

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**30 May 2002**

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**FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION**

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Carli, Mr Carlo	Coburg	ALP	Mildenhall, Mr Bruce Allan	Footscray	ALP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn	Polwarth	LP
Cooper, Mr Robert Fitzgerald	Mornington	LP	Napthine, Dr Denis Vincent	Portland	LP
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Leigh, Mr Geoffrey Graeme	Mordialloc	LP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

<sup>1</sup> Resigned 3 November 1999

<sup>2</sup> Elected 11 December 1999

<sup>3</sup> Resigned 12 April 2000

<sup>4</sup> Elected 13 May 2000



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**Thursday, 30 May 2002**

**The SPEAKER (Hon. Alex Andrianopoulos)** took the chair at 9.36 a.m. and read the prayer.

**ABSENCE OF MINISTER**

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Before calling questions without notice I wish to advise the house that I have been informed that the Minister for Finance will not be present during question time today; the Premier will answer in his stead.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Shannon's Way Pty Ltd**

**Dr NAPHTHINE (Leader of the Opposition)** — On Tuesday the Premier was unable to advise the house of the role that Mr Anton Staindl played in the selection of Shannon's Way Pty Ltd for the multimillion-dollar Workcover advertising contract.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — I will start again. On Tuesday the Premier was unable to advise the house of the role that Mr Anton Staindl played in the selection of Shannon's Way for the multimillion-dollar Workcover advertising contract. Given that the Premier has had 48 hours to be advised, can he now confirm that Mr Anton Staindl was a key player in the May 2001 selection of Bill Shannon's firm for this multimillion-dollar job, and that this is the same Anton Staindl —

**Mr Thwaites** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the Deputy Premier to cease interjecting. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to ask his question.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** — Now that the Premier has had 48 hours to be fully informed on this matter, can he confirm that Mr Anton Staindl was a key player in the May 2001 selection of Bill Shannon's firm for this multimillion-dollar job, and that this is the same Anton Staindl who just a few months later became a full business partner of Mr Bill Shannon?

**Mr BRACKS (Premier)** — What a convoluted question! Let me go to the nub of the question, which has been asked twice now by the Leader of the Opposition — in a convoluted way today, and on Tuesday. Let me get to the fact of the matter: he has

claimed that there is a business link and tie-up between Mr Staindl and Shannon's Way's Bill Shannon. That is the nub of the question. Let me go to the actual comment of Mr Staindl, which is reported on page 7 of the *Age* of Wednesday this week:

Mr Staindl last night said that Haystac had not, and would not, seek Shannon's Way's assistance in fulfilling its contract with the TAC. 'There is no base at all to these allegations', he said.

No base for the allegations!

**Dr Napthine** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, on the matter of relevance, the question related to a Workcover contract. The Premier seems to be answering in relation to a Transport Accident Commission contract. The question clearly related to a Workcover contract. The fact of the matter is that Mr Bill Shannon and Mr Anton Staindl are partners in the one business.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The latter part of that point of order was a point in debate and therefore out of order. I do not uphold the point of order that the Premier was not being relevant.

**Mr BRACKS** — I can go on. I shall not respond to the interjection of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but will go on to answer other matters. The article says:

The opposition based its questions on an article in an advertising industry newsletter in which it was reported —

reported —

that Haystac and Shannon's Way were set to work together on a TAC project. Mr Staindl said the report was inaccurate.

**Mr McArthur** — Workcover! Workcover!

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The honourable member for Monbulk should not interject in that fashion.

**Mr BRACKS** — It is clear — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr BRACKS** — The honourable member for Wantirna should just settle down. He is very concerned that he has been exposed by his opposition leader on mandatory sentencing!

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the Premier to cease debating the question and come back to answering it.

**Dr Napthine** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, also on the issue of relevance, the Premier is deliberately evading the question. The question related

to a Workcover contract, not a TAC contract. I ask you, Sir, to bring him back to answering the question about a Workcover contract.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I have asked the Premier to cease debating the question, to come back to answering it and to be relevant in his remarks in answering the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr BRACKS** — The supposition of the question is the relationship between Phillip Staindl — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr BRACKS** — Anton Staindl and — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to cease interjecting in that vein.

