 5:

(a) Victorian Court Information Network

(b) Therese McCarthy, Executive Director

(c) Total - $139,185

(d) Victorian Court Information and Welfare Network has received funding for the last 15 years to coordinate and develop services to people going to court within a number of jurisdictions.

(e) $38,160 - 27 June 1996
$38,160 - 27 August 1996
$24,705 - 6 February 1997
$38,160 - 13 May 1997

Grant 6:

(a) Australian Institute of Judicial Administration

(b) Professor Greg Reinhardt, Executive Director

(c) Total - $40,703

(d) Ongoing support to the operations of the AIJA in its support and development role in provision of the research and educational services on a wide range of issues of relevance to the Judiciary across Australia.

(e) $20,352 - 28 December 1995
$20,352 - 26 April 1996

Grant 7:

(a) Australian Institute of Judicial Administration

(b) Professor Greg Reinhardt, Executive Director

(c) Total - $41,966

(d) Ongoing support to the operations of the AIJA in its support and development role in provision of the research and educational services on a wide range of issues of relevance to the Judiciary across Australia.

(e) $20,983 - 28 January 1997
$20,983 - 13 May 1997

Grant 8:

(a) Federation of Community Legal Centres

(b) Not available, Department dealt with Ms Shirley Birchfield

(c) $30,000

(d) For interpreting and translating services (Administered through VLA)

(e) November 1996

Grant 9:

(a) Law Aid Scheme

(b) Ms Stella Folie, Manager

(c) $1,806,000

(d) Funding agreement between AG/LIV/Bar Council in December 1996 for a grant of seed funding, including $125,000 for marketing. Managed by Trustees

(e) March 1997

Other Grants:

Grants are provided subject to the Crime Prevention and Victims' Aid Fund agreement. A total of $364,998 was made in grants in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 financial years to the following organisations:

Victorian Court Information Network
Victims of Crime Assistance League Inc.
Victorian Community Council Against Violence
Footscray Community Arts Centre
CASA House
Victoria Police, Child Exploitation Squad
The Mission of St James and St John
The Australian Foundation for Aftermath Reactions
West CASA

However, as the agreement contains a confidentiality clause further details of these grants cannot be released. The purpose of the grants are to assist various aspects of, or associated with the provision of services for victims of crime.

Treasurer: electricity system losses

2233. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer): In relation to the allocation of system losses:

(a) What modifications have been made to the pool rules and the various profiling studies on franchised customers in light of the substantial increases in electricity system losses experienced in February 1997.

(b) Which of the distribution businesses have been disadvantaged through the current allocation of fixed losses in the pool rules and system code, indicating whether any consideration has been given to compensating the most disadvantaged businesses and consumers.

(c) What mechanisms are in place to effectively allocate system losses to the remaining tranches of franchised customers when they become contestable.

(d) What is the anticipated cost of the problem over the life of NEM 1 and what contribution have problems of this sort had on reducing market participants taking up the risks of providing generation capacity to cover a projected shortfall in the summer of 1997-98 in the light of the inconsistent price and dispatch problems outlined by the PCC in PCC 97/23/03.

ANSWER:

The answer supplied by the Treasurer is:

There are losses in the transmission network and losses in the distribution networks. These losses are treated separately in the settlement process.

There have been no changes to the VicPool Rules relating to transmission losses this year.

No distribution business has been disadvantaged through the current allocation of fixed losses in the pool rules and system code, therefore no consideration of compensation has been required.

Whether a customer is a franchise or contestable customer does not influence the allocation of system losses. Such losses are incorporated in the energy price paid by electricity retailers in the wholesale pool.

There are currently no problems with the recognition of losses in the operation of NEM1. Since there is no material relationship between the magnitude of system losses incurred by the existing network and the supply and demand balance for summer 1997/98, there are no disincentives for suppliers to provide additional generation capacity to the system.

Premier: members' residential allowances

2396. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): Which additional Members of Parliament qualified for payment of the residential allowance following the changes made to the Parliamentary Allowances Regulations in 1996, indicating which of those members has now claimed the allowance.

ANSWER:

Regulation 6(1) of the Parliamentary Allowances Regulations 1992 was amended by the Parliamentary Allowances (Amendment) Regulations 1996, which were made on 16 July 1996. Since that date, the following additional Members of Parliament have claimed the allowance:

Mr G.H. Spry MLA

Mr M.F. Dixon MLA

The Hon S.J. Plowman MLA

The Hon S.D. Wilding MLC

The Hon W.A.N. Hartigan MLC

Tuesday, 11 November 1997

Premier: Internet home page

1272. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): In relation to the establishment of a home page on the Internet for the Premier:

(a) Who initiated the creation of the home page.

(b) What was the cost of setting up the page.

(c) Who decides on the information to be made available on the home page.

(d) Who maintains the home page and at what cost.

(e) What is the nature of the association, if any, of 3AW with the home page and the promotional brochure.

(f) What was the cost of the promotional brochure and who printed it.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

(a) The home page was created as part of the Government's Victoria 21 strategy to put all Government services and information online by the year 2000.

(b) The cost of establishing the home page was $38,064.

(c) Information for the home page is determined by the Government Information and Communications Branch within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, in association with the Premier's Office, in line with the Government's communications program.

(d) The home page is maintained by the Government Information and Communications Branch, in association with the Premier's Office. Ongoing maintenance costs are not available at this early stage.

(e) 3AW has no association with the home page or the promotional brochure. The station is referred to as one of a number of broadcasting organisations with which the Premier does regular interviews.

(f) The promotional brochure was printed by McLaren Press for a total cost of $1920.

Planning and Local Government: parliamentary secretary office expenses

1275. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): What are the office expenses of the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Local Government since 30 March 1996, including — (i) telephone expenses; (ii) entertainment expenses; and (iii) credit card expenses.

ANSWER:

The answer supplied by the Minister for Planning and Local Government is:

The Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Local Government is accommodated in the Minister's Office and associated expenses are incorporated in the Minister's Office budget.

The time and resources to establish expenses associated with individual telephone extensions cannot be justified.

The Parliamentary Secretary was reimbursed $185.60 for the cost of an official lunch hosted by the Minister for Planning and Local Government at Parliament House on 4 December 1996. The Parliamentary Secretary signed the invoice. This is the only entertainment cost recorded. This amount

was included in the entertainment figure given in my answer to Question No 259 raised in the Legislative Assembly and tabled on 9 April 1997, pages 1824-1825.