**Mr BRACKS** — The nub of the question is the supposed link between Mr Anton Staindl and Mr Shannon. That has been denied. Despite the attempts by the opposition to purport to have a Workcover officer investigating this matter on their own staff, they have not uncovered any matters. It is a pathetic attempt, and I reject it.

**Dr Napthine** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the Premier is debating the question. Mr Bill Shannon and Mr Anton Staindl are business partners in one firm — they are partners in a firm. It is about time the Premier told the truth — and told the truth to the Parliament.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to cease defying the Chair when the Chair stands up. Regarding the point of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition, he has again misused the taking of a point of order to make a point in debate. I will not allow him to do so continuously. In regard to the earlier part of the point of order, the Premier was providing information to the house.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr BRACKS** — Believe it or not he is the opposition leader! I thought I should remind people. Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is wrong and continues to be wrong on all these matters.

### **Insurance: public liability**

**Mr MAXFIELD** (Narracan) — Will the Premier advise the house of the package of measures the government will take to today's meeting in Melbourne

of ministers responsible for insurance to help address the current problems in public liability insurance?

**Mr BRACKS** (Premier) — I thank the honourable member for Narracan for his question. As he indicated, there is a very important meeting being undertaken in Melbourne today of state and territory ministers responsible for insurance matters, including Senator Coonan, the federal Minister for Revenue. The Victorian Minister for Finance will also be present.

The government's intention as a result of the meeting is to work with the states and territories and the commonwealth government to identify uniform, workable solutions to the current problems in public liability insurance. We are putting to the meeting of state, territory and commonwealth ministers a two-pronged approach. The first is that we have been working with relevant organisations to properly develop risk management mitigation strategies and group pooling insurance arrangements. In particular, initiatives have already been taken to establish an insurance scheme to assist up to 12 000 community groups in Victoria. There will be a grant of \$330 000 to the Municipal Association of Victoria to develop risk mitigation activities linked to a community group insurance scheme and a grant to the tourism ministry for adventure tourism as well.

Also, as announced by the Minister for Finance today, we are preparing a raft of legislative reforms for the spring sitting of Parliament which will be taken to the meeting of insurance ministers in Melbourne today. This legislative package includes six major areas: waivers that will allow people to accept responsibility for their own participation in risky activities like horseriding — —

**Mr McArthur** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I raise the issue of anticipation. The matters the Premier is now entering into are included in a bill that has passed through the Legislative Council in recent days and is due to be second-read in this place today. The Premier is now covering items which are specifically covered in that legislation and I ask you, Mr Speaker, to advise him of the rulings of this house on anticipating matters of debate.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I advise the Premier and all honourable members that they must not anticipate matters contained in legislation currently on the notice paper. With that instruction, I ask the Premier to continue his answer.

**Mr BRACKS** — One of the matters that we are proposing to put up for legislation in the spring sitting

will be waivers that will allow people to accept responsibility for their own participation in risky activities such as horseriding and adventure tourism. The second matter includes the protection of volunteers and good Samaritans from the risk of being sued. The third is proper risk management and accreditation frameworks for business and organisations. The fourth is structured settlements to enable substantial amounts of damages to be paid in regular instalments instead of — —

**Mr McArthur** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I again raise the matter of anticipation. All these matters are covered in the legislation which the opposition tried to have second-read yesterday, but it was frustrated and blocked by the Minister for Tourism. All these matters are in the Liberal Party bill, which is due for debate in this place today.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The honourable member for Monbulk has raised a point of order on the rules of anticipation of debate of matters contained in a bill. I am of the view that the Premier is not anticipating debate in regard to matters in the bill; he is merely making references to some points contained in the bill. If the honourable member for Monbulk refers to previous rulings, he will see there is not a total prohibition on mentioning matters that are contained in bills.

**Mr BRACKS** — In addition, we will propose improvements to legal procedures surrounding claims to enable quicker, cheaper and less stressful determination of civil liability disputes, and we will propose the removal of the right to claim damages where injury was suffered through criminal activity or where people injured were under the influence of drugs. We will also work with other jurisdictions examining — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the honourable member for Pakenham to cease interjecting in that vein.

**Mr BRACKS** — What a pity the Leader of the Opposition has no control over the honourable member for Pakenham! What a pity he cannot get a guarantee!

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the Premier to cease debating the question and to come back to answering it.

**Mr BRACKS** — I apologise; I was being provoked by the honourable member for Pakenham.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The honourable member for Monbulk is behaving in a fashion that is testing the Chair. I shall not warn him again.

**Mr BRACKS** — In addition to the two-pronged approach, the matter of tort law reform will also be discussed at the ministerial council meeting today, and again we will seek — —

*Interjection from gallery.*

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I warn the honourable member for Mordialloc. I warn the honourable member for Oakleigh.

I wish to advise that it is disorderly for any member of the public to speak or make noises in the chamber. I ask the Serjeant-at-Arms to take care of that matter.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the house to settle down, and I ask the honourable member for Pakenham not to interject in that vein.

I ask the Premier to conclude his answer.

**Mr BRACKS** — As well as the two-pronged approach — the existing strategy to cover community and non-profit making groups and the additional package of legislation for the spring sitting — we will also deal with tort law reform in cooperation with other states and territories. We are hopeful of getting a uniform system.

### **Kangaroos: control**

**Mr RYAN** (Leader of the National Party) — I refer the Premier to the fact that access to kangaroos culled at Puckapunyal would save 15 jobs at the Game Meats company in Myrtleford and further advise that the federal government has thrown its support behind the company on this issue. Will the government provide an exemption to the ban on commercial processing of kangaroos to help save these jobs?

**Mr BRACKS** (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the National Party for his question. The government has considered this matter. It had a request for the commercial processing of kangaroos that were culled in order to save the wider kangaroo population at Puckapunyal. We have rejected that because the cull was not intended for commercial profit or for any income generation. It was intended as a one-off event in order to have a risk management plan for the whole of the Puckapunyal area, which is fenced, to ensure that

the survival of the kangaroo population is part of the plan for the future.

In response to the question from the honourable member, there will not be exemptions in this case. It is a one-off event. We do not believe we should be profiting from this occurrence. The government would have preferred that a risk management plan was in place at the very start rather than getting to the point where the cull had to happen. Given the cull is happening, we certainly will not be profiting by it in this state.

### Public transport: ticketing system

**Mrs MADDIGAN** (Essendon) — Will the Minister for Transport inform the house what action the government is taking to improve the flawed public transport system bequeathed to the Victorian people by the Kennett government and indicate how the interests of Victorian taxpayers will be protected?

**Mr BATCHELOR** (Minister for Transport) — Honourable members will recall that in 1994 the former Kennett government signed Victorians up to the notorious Onelink contract, which resulted in the introduction of an inadequate ticketing system across the public transport network and caused great inconvenience. We all know that the honourable member for Mordialloc was a member of the government committee that selected the Onelink consortium; he has confessed to that previously in this chamber.

Honourable members will also recall that Victorian taxpayers have since inherited an enormous contractual problem that now amounts to some \$360 million in claims made against the state by Onelink, directly as a result of the bungled handling of the automatic ticketing contract. This Onelink dispute is yet another privatisation time bomb left behind by the Liberal and National parties. It is another mess that this government is having to fix up. We are cleaning up the mess left behind by the National and Liberal parties.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr BATCHELOR** — They laugh! This is a serious matter. Everyone who uses public transport knows the difficulties caused to ordinary people by the automatic ticketing system and the contractual mess, yet all that members of the Liberal and National parties can do is laugh about it in this chamber. It is a disgrace!