The Parliamentary Secretary does not hold a credit card issued by the Government.

Police and Emergency Services: grants

1360. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in response to the Honourable Member's question is:

The information requested by the Honourable Member is extensive and the time and resources are not available to answer it in full for the Department and all the portfolio agencies. Also, there is no universal definition of what constitutes a grant.

Consequently, provided below is that information which is readily available from within the Department of Justice. In general, "grant" has been taken to be funding given to non-Government organisations or to Government organisations where it involves program initiatives. It does not generally include funding provided to a body within the Justice portfolios where the funding is part of annual budget allocation. However, instances of funding provided for program initiatives to Government agencies, whether within or outside the Justice portfolios, have been included where the information is readily available.

The Honourable Member should note that there is publicly available information on funding programs to organisations and it is provided in documents such as budget papers and annual reports of the respective agencies involved.

(Information referred to in answer (237 pages) sent to honourable member and copy tabled in parliamentary library.)

Corrections: grants

1361. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the information available in response to the Honourable Member's question is:

The information requested by the Honourable Member is extensive and the time and resources are not available to answer it in full for the Department and all the portfolio agencies. Also, there is no universal definition of what constitutes a grant.

Consequently, provided below is that information which is readily available from within the Department of Justice. In general, "grant" has been taken to be funding given to non-Government organisations or to Government organisations where it involves program initiatives. It does not generally include funding provided to a body within the Justice portfolios where the funding is part of annual budget allocation. However, instances of funding provided for program initiatives to Government agencies, whether within or outside the Justice portfolios, have been included where the information is readily available.

The Honourable Member should note that there is publicly available information on funding programs to organisations and it is provided in documents such as budget papers and annual reports of the respective agencies involved.

Grant 1:

(a) Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders and Epistle Post Release Service

(b) Ms Judy Lazarus and Mr Antony Calabro

(c) $233,000

(d) Practical welfare services for prisoners, support and referral services for families of prisoners and post release services for ex-prisoners as set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, October 1995 and February 1996

Grant 2:

(a) Brosnan Centre Youth Service

(b) Mr Paul Newland

(c) $48,000

(d) Post release services for prisoners aged under 25 as set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, October 1995 and February 1996

Grant 3:

(a) Salvation Army Melbourne Central Division

(b) Major Graeme McClimont

(c) $75,000

(d) Practical welfare services for prisoners, support and referral services for families of prisoners set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, October 1995 and February 1996

Grant 4:

(a) Prison Fellowship

(b) Mr Richard Whaley

(c) $21,000

(d) To provide support and referral services for families of prisoners, staff visitor centre at Barwon Prison and transport visitors as set out in the service agreement.

(e) Two instalments; October 1995 and February 1996.

Grant 5:

(a) St Lukes Family Care Bendigo

(b) Mr Russell Deal

(c) $10,000

(d) Family conferencing for prisoners at Tarrengower and Fairlea as set out in service agreement.

(e) November 1995

Grant 6:

(a) Muwila House Inc. Beechworth

(b) Mr Ian McKinley

(c) $8,000

(d) Visitor support Beechworth Prison as set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, October 1995 and February 1996

Grant 7:

(a) Sale Prisoner's Aid

(b) Mr Karl Schmack

(c) $5,000

(d) Visitor support Sale Prison as set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, October 1995 and February 1996

Grant 8:

(a) Criminology Research Council

(b) Ms Elizabeth Raffaele

(c) $40, 203

(d) Victoria's contribution to the Criminology Research Fund.

(e) August 1995

Grant 9:

(a) Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders and Epistle Post Release Service

(b) Ms Judy Lazarus and Mr Antony Calabro

(c) $235,000

(d) Practical welfare services for prisoners, support and referral services for families of prisoners and post release services for ex-prisoners as set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, December 1996 and May 1997

Grant 10:

(a) Brosnan Centre Youth Service

(b) Mr Paul Newland

(c) $41,000

(d) Post release services for prisoners aged under 25 as set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, December 1996 and May 1997

Grant 11:

(a) Salvation Army Melbourne Central Division

(b) Major Graeme McClimont

(c) $30,000

(d) Post release support for prisoners and practical support for families of prisoners set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, December 1995 and June 1997

Grant 12:

(a) Prison Fellowship

(b) Mr Richard Waley

(c) $15,000

(d) Support and referral services for families of prisoners, staff visitors centre at Barwon Prison and transport visitors as set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, December 1996 and April 1997

Grant 13:

(a) Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare Association

(b) Mrs Cam Nguyen

(c) $15,000

(d) Support to families of Vietnamese prisoners as set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, December 1996 and April 1997

Grant 14:

(a) Muwila House Inc. Beechworth

(b) Mr Ian McKinley

(c) $8,000.00

(d) Visitor support Beechworth Prison as set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, December 1996 and April 1997

Grant 15:

(a) Sale Prisoner's Aid

(b) Mr Karl Schmack

(c) $5,000

(d) Visitor support Sale Prison as set out in service agreement.

(e) Two instalments, December 1996 and April 1997

Grant 16:

(a) Criminology Research Council

(b) Ms Elizabeth Raffaele

(c) $37, 798

(d) Victoria's contribution to the Criminology Research Fund.

(e) October 1996

Finance: grants

1362. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance: In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

Department of Treasury and Finance

Note: The Grants identified are those that have been charged to the Department's "recurrent grants accounts codes". The same information is reproduced in relation to question 1355.

1995/96

Organisation Name	1995/96	Date	Principal	Reason
United Nations Association of Australia	$15,000	29/11/97	A Gelme	Defray Administrative costs
Australian Accounting Research Foundation	$15,000 $16,500	28/12/95 19/1/96		Funding for developing accounting standards
Victorian Council of Social Service	$61,000 $61,000	22/11/95 14/1/96		In support of the management support & training unit to promote & assist the development of more effective & efficient management of community groups
Federalism Research Centre	$21,450	24/7/97	L Gosnell	Contribution for research.
Southern Peninsula Rescue	$72,160	22/11/95	B Taylor	Insurance premium for helicopter

1996/97

Organisation Name	1996/97	Date	Principal	Reason
United Nations Association of Australia	$15,000	21/3/97	A Gelme	Defray Administrative costs
Walk Against Want Appeal	$20,000	18/4/97	J Hobbs	Donation to the appeal
Care Australia Appeal	$20,000	19/4/97	P Fraser	Donation to the appeal
Australian Accounting Research Foundation	$33,000	21/3/97		Funding for developing accounting standards

Gaming Authority

Nil

Victorian WorkCover Authority

Schedule 1

Victorian WorkCover Authority Grants 1995/96.