The automatic ticketing system debacle is a privatisation time bomb, and it has a long and very expensive fuse. Today I announce that the government

has reached agreement with Onelink to settle those claims and to also make sure that substantial improvements are made to the reliability of Melbourne's ticketing system. Onelink will receive up to \$65 million in settlement of its claims, payable in three stages, subject to achieving certain milestones.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr BATCHELOR** — Given the interjections of the Leader of the Opposition, it is worth referring to the annual financial report for the year 1998–99. This is a report on the effect of the automatic ticketing system and it says:

The scope of the services has been varied during the prolonged development period. The service provider has a contractual right to claim compensation for certain scope changes.

There it is in black and white back in the 1998–99 annual financial statement — the previous government acknowledged that it committed this bungle. It cannot be denied. The Leader of the Opposition, with his nervous, embarrassing laugh, giggles at it! This settlement will be payable in three stages subject to meeting significant milestones. Significantly the contractual framework put in place by the Kennett government will also be changed by this government to ensure that Onelink provides a much better service to Melbourne and to the people who use our transport system.

For the first time Onelink will have a real financial incentive to make the ticketing system meet customer expectations. It will receive bonuses for good performance but penalties will be incurred for underperformance. Onelink will take on the management of vandalism, and for the first time it will have a direct interest in making it easier for passengers to purchase tickets. New performance standards will require ticketing equipment to meet dramatically higher standards of reliability. Most of these new standards will be in excess of 99 per cent and others will be 97 per cent and 98 per cent. They will be very high. For example, Onelink will face penalties if the main ticket machines at railway stations are not — —

**Mr McArthur** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to sessional order 3.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I do not uphold the point of order raised by the honourable member for Monbulk that the Minister for Transport is contravening sessional order 3 at this time. I ask the minister to conclude his answer.

**Mr BATCHELOR** — For example, if the ticket machines on railway stations are not fully operational for 97.45 per cent of the time Onelink will face penalties. That has never happened before. This should be compared with the independent audit conducted by the Miller Group in March–April of this year, which found that only 72.8 per cent of ticket machines at railway stations were fully operational. This government is setting a much higher standard, and if Onelink does not meet this standard it will be subject to penalties — and this will be put into the contract. Despite the abysmal results under the old contract, you must remember that — —

**Mr McArthur** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I again raise sessional order 3. The minister's answer has been going for 6 minutes. If this is not in contravention of sessional order 3, I ask you to explain to the house how long a minister is allowed to read an answer.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Chair has already issued guidelines in regard to this matter that generally question time is expected to take about 40 to 45 minutes, but some flexibility has been allowed in regard to the precise timing of individual questions and answers. The Chair is of the view that a lot of time was wasted by the house in dealing with the first two questions. Having said that, however, the Chair considers that the Minister for Transport is now contravening the succinctness rule, and I ask him to conclude his answer.

**Mr BATCHELOR** — As I was saying, new standards will be put in place; they were not in place under the previous regime. Under our new arrangements the reliability of the system is important; poor reliability will be penalised and ongoing poor performance will mean that Onelink will risk its contract being terminated. We have fixed up the claims that have been made against the state — —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The Minister for Transport should conclude his answer.

**Mr BATCHELOR** — We have also provided a mechanism for ensuring increased availability and improved performance into the future.

### Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

**Ms ASHER** (Brighton) — Was the Minister for Workcover aware of the personal and business relationship that exists between Mr Anton Staindl and Mr Bill Shannon before Mr Staindl was allowed to sit on the panel that gave Mr Shannon's tiny firm the government's biggest advertising contract?

**Mr CAMERON** (Minister for Workcover) — You can see that Mr Brice has not done his work very well! It is very surprising for the opposition that the basis of the question is that it is not dorky, it is a porky!

Let's get this straight: the Leader of the Opposition last month made it very clear to the chief executive officer and the chairman of Workcover that he accepts the probity of this around the tender process.

**Dr Napthine** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the Minister for Workcover has made that allegation three times. It is an absolute misrepresentation of the truth, and I ask that he desist.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! That is not a point of order; the Leader of the Opposition is obviously seeking to make a personal explanation. The minister, answering the question.

**Mr CAMERON** — At the time that Mr Staindl was appointed to the panel — of course he was appointed to the panel as an operational matter by the senior management and the board — he was working for the Transport Accident Commission as the head of marketing, a position he was appointed to and in which he served during the term of the former Liberal and National Party coalition government!

### Gaming: problem gambling

**Mr LEIGHTON** (Preston) — Will the Minister for Community Services advise the house of recent developments concerning the government's problem gambling communications strategy?

**Ms PIKE** (Minister for Community Services) — The Bracks government has initiated the 'Think of what you're really gambling with' campaign, which is a very hard-hitting and widely supported campaign against problem gambling. It is widely supported because it helps to promote an understanding of problem gambling, and it certainly has dramatically increased the usage of gambling help services. The very sound results to date and the support there is right across the key groups concerned with problem gambling are the basis for the government's decision to further extend this communications strategy, which commenced on air last night.

I am very pleased to announce a further investment of \$5.9 million to build upon the \$6.1 million that was invested last year. The campaign on TV, radio and in print is designed to influence problem gamblers and those at risk to get help. It is also backed up by a statewide network of funded services to help provide counselling and support. In the first year of the 'Think

of what you're really gambling with' campaign there was a 31.4 per cent increase in the number of people seeking help from Gamblers Help Services and a major increase in the number of people using the Gamblers Help phone line.

The Bracks government is extending this very hard-hitting campaign because it cares about people and their families who are being hurt, sometimes very dramatically, by problem gambling. This campaign is backed up by a number of measures and —

**Mr Cooper** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, could you advise me whether the minister has special permission to read her answer or are you going to allow her to continue to breach the rules?

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. I am not of that view.

**Ms PIKE** — This campaign is yet another example of our unprecedented commitment to working with those groups that are supporting problem gamblers and of reaching out and informing problem gamblers of services that are available to them in the community. We will continue to sit around the table to listen to and consult with groups and members of the community who are concerned with problem gambling to ensure that we deliver the most appropriate services to this very disadvantaged group in our community.

### **Metropolitan Ambulance Service Royal Commission: commissioner**

**Mr DOYLE** (Malvern) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to the outrage in Senate estimates hearings this week of Labor Senators Kim Carr and Barney Cooney over the \$660 000 salary of royal commissioner Terence Cole and the claim by Labor's federal shadow Attorney-General that Commissioner Cole was the highest paid public official in Australia. Noting that the federal government made full details of Commissioner Cole's salary public, I ask: what was the total remuneration paid to Lex Lasry, QC, the Metropolitan Ambulance Service royal commissioner?

**Mr BRACKS** (Premier) — In fact I had a not exactly the same but similar question from the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee on the total cost of the royal commission into the Intergraph affair, and I indicated what it was. I do not have those figures, and I suggest that the honourable member should have those matters raised properly and appropriately at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee.

**Dr Napthine** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, on the question of relevance, the question referred to the

royal commissioner, not the royal commission, and the total remuneration paid. Is the Premier saying he does not actually know what the government paid its royal commissioner? That is what the question asked.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I am not too sure what the honourable member is seeking other than repeating the question. The question has been accepted by the Chair and the Premier has answered it.

### **Courts: infrastructure**

**Mr LANGDON** (Ivanhoe) — I ask the Attorney-General to advise the house what action the government is taking to improve Victoria's court facilities.

**Mr HULLS** (Attorney-General) — I will try and speak up so everybody can hear! All over the state the government is turning around the legacy of the former Liberal government, which closed down courts and let country courthouses fall into an abysmal state of decay. The government has embarked on a major program to restore access to modern and efficient court infrastructure throughout Victoria. New courts have been built at Wodonga and Ballarat, and the government is now in the process of constructing new courthouses at Mildura and Warrnambool as well as in the Latrobe Valley. In its latest budget the government has provided \$2.6 million for court upgrades in Horsham, Bendigo and Wangaratta. This builds on its ongoing upgrade program for courts at Heidelberg, Moe and Preston.

Victorian courts are not just the primary venues for access to justice, they are also community assets. The government will ensure, wherever possible and appropriate, that courts can be used by the local community, including local community groups, for community purposes.