Schedule 2

Victorian WorkCover Authority Grants 1996/97.

It should be noted that the former Health and Safety Organisation (HSO) was merged with the Victorian WorkCover Authority on 2 July 1996. All grants made by the HSO in the period 1995/96 are included in Schedule 1.

(Schedules referred to in answer (7 pages) sent to honourable member and copy tabled in parliamentary library.)

Aboriginal Affairs: grants

1367. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs): In relation to each department and agency responsible to the Minister, what grants were made to organisations during 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, indicating the name of each organisation, its principal, the amount of each grant, the reason for the grant, and the date on which each payment was made.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to each Department and Agency responsible to me can only be provided in part in the attached documents, and due to the large number of grants involved, the time and resources required to extract further information cannot be justified.

(Information referred to in answer (9 pages) sent to honourable member and copy tabled in parliamentary library.)

Premier: employment initiatives, Kingston

1415. **THE HON. M. M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier):

(a) What employment initiatives has the Premier's Department undertaken in 1995-96 and 1996-97, respectively, which will benefit the local government area of the City of Kingston.

(b) What employment initiatives will the Department undertake in this local government area in 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I am informed that the answer to the question above is:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet undertakes or contributes to a range of employment initiatives for the benefit of unemployed persons across Victoria and as such, information is not held in relation to specific local government areas.

Two specific employment initiatives designed to benefit unemployed persons across Victoria are:

(a) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative are specific employment initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public

Service Commissioner, in 1995-96 and 1996-97. The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is targeted to university graduates, whilst the Youth Employment Initiative is targeted to 16-20 year olds who are not intending to pursue tertiary studies. Both employment initiatives are directed to benefit unemployed youth across the State of Victoria and are not restricted to specific local government areas.

(b) The Graduate Recruitment Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative will again be undertaken by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, in 1997-98.

Arts: investment proposals

2385. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Minister for the Arts): Will the Minister provide a list of all investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

Although the Government introduced improved capital works planning processes from 1993 onwards, the *Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines* were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date (i.e. projects for 1996/97 capital budget). Accordingly, the information requested cannot be supplied.

Premier: investment proposals

2386. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable Minister for Industry, Science and Technology (for the Honourable the Premier): Will the Premier provide a list of all investment proposals relating to his portfolio in 1996-97, evaluated in accordance with current Investment Evaluation Guidelines and submitted to the Department of Treasury and Finance.

ANSWER:

Although the Government introduced improved capital works planning processes from 1993 onwards, the *Investment Evaluation Policy and Guidelines* were not issued in final form until September 1996. Investment proposals were not required to meet the requirements of the Guidelines prior to this date (i.e. projects for 1996/97 capital budget). Accordingly, the information requested cannot be supplied.

Thursday, 13 November 1997

Health: maternity hospital and post-natal service funding

2414. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What amount of funding has been allocated to public maternity hospitals in 1994-95 and 1995-96, respectively, to provide domiciliary post natal services to women as mentioned on page 17 of Victoria Women's Budget 1995-96.

ANSWER:

Victorian public maternity hospitals are funded to offer domiciliary postnatal care to mothers and infants who require it upon discharge, in the days immediately following birth. Care may be provided directly by the hospital or, in whole or in part, purchased from another health service agency.

The funding takes the form of an additional variable case payment of $75 for each obstetric separation.

In 1994-95, there were 46,901 obstetric separations, giving rise to an amount of $3,517,575 in additional payments for domiciliary postnatal care.

In 1995-96, the amount was $3,432,150, for 45,762 obstetric separations.

Wednesday, 19 November 1997

Planning and Local Government: free publication

1917. **THE HON. P. POWER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): In respect of the free publication Super Service - Customer Service Newsletter - Quarterly (Local Government) in each year from 1993 to 1996 what has been — (i) the numbers of this publication distributed; and (ii) the budget allocated for the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication.

ANSWER:

The answer supplied by the Minister for Planning and Local Government is:

Production of the newsletter commenced in 1996 with four editions being prepared - February, May, August and November. In 1997 an edition was produced in March.

No record was kept by the Office of Local Government of the number of newsletters which were distributed. However, they were made available to all Councils and any person who requested a copy of the report.

The report was prepared within the budget resources of the Office of Local Government. No separate budget allocation was identified for the preparation of the report.

The time and resources required to provide an estimate of the cost of the preparation, printing and distribution of the publication cannot be justified.

Wednesday, 3 December 1997

Treasurer: gas industry reform

1242. **THE HON. D.T. WALPOLE** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer):

(a) What studies have been carried out into structural reform and management structures in the gas industry in Victoria over the past four years by Treasury, the Regulator-General and the Victorian gas industry, indicating which reports have dealt with the costs of the structural reforms.

(b) Which reports indicated that the proposed reforms will benefit — (i) the gas industry transmission, distribution and retail companies; and (ii) consumers.

(c) How the benefits are defined to each party.

(d) Will the Government be making these reports available to the public.

ANSWER:

The answer supplied by the Treasurer is :

The Government has canvassed a wide range of views and possible options in addressing gas reforms consistent with the approach taken in the electricity industry and the national agenda for engendering competition into the industry. Reforms to the gas industry will continue to be subject to a rigorous and extensive process of analysis, consultation and review. These processes are important in coming to a balanced position and in ensuring that all facts options, opinions and likely benefits to stakeholders and consumers are considered and that when final decisions are made they take into account the best available analysis.

The Government has consistently reported to the public on the progress of these reforms. Documents outlining the rationale behind these reforms and their benefits to the community have been published and are freely available to the public.

Industry, Science and Technology: FOI requests

2469. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: In relation to Freedom of Information requests to departments and agencies that come within the Minister's portfolio:

(a) How many requests were received by for each department and agency in each year since 1993.

(b) What was the cost of opposing such requests for each department and agency, including legal fees, for each year since 1993.

ANSWER:

The answer as provided by my Department and agencies is:

(a) statistics on the number of Freedom of Information requests received by departments and agencies are contained in the Freedom of Information Annual Reports produced by the Victorian Attorney-General;

(b) legal costs in defending FOI appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, concerning my portfolio, were $1,500. Additional costs consisted of Departmental officers' time. The time and resources required to quantify these costs cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: taxes, charges and fees

2471. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: In relation to all departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio, which taxes, charges and fees have increased since 30 March 1996.

ANSWER:

The answer as provided by my Department and agencies is: Nil.

Industry, Science and Technology: market research

2472. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: In relation to all departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all polling and/or market research undertaken since 30 March 1996.

ANSWER:

The answer as provided by my Department and agencies is: There has been no polling/market research undertaken in my Department of State Development portfolio in the period specified. The Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust has internally compiled visitor statistics for the period.

Industry, Science and Technology: job creation schemes

2473. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: What are the details of job creation schemes being carried out in each scheme; (ii) the number of people engaged in the scheme; (iii) the expected life of the scheme; (iv) whether any such schemes carry accreditation with any State or national training body; and (v) the locality of any such schemes.

ANSWER:

The answer as provided by my Department and agencies is:

The major employment initiatives conducted by the Department of State Development are the Community Business Employment Program, the StreetLIFE Program, and the Youth Employment Initiative. Details, including budgetary provisions, are outlined in the 1996/97 Annual Report of the Department of State Development.

Each of these initiatives is delivered by private and community based organisations through contracts with the Department. The Community Business Employment Program and the StreetLIFE Program are delivered by 57 and 37 organisations respectively. The Youth Employment Initiative is currently delivered by a Melbourne based group training company. From next year, additional companies will be used to implement the statewide expansion of the initiative.

The Community Business Employment program, the StreetLIFE program and the Youth Employment Initiative are on-going programs.

The Youth Employment Initiative traineeships are accredited by the State Training Board, Office of Further Education & Training and the Australian National Training Authority.

The Community Business Employment Program and the StreetLIFE Program operate in all 14 ABS Labour Force Regions.

Small Business: FOI requests

2499. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to Freedom of Information requests to departments and agencies that come within the Minister's portfolio:

(a) How many requests were received by for each department and agency in each year since 1993.

(b) What was the cost of opposing such requests for each department and agency, including legal fees, for each year since 1993.

ANSWER:

(a) Statistics on the number of Freedom of Information requests received by Departments and agencies are contained in the Freedom of Information Annual Reports by the Victorian Attorney-General.

(b) Nil.

Small Business: taxes, charges and fees

2501. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to all departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio, which taxes, charges and fees have increased since 30 March 1996. market research

ANSWER:

In relation to all departments and agencies within my portfolio, no taxes, charges and fees have increased since 30 March 1996. Further, I advise the Honourable Member that several charges have in fact decreased over the same period, specifically -

- Variation of a Liquor Licence or Permit, decreased by $162 from $270 to the current charge of $108;
- Transfer of a Liquor Licence or Permit, decreased by $181 from $213 to the current charge of $32; and
- Removal of a Liquor Licence or Permit, decreased by $180 from $269 to the current charge of $89.

Small Business: market research

2502. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to all departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all polling and/or market research undertaken since 30 March 1996.

ANSWER:

One market research project was undertaken in relation to the Business Licensing Information Service by BIS Shrapnel in January/February 1997 at a cost of $48,620.

Small Business: job creation schemes

2503. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: What are the details of job creation schemes being carried out in each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, including — (i) the cost of any such scheme; (ii) the number of people engaged in the scheme; (iii) the expected life of the scheme; (iv) whether any such schemes carry accreditation with any State or national training body; and (v) the locality of any such schemes.

ANSWER:

No such schemes are administered within my portfolio.

Industry, Science and Technology: taxes, charges and fees:

2599. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what taxes, charges and fees have been adjusted since 30 March 1996, indicating all details of the level of the tax, charge or fee as at 30 March 1996, the amount of the increase(s) and/or decrease(s), and the current level.

ANSWER:

Industry, Science The answer as provided by my Department and agencies is: Under the former Employee Relations Act 1992 a fee of $50 had to accompany an application with respect to an unfair dismissal order. This provision was repealed as part of the transfer of Victoria's industrial functions to the Commonwealth.

Industry, Science and Technology: asset sales

2600. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what asset sales have taken place since 30 March 1996, indicating — (i) the sale price; (ii) the buyer of the asset; (iii) whether there was a tender process; and (iv) the valuation of the asset prior to sale.

ANSWER:

The answer as provided by my Department and agencies is:

There have been no major asset sales within the portfolio since 30 March 1996. General use assets such as vehicles and office equipment are disposed of via trade-in or auction as appropriate. Time and resources required to provide detailed information covering such asset disposals cannot be justified.

Industry, Science and Technology: advertising

2601. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all advertising contracts or consultancies in the year 1996-97, indicating the — (i) name of the company so contracted to perform advertising work; (ii) value of the consultancy or contract; (iii) nature of the consultancy or contract; and (iv) duration of the contract or consultancy.

ANSWER:

The answer as provided by my Department and agencies is:

Department of State Development (Industry, Science and Technology portfolio) advertising contracts:

(i) Hambleton Ruff Pty Ltd

(ii) $ 208,527

(iii) Development of advertising copy and concepts to promote Department initiatives, business programs; specific programs and events - Air Show; Governor of Victoria Export Awards, the Advantage Melbourne campaign.

(iv) Ongoing

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust advertising contracts:

(i) Advertising Associates	(i) Cam Carter
(ii) $8,910	(ii) $15,000

(iii) Tender consultants to manage the tender process	(iii)	Communication & advertising
(iv) May to June 1997	(iv)	Dec 1996 to June 1997

Small Business: taxes, charges and fees

2615. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what taxes, charges and fees have been adjusted since 30 March 1996, indicating all details of the level of the tax, charge or fee as at 30 March 1996, the amount of the increase(s) and/or decrease(s), and the current level.