In accordance with the government's policy of opening courts, tomorrow the Premier will launch the magnificent new County Court building at the intersection of William and Lonsdale streets in the heart of the city. The new County Court facility is the most significant social infrastructure project to commence operation under the Victorian government's Partnerships Victoria policy — an innovative policy that is bringing the public and private sectors together to deliver improved services to the community. The building has been designed to ensure that access to justice is translated into the physical reality of a court. It is a \$140 million project that will provide the largest court facility in Australia. It has state-of-the-art

facilities and technology to ensure that Victorians have access to modern and speedy justice.

As all honourable members would know, the separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary is fundamental to our democracy. The government understands the very great importance of ensuring the integrity of our courts and tribunals and the significance of judicial independence. It is also critical to ensure that judicial discretion is maintained as a central plank of our justice system. This new court will go a long way towards communicating that independence, and it is a strong symbol of this government's commitment to justice, law and social order. I look forward to joining the Premier tomorrow at the opening of this great facility.

**Minister for Youth Affairs: adviser**

**Mr WILSON** (Bennettswood) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to the fact that the government's senior youth affairs adviser, David Henderson, was president of the National Union of Students when it organised demonstrations in April last year that resulted in 74 arrests and a damage bill of over \$100 000 to Melbourne University. Does the Premier agree with his minister that someone who has organised demonstrations of this kind and advocated the use of hard drugs is the right person to advise his government on youth affairs?

**Mr BRACKS** (Premier) — The allegation is about some of the remarks the adviser made when he was a university student. He has already indicated in a written public statement that they were immature comments which were made — —

**Dr Napthine** interjected.

**Mr BRACKS** — Okay. They were immature comments which were made at that time, which he regrets and has of course learnt by. I think all of us can understand how comments that might have been made at university might be regretted and might be something that we learn by ourselves. I think that is reasonable.

In relation to the other matter, I am not aware of his status at that time. Obviously he has considerable ability in youth affairs, and the government has confidence in him.

**Sport: violence**

**Mr HOLDING** (Springvale) — I ask the Attorney-General to advise the house whether the government has any policy proposal to change the criminal law relating to violence in sport?

**Mr HULLS** (Attorney-General) — I thank the honourable member for his question. Questions in relation to violence in sport are very important; it is an issue that has been around in recent times. I notice that in 1994 an article was published by a student at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in relation to violence in sport. The contributor of that article was a person by the name of Dog Brown, which I understand was a pseudonym used for Mr Dieter Liehmann — —

**Mr Perton** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, on the question of debating, the minister was asked whether there were any matters relating to a violence-in-sport policy. That is a matter of government administration, and it appears that the minister is, as he did yesterday, going down a path of attempting to slur or slander an individual using parliamentary privilege. I ask you, Mr Speaker, to direct the minister to answer the question which was asked, which related to government policy in respect of violence in sport, and not to turn this Parliament into a circus.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask government benches to come to order. I ask the honourable member for Doncaster to come to his point of order.

**Mr Perton** — This is the chief law officer of the state making his job a joke and making this Parliament a joke, and I ask you to bring him to order.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! It appears to the Chair that the honourable member for Doncaster wants to debate the merits or otherwise of what the Attorney-General is doing. Unless he makes his remarks relate to a standing order that is not being followed in the house, I will not hear him.

**Mr Perton** — On the question of debating, Mr Speaker, the question was quite specific: it was on a matter of government administration, not about a student at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 1994. If you let him proceed down this track it is a joke!

**The SPEAKER** — Order! If the honourable member's point of order is that the Attorney-General is debating the question, I am not of that opinion. The Attorney-General was providing information to the house.

**Mr HULLS** — So violence in sport is a very serious issue, and the government always has laws in relation to violence in sport under consideration. I understand that an article written in 1994 that dealt with violence in sport states:

Thou shalt encourage violence in sport (on the ground and naturally in the terraces) ...

How to beat North: hire a hit man, pay him a fat load of cash and tell him to hit Wayne Carey's knees with a lead pipe. It worked for Tonya Harding.