ANSWER:

In relation to all departments and agencies within my portfolio, the following taxes, charges and fees have been adjusted since 30 March 1996 -

- Variation of a Liquor Licence or Permit; previously $270; decrease $162; current charge $108
- Transfer of a Liquor Licence or Permit; previously $213; decrease $181; current charge $32
- Removal of a Liquor Licence or Permit; previously $269; decrease $180; current charge $89

As the Honourable Member would be aware, following a decision of the High Court of Australia changes were made to the Commonwealth wholesale sales tax regime and State liquor licence fees were abolished.

Small Business: asset sales

2616. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what asset sales have taken place since 30 March 1996, indicating — (i) the sale price; (ii) the buyer of the asset; (iii) whether there was a tender process; and (iv) the valuation of the asset prior to sale.

ANSWER:

There have been no major asset sales within the portfolio since 30 March 1996. (General use assets such as vehicles and office equipment are disposed of via trade-in or auction as appropriate.) (Time and resources required to provide detailed information covering such asset disposals cannot be justified.)

Small Business: advertising

2617. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all advertising contracts or consultancies in the year 1996-97, indicating the — (i) name of the company so contracted to perform advertising work; (ii) value of the consultancy or contract; (iii) nature of the consultancy or contract; and (iv) duration of the contract or consultancy.

ANSWER:

In relation to each department and agency within my portfolio, no contracts or consultancies for advertising were entered into in the year 1996-97.

Thursday, 4 December 1997

Small Business: ministerial expenses

2500. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to the 1996-97 financial year,what expenses were incurred by the Minister or the Minister's Office, indicating the amounts expended on — (i) credit card expenditure; (ii) alcohol; (iii) entertainment; (iv) travel allowance and incidental expenses; (v) domestic travel; (vi) international travel; (vii) charter travel; (viii) office salaries; (ix) accommodation expenses; (x) car hire; and (xi) general office expenses.

ANSWER:

I refer to the answer provided to Question No. 443 (refer to Legislative Council Hansard issued 8 April 1997, at page 130). Because Question 443 is similar to this Question and substantially covers the same period of time, the time and resources required to provide further details for this Question, when it has already been substantially answered, cannot be justified.

Sport: ministerial expenses

2548. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Sport): In relation to the 1996-97 financial year,what expenses were incurred by the Minister or the Minister's Office, indicating the amounts expended on — (i) credit card expenditure; (ii) alcohol; (iii) entertainment; (iv) travel allowance and incidental expenses; (v) domestic travel; (vi) international travel; (vii) charter travel; (viii) office salaries; (ix) accommodation expenses; (x) car hire; and (xi) general office expenses.

ANSWER:

I refer to the answer provided to Question No. 532 (refer Legislative Council Hansard, Tuesday 8 April 1997 page 1320). Because Question 456 is similar to this question and substantially covers the same period of time, the time and resources required to provide further details for this Question, when it has already been substantially answered, cannot be justified.

Rural Development: FOI requests

2553. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): In relation to Freedom of Information requests to departments and agencies that come within the Minister's portfolio:

(a) How many requests were received by for each department and agency in each year since 1993.

(b) What was the cost of opposing such requests for each department and agency, including legal fees, for each year since 1993.

ANSWER:

Department of State Development

Information relating to the Department of State Development has been provided by the Honourable Mark Birrell, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, in his response to Question on Notice No 2469.

Albury Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation

Nil

Geelong Region Commission and Latrobe Regional Commission

These two organisations have been abolished and the information is not readily available.

Rural Development: ministerial expenses

2554. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): In relation to the 1996-97 financial year, what expenses were incurred by the Minister or the Minister's Office, indicating the amounts expended on — (i) credit card expenditure; (ii) alcohol; (iii) entertainment; (iv) travel allowance and incidental expenses; (v) domestic travel; (vi) international travel; (vii) charter travel; (viii) office salaries; (ix) accommodation expenses; (x) car hire; and (xi) general office expenses.

ANSWER:

I refer to the answer provided to Question No. 533 (refer Legislative Council Hansard, Tuesday 8 April 1997 page 1321). Because Question 456 is similar to this question and substantially covers the same period of time, the time and resources required to provide further details for this Question, when it has already been substantially answered, cannot be justified.

Rural Development: taxes, charges and fees

2555. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): In relation to all departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio, which taxes, charges and fees have increased since 30 March 1996.

ANSWER:

Department of State Development

Information relating to the Department of State Development has been provided by the Honourable Mark Birrell, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, in his response to Question on Notice No 2472.

Albury Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation

Nil

Rural Development: market research

2556. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): In relation to all departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all polling and/or market research undertaken since 30 March 1996.

ANSWER:

Department of State Development

Information relating to the Department of State Development has been provided by the Honourable Mark Birrell, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, in his response to Question on Notice No 2471.

Albury Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation

Nil

Rural Development: job creation schemes

2557. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): What are the details of job creation schemes being carried out in each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, including — (i) the cost of any such scheme; (ii) the number of people engaged in the scheme; (iii) the expected life of the scheme; (iv) whether any such schemes carry accreditation with any State or national training body; and (v) the locality of any such schemes.

ANSWER:

Department of State Development

Information relating to the Department of State Development has been provided by the Honourable Mark Birrell, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, in his response to Question on Notice No 2473.

Albury Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation

Nil

Industry, Science and Technology: public relations and marketing

2602. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology: In relation to each department or agency within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all persons and costs associated with public relations, media relations or marketing, as defined in the Auditor General's special report No. 43, Marketing Government Services, indicating — (i) how many persons are involved in marketing government services (including those involved in media or public relations) in each department or agency; (ii) the total cost, including salaries, for the provision of such marketing services for the period since 30 March 1996 to date; and (iii) the budget for the provision of such services for the year 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The answer as provided by my Department and agencies is:

Department of State Development:

dsdMarketing provides public relations and promotional services to the Department of State Development and all Ministers within the portfolio.

(i) Presently there are 15.6 officers in dsdMarketing.

(ii) Salaries plus marketing budget (March 1996 to 19 November 1997) $1,763,226.

(iii) Total project budget for 1997/98 is $1.6 million.

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust:

(i) Ten persons at 30/10/97.

(ii) Total cost from 30 March 1996 to 31 October 1997 $1,760,429.

(iii) Budgeted year ended 30 June, 1998 $2,735,000.