Those comments were made by a student in 1994, in jest, I take it, and we do not take those types of views in relation to violence in sport seriously. I have no doubt that the adviser to the Leader of the Opposition would not be seriously suggesting that that is how violence in sport ought be dealt with. We certainly would not take his suggestion seriously.

**Mr McArthur** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I think we are now witnessing what is known in the Premier's department advisers room as Hulls's Thursday special. The Attorney-General is trying to run a line to get across a few cheap jokes.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The honourable member for Monbulk well knows that he is taking a point of order.

**Mr McArthur** — Yes. He was asked a question, Sir, about government programs and government policy. He has not touched on that issue at all and is not relevant to the question asked. He is debating a much broader issue. I suggest you bring him back to the question, which was about the government's programs and policies in relation to violence in sport.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I do not uphold the point of order raised by the honourable member for Monbulk. The Attorney-General was posed a question with regard to what his government is doing in this particular area of policy. The Attorney-General was then providing information to the house that is relevant to that policy and the deliberations on that policy. I will continue to hear him.

**Mr HULLS** — So while we continually monitor the laws in relation to violence in sport we certainly do not take seriously suggestions by students, no doubt made tongue in cheek, that people should take lead pipes onto the football field. We do not adhere to that view; indeed we treat that as the joke I am sure it was intended to be. The fact is that young students do make jokes, and those jokes ought be treated as jokes. We will continue to monitor the laws in relation to violence in sport.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The time set down for questions without notice has expired and a minimum number of questions have been dealt with.

**Mr Ryan** — I raise a point of order, Mr Speaker, in a context where discussions are unfolding around the

house, even as I speak, about the business program for today. I draw the attention of the house to the fact that the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and I are to attend the funeral in Bendigo today of the late Jack Lockett. My purpose in rising is to seek the indulgence of the house to ensure that item 4 on the government's business program, the Gaming Legislation (Amendment) Bill, is not brought on pending our return to the house. In circumstances where there are amendments proposed to it by the government and by other honourable members, I seek an assurance from the government that it can be delayed until we are here.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I will not allow the honourable member to continue with his point of order. He well knows that a program has been set and that any such requests should be made — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The business program for the day is as listed in the green notice paper under government business, orders of the day, items 1 to 30. The Leader of the National Party well knows how that can be changed.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

**Mr HONEYWOOD** having given notice of motion:

**Mr Haermeyer** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, the notice of motion being given by the honourable member for Warrandyte is basically a narrative that takes certain statements and allegations as fact and therefore does not constitute a notice. I ask him to rephrase it in a way that is proper for a notice of motion. He is using the device of giving notice to make a speech.

**Mr McArthur** — On the point of order, Mr Speaker, there is no point of order. There are a number of notices on the notice paper that are quite lengthy. It is up to the Chair to decide whether that is appropriate.

The notice of motion being given by the honourable member for Warrandyte is entirely consistent with a series of notices of motion which are already on the notice paper and which have been on the notice papers of many parliaments in the past. There is nothing extraordinary about this one.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I do not uphold the point of order raised by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. The honourable member for Warrandyte is entitled to give his notice of motion.

**Mr Loney** — On a further point of order, Mr Speaker, the notice of motion being given by the honourable member for Warrandyte raises matters that pertain to the Auditor-General and in fact are an attack on him. I seek your clarification, Mr Speaker, as to whether that type of notice of motion is in order if it is not being proposed as a substantive motion against the Auditor-General.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I do not uphold the point of order. The honourable member for Geelong North is well aware, as all honourable members should be, that the giving of a notice of motion leads to the listing of a substantive motion on the notice paper that will at some time be debated by Parliament. The honourable member for Warrandyte is perfectly entitled to do that.

## PETITIONS

**The Clerk** — I have received the following petitions for presentation to Parliament:

### Port Phillip Bay: foreshore development

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled:

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of Victoria sheweth that building development near the foreshore around Port Phillip Bay could include high-rise development which would force or block out residents and existing communities.