Small Business: public relations and marketing

2618. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to each department or agency within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all persons and costs associated with public relations, media relations or marketing, as defined in the Auditor General's special report No. 43, Marketing Government Services, indicating — (i) how many persons are involved in marketing government services (including those involved in media or public relations) in each department or agency; (ii) the total cost, including salaries, for the provision of such marketing services for the period since 30 March 1996 to date; and (iii) the budget for the provision of such services for the year 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I believe the Honourable Member is mistaken in referring to the Auditor General's special report No. 43, which is actually entitled Protecting Victoria's Children. Perhaps the Honourable Member meant to refer to the Auditor General's special report No. 39, entitled Marketing Government Services.

Three persons were employed by Small Business Victoria as part of its marketing and communications group during the period 30 March 1996 to 30 June 1997. I am advised that total expenditure during this period was $360,188.

Following a restructure of administration, these services are now provided by the Department of State Development Marketing Unit. For information on the activities of dsdMarketing, I refer the Honourable Member to the response by the Honourable Mark Birrell, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology to Question on Notice No. 2602.

Rural Development: taxes, charges and fees

2663. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what taxes, charges and fees have been adjusted since 30 March 1996, indicating all details of the level of the tax, charge or fee as at 30 March 1996, the amount of the increase(s) and/or decrease(s), and the current level.

ANSWER:

Department of State Development

Information relating to the Department of State Development has been provided by the Honourable Mark Birrell, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, in his response to Question on Notice No 2599.

Albury Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation

Nil

Rural Development: asset sales

2664. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what asset sales have taken place since 30 March 1996, indicating — (i) the sale price; (ii) the buyer of the asset; (iii) whether there was a tender process; and (iv) the valuation of the asset prior to sale.

ANSWER:

Department of State Development

Information relating to the Department of State Development has been provided by the Honourable Mark Birrell, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, in his response to Question on Notice No 2600.

Albury Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation

Nil

Rural Development: advertising

2665. THE HON. M.M. GOULD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all advertising contracts or consultancies in the year 1996-97, indicating the — (i) name of the company so contracted to perform advertising

work; (ii) value of the consultancy or contract; (iii) nature of the consultancy or contract; and (iv) duration of the contract or consultancy.

ANSWER:

Department of State Development:

Information relating to the Department of State Development has been provided by the Hon Mark Mirrell, Minister for Industry, Science & Technology, in his response to Question on Notice No 2601.

Albury Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation

Nil

Rural Development: public relations and marketing

2666. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Rural Development): In relation to each department or agency within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all persons and costs associated with public relations, media relations or marketing, as defined in the Auditor General's special report No. 43, Marketing Government Services, indicating — (i) how many persons are involved in marketing government services (including those involved in media or public relations) in each department or agency; (ii) the total cost, including salaries, for the provision of such marketing services for the period since 30 March 1996 to date; and (iii) the budget for the provision of such services for the year 1997-98.

ANSWER:

Department of State Development

Information relating to the Department of State Development has been provided by the Honourable Mark Birrell, Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, in his response to Question on Notice No 2602.

Albury Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation

Nil

Tuesday, 9 December 1997

Roads and Ports: market research

2514. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: In relation to all departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all polling and/or market research undertaken since 30 March 1996.

ANSWER:

Market research was undertaken to assist VicRoads to develop and finalise a "Road Users' Charter" including the provision of recommendations on the content, format and design of the document. The market research was undertaken between November 1996 and June 1997 for VicRoads by Western Pacific Communications at a cost of $25,400.

Market research was undertaken to provide public and user feedback on the design and development of VicRoads' "Home Page" on the Internet. The market research was undertaken in April 1996 by Western Pacific Communications at a cost of $12,500.

A market research project commenced in December 1996 to "benchmark the effectiveness of the current Victorian direction and tourist signs prior to the implementation of the new Statewide Route Numbering and Tourist Signing Programs". The market research was undertaken for VicRoads and Tourism Victoria jointly by Beatts Not Knowing of Elwood and Market Solutions Pty Ltd of Coburg at a total cost of $9,000.

Market research was undertaken to obtain comments from learner drivers and their parents on the design and content of a VicRoads' booklet to promote learner driver practice. The market research was undertaken in December 1996 by Research International at a cost of $9,000.

Market research was undertaken to gauge a range of road safety issues amongst Victorian motorists to assist with future initiatives. The research was undertaken by AGB McNair in June 1997 at a cost of $23,700.

Market research was undertaken to gauge the current extent of road safety programs and activities within Victorian municipalities. The survey was conducted by CNG Data Services Analysis in September 1997 at a cost of $1,900.

Market research was conducted to ascertain current road safety programs operating at the local level (such as in schools). The survey was undertaken in September 1997 by Hennessy Services Pty Ltd at a cost of $1,800.

Roads and Ports: job creation schemes

2515. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Roads and Ports: What are the details of job creation schemes being carried out in each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, including — (i) the cost of any such scheme; (ii) the number of people engaged in the scheme; (iii) the expected life of the scheme; (iv) whether any such schemes carry accreditation with any State or national training body; and (v) the locality of any such schemes.

ANSWER:

The job creation schemes relevant to the Department of Infrastructure are:

Youth Employment Initiative

Graduate Recruitment Scheme.

The Youth Employment Initiative is aimed at young people between the ages of 16 - 20. Employment is for a twelve month period, and participants are paid according to the National Training Wage Award Rates ($8008 - $18,000 per annum, including overheads). The Department currently employs three people through this scheme in Melbourne.

The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is aimed at university graduates. Employment during the year long program is provided on a four month placement basis, with the graduate returning to their 'home' Department at the end of the graduate year, for ongoing employment. Graduates are paid between $27,709 - $27,744 per annum, according to their qualifications and are placed in the Department of Infrastructure. In 1997 the Department has 4 graduates permanently placed, and has provided short term placements for a further 10 graduates.

The Department also participates in work experience placements for secondary school students throughout the year. To date seven students have participated in the scheme this year.

Tertiary Education and Training: FOI requests

2529. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training): In relation to Freedom of Information requests to departments and agencies that come within the Minister's portfolio:

(a) How many requests were received by for each department and agency in each year since 1993.

(b) What was the cost of opposing such requests for each department and agency, including legal fees, for each year since 1993.

ANSWER:

The information requested in relation to each department and agency responsible to me is not provided for the following reasons:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Hon. M M Gould may wish to submit a more focused and specific question on the matter.

Tertiary Education and Training: taxes, charges and fees

2531. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training): In relation to all departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio, which taxes, charges and fees have increased since 30 March 1996.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The Hon. M M Gould is referred to the answer to Question on Notice No 2631.

Tertiary Education and Training: market research

2532. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training): In relation to all departments and agencies within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all polling and/or market research undertaken since 30 March 1996.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Since 1996, market research has been undertaken on a number of activities for the Department of Education.

Further details are unable to be provided as it would necessitate the diversion of Departmental resources from priority work at substantial cost.

Tertiary Education and Training: job creation schemes

2533. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training): What are the details of job creation schemes being carried out in each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, including — (i) the cost of any such scheme; (ii) the number of people engaged in the scheme; (iii) the expected life of the scheme; (iv) whether any such schemes carry accreditation with any State or national training body; and (v) the locality of any such schemes.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

There are no job creation schemes being carried out within those parts of the Department of Education under my administration.

This response does not, however, cover any activities by TAFE Institutes, Universities or other post-secondary institutions as these are self governing bodies responsible for their own day to day administration.

Tertiary Education and Training: taxes, charges and fees

2631. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training): In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what taxes, charges and fees have been adjusted since 30 March 1996, indicating all details of the level of the tax, charge or fee as at 30 March 1996, the amount of the increase(s) and/or decrease(s), and the current level.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

Reduced fees for private provider registrations and extensions to scope of registration were introduced in August 1997.

The fee for the first year of registration was reduced from $2,000 to $1,000, for providers who submit applications through an approved Training Recognition Consultant. The fee for community based providers for the first year of registration was also halved from $1,000 to $500 if applications are submitted through an approved Training Recognition Consultant.

There is no longer a fee for applications for extensions to scope of registration if the application is submitted through an approved Training Recognition Consultant. The fee for applications for extensions to scope of registration submitted otherwise than through an approved Training Recognition Consultant has, however, been increased to $400 for the first course and $300 per additional course, per application.

A fee for the accreditation of non-Crown owned courses was introduced on 1 January 1997. The fee is $1000 per full course (or sequence of linked courses) and $500 per short course.

Fees for the use of Crown copyright curriculum have been extended to include fees for service delivery by Victorian providers outside of Victoria (includes overseas). Fees are as follows:

$500 per annum for graduate certificates and shorts courses
$1000 per annum for Certificate I and II level courses
$1500 per annum for Certificate III and IV level courses
$2000 per annum for Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses

This response does not, however, cover any activities by TAFE Institutes, Universities or other post-secondary institutions as these are self governing bodies responsible for their own day to day administration.

Wednesday, 10 December 1997

Health: job creation schemes

2479. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: What are the details of job creation schemes being carried out in each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, including — (i) the cost of any such scheme; (ii) the number of people engaged in the scheme; (iii) the expected life of the scheme; (iv) whether any such schemes carry accreditation with any State or national training body; and (v) the locality of any such schemes.

ANSWER:

No specific "job creation" schemes are directly undertaken by the Department of Human Services.

Housing: job creation schemes

2521. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What are the details of job creation schemes being carried out in each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, including — (i) the cost of any such scheme; (ii) the number of people engaged in the scheme; (iii) the expected life of the scheme; (iv) whether any such schemes carry accreditation with any State or national training body; and (v) the locality of any such schemes.

ANSWER:

No specific "job creation" schemes are directly undertaken by the Department of Human Services.

Housing: parliamentary secretary expenses

2522. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): In relation to all Parliamentary Secretaries within the Minister's portfolio, what are the expenses of the office of each such Secretary since 30 March 1996, including — (i) domestic and international travel; (ii) air charter travel; (iii) travel allowance and incidental travel expenses; (iv) car hire; (v) credit card expenses; (vi) office salaries and wages; (vii) accommodation expenses; and (viii) entertainment and alcohol expenses.

ANSWER:

There is no Parliamentary Secretary for the Honourable the Minister for Housing.

Aboriginal Affairs: job creation schemes

2527. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for responsible Aboriginal Affairs): What are the details of job creation schemes being carried out in each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, including — (i) the cost of any such scheme; (ii) the number of people engaged in the scheme; (iii) the expected life of the scheme; (iv) whether any such schemes carry accreditation with any State or national training body; and (v) the locality of any such schemes.

ANSWER:

No specific "job creation" schemes are directly undertaken by the Department of Human Services.

Aboriginal Affairs: parliamentary secretary expenses

2528. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs): In relation to all Parliamentary Secretaries within

the Minister's portfolio, what are the expenses of the office of each such Secretary since 30 March 1996, including — (i) domestic and international travel; (ii) air charter travel; (iii) travel allowance and incidental travel expenses; (iv) car hire; (v) credit card expenses; (vi) office salaries and wages; (vii) accommodation expenses; and (viii) entertainment and alcohol expenses.

ANSWER:

There is no Parliamentary Secretary for the Honourable the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs.

Tertiary Education and Training: parliamentary secretary expenses

2534. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training): In relation to all Parliamentary Secretaries within the Minister's portfolio, what are the expenses of the office of each such Secretary since 30 March 1996, including — (i) domestic and international travel; (ii) air charter travel; (iii) travel allowance and incidental travel expenses; (iv) car hire; (v) credit card expenses; (vi) office salaries and wages; (vii) accommodation expenses; and (viii) entertainment and alcohol expenses.

ANSWER:

There are currently no Parliamentary Secretaries employed within the Minister's portfolio.

Planning and Local Government: job creation schemes

2539. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning and Local Government): What are the details of job creation schemes being carried out in each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, including — (i) the cost of any such scheme; (ii) the number of people engaged in the scheme; (iii) the expected life of the scheme; (iv) whether any such schemes carry accreditation with any State or national training body; and (v) the locality of any such schemes.

ANSWER:

The job creation schemes relevant to the Department of Infrastructure are:

Youth Employment Initiative
Graduate Recruitment Scheme.

The Youth Employment Initiative is aimed at young people between the ages of 16 - 20. Employment is for a twelve month period, and participants are paid according to the National Training Wage Award Rates ($8008 - $18,000 per annum, including overheads). The Department currently employs three people through this scheme in Melbourne.

The Graduate Recruitment Scheme is aimed at university graduates. Employment during the year long program is provided on a four month placement basis, with the graduate returning to their 'home' Department at the end of the graduate year, for ongoing employment. Graduates are paid between $27,709 - $27,744 per annum, according to their qualifications and are placed in the Department of Infrastructure. In 1997 the Department has 4 graduates permanently placed, and has provided short term placements for a further 10 graduates.

The Department also participates in work experience placements for secondary school students throughout the year. To date seven students have participated in the scheme this year.

Youth and Community Services: job creation schemes

2545. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): What are the details of job creation schemes being carried out in each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, including — (i) the cost

of any such scheme; (ii) the number of people engaged in the scheme; (iii) the expected life of the scheme; (iv) whether any such schemes carry accreditation with any State or national training body; and (v) the locality of any such schemes.

ANSWER:

No specific "job creation" schemes are directly undertaken by the Department of Human Services.

Youth and Community Services: parliamentary secretary expenses

2546. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): In relation to all Parliamentary Secretaries within the Minister's portfolio, what are the expenses of the office of each such Secretary since 30 March 1996, including — (i) domestic and international travel; (ii) air charter travel; (iii) travel allowance and incidental travel expenses; (iv) car hire; (v) credit card expenses; (vi) office salaries and wages; (vii) accommodation expenses; and (viii) entertainment and alcohol expenses.

ANSWER:

There is no Parliamentary Secretary for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services.

Treasurer: public relations and marketing

2590. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Finance (for the Honourable the Treasurer): In relation to each department or agency within the Treasurer's portfolio, what are the details of all persons and costs associated with public relations, media relations or marketing, as defined in the Auditor General's special report No. 43, Marketing Government Services, indicating — (i) how many persons are involved in marketing government services (including those involved in media or public relations) in each department or agency; (ii) the total cost, including salaries, for the provision of such marketing services for the period since 30 March 1996 to date; and (iii) the budget for the provision of such services for the year 1997-98.

ANSWER:

It should be noted that, special report No. 43 deals with protecting Victoria's children-the role of the Department of Human Services and not Marketing Government Services as stated in the Question.

Department of Treasury and Finance

(i) 2
(ii) $481,066
(iii) $482,788

State Revenue Office

(i) 16
(ii) $2,577,922
(iii) $1,628,148

Rural Finance Corporation

(i) Approximately 20% of one person's time.
(ii) $35,400
(iii) No separate budget as staff costs are included in overall divisional costs.

Transport Accident Commission

(i) 5
(ii) $34.2m
(iii) $26.1m.

Treasury Corporation of Victoria

(i) 3
(ii) $686,000
(iii) $684,465

Chief Electrical Inspector

(i) The OCEI utilises several of its technical and administrative staff on a part time basis.
(ii) $81,600 (Approximately).
(iii) $51,200 (Approximately).

Health: public relations and marketing

2606. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health: In relation to each department or agency within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all persons and costs associated with public relations, media relations or marketing, as defined in the Auditor General's special report No. 43, Marketing Government Services, indicating — (i) how many persons are involved in marketing government services (including those involved in media or public relations) in each department or agency; (ii) the total cost, including salaries, for the provision of such marketing services for the period since 30 March 1996 to date; and (iii) the budget for the provision of such services for the year 1997-98.

ANSWER:

I note the question has asked for a response in relation to the Auditor General's special report No. 43 (Protecting Victoria's Children - The Role of Human Services). However, I believe the question meant to refer to Auditor General's report No. 39 (Marketing Government Services - Are You Being Served?). In this case the answer would be:

The Department of Human Services Public Affairs Branch seeks to improve community understanding of Human Services programs and services and inform the community about significant Human Services initiatives. The Public Affairs Branch provides strategic advice to all divisions within the department in relation to media, promotions and public relations.

(i) There are 28 positions within the Public Affairs branch. This includes management, editorial, journalistic, design, administrative support personnel and promotions staff. There are 16 promotions/communication consultants whose main role is to advise on promotions issues and ensure all material published by the Department complies with corporate format and content standards. There are 8 in the media unit.

(ii) The total cost, including salaries, for the provision of such marketing services for the period since 30 March 1996 to 11 November 1997 is $3,563,182 (actual).

(iii) The budget for the provision of such services for 1997-98 is $2,255,043. This is a projected figure.

Tertiary Education and Training: asset sales

2632. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training): In relation to each department and agency within the Minister's portfolio, what asset sales have taken place since 30 March 1996, indicating — (i) the sale price; (ii) the buyer of the asset; (iii) whether there was a tender process; and (iv) the valuation of the asset prior to sale.

ANSWER:

No asset sales have taken place since 30 March 1996 within those parts of the Department of Education under my administration.

This response does not, however, cover any activities by TAFE Institutes, Universities or other post-secondary institutions as these are self governing bodies responsible for their own day to day administration.

Tertiary Education and Training: public relations and marketing

2634. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training): In relation to each department or agency within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all persons and costs associated with public relations, media relations or marketing, as defined in the Auditor General's special report No. 43, Marketing Government Services, indicating — (i) how many persons are involved in marketing government services (including those involved in media or public relations) in each department or agency; (ii) the total cost, including salaries, for the provision of such marketing services for the period since 30 March 1996 to date; and (iii) the budget for the provision of such services for the year 1997-98.

ANSWER:

It is noted that Special Report 43, referred to in the Honourable Member's Question is titled "Protecting Victoria's Children - The Role of the Department of Human Services".

The Honourable Member may therefore wish to submit a revised question.

Youth and Community Services: public relations and marketing

2642. **THE HON. M.M. GOULD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health (for the Honourable the Minister for Youth and Community Services): In relation to each department or agency within the Minister's portfolio, what are the details of all persons and costs associated with public relations, media relations or marketing, as defined in the Auditor General's special report No. 43, Marketing Government Services, indicating — (i) how many persons are involved in marketing government services (including those involved in media or public relations) in each department or agency; (ii) the total cost, including salaries, for the provision of such marketing services for the period since 30 March 1996 to date; and (iii) the budget for the provision of such services for the year 1997-98.

ANSWER:

The response to the question is contained within the answer to Question No. 2606.