Your petitioners therefore pray that zoning laws be urgently introduced, limiting buildings near the foreshore to two storeys.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

**By Ms LINDELL (Carrum) (79 signatures)**

### Lake Boga: water management

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled:

The humble petition of Lake Boga Ratepayers and Interested Parties Community Group sheweth the gradual deterioration of Lake Boga.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that immediate steps be taken to reinstate Lake Boga as part of the Torrumbarry irrigation system, with a water management regime which supports Lake Boga's historic environment and recreational values, and with the system to maintain established target levels of 68.5 AHD.

Your petitioners therefore pray that it be reinstated to the Torrumbarry irrigation system.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

**By Mr STEGGALL (Swan Hill) (217 signatures)**

### St John's Primary School, Dennington

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled:

The humble petition of the Dennington Community Association together with the undersigned citizens of the state of Victoria are extremely concerned about and fear for the safety of school children attending St John's Primary School, Dennington, whilst crossing the Princes Highway and additionally the lack of safety zones in the vicinity of the school grounds with the impending concern being the current 70 km/h speed zone along the Princes Highway, Dennington, which is in a residential area with a school immediately adjacent to the highway.

Your petitioners therefore pray that the undersigned have been very patient in awaiting a decision to have this matter addressed and rectified and now insist that the proposals recommended to Vicroads and the Warrnambool City Council in a study completed more than one year ago be immediately implemented before a serious accident occurs or lives are tragically taken.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

**By Mr VOGELS (Warrnambool) (349 signatures)**

Laid on table.

**Ordered that petition presented by honourable member for Warrnambool be considered next day on motion of Mr VOGELS (Warrnambool).**

## LAW REFORM COMMITTEE

### Entry, search, seizure and questioning powers

**Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) presented report, together with appendices.**

Laid on table.

**Ordered that report and appendices be printed.**

## PAPERS

**Laid on table by Clerk:**

Auditor-General — Performance Audit Reports on:

Investment attraction and facilitation in Victoria —  
Ordered to be printed

Nurse work force planning — Ordered to be printed

*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986:*

Revocation of Code of Practice for the Welfare of Rodeo and Rodeo School Livestock (Victoria)

Code of Practice for the Welfare of Rodeo and Rodeo School Livestock (Victoria)

## APPROPRIATION MESSAGE

**Message read recommending appropriation for Gaming Legislation (Amendment) Bill.**

### MEMBERS STATEMENTS

#### Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (Leader of the Opposition) — I stand to accuse the Premier and the government of weaving a web of deception, lies and deliberate misinformation to cover up the dirty deal they have done to give Labor mate Bill Shannon and Shannon's Way Pty Ltd a multimillion-dollar contract with Workcover.

On Tuesday the Premier was asked about the role of one Anton Staindl and his business links with Bill Shannon, who is the principal of Shannon's Way, given that Anton Staindl was a key player in the selection process that saw Shannon's Way get the multimillion-dollar Workcover contract.

The Premier did not answer that question and avoided the issue. Today the opposition asked the Premier further questions on that same issue. The Premier stood in this place and deliberately deceived the house and the people of Victoria about the business relationship between Anton Staindl and Bill Shannon. He tried to imply that there was no such relationship.

The facts of the matter are that the web site of a company called Social Shift lists Anton Staindl as a partner of the company. It also lists Bill Shannon as a partner of that company. Clearly there is a business relationship between Anton Staindl and Bill Shannon. This is an absolute cover-up of the worst degree.

#### Wirilda Preschool

**Mr VINEY** (Frankston East) — Last week during Education Week I had the pleasure of visiting the Wirilda Preschool in Frankston North. It is a great preschool and provides fantastic services to the local community. I also had the pleasure of visiting the Wirilda Preschool with the Labor candidate for Cranbourne, Mr Jude Perera, to attend a breakfast-with-the-kids morning, where we joined the parents, the committee and the dedicated staff.

I am happy to report to the house that with the boost in funding of preschools provided by the government, and particularly with the assistance package that has been provided for committees of management, the preschool is going from strength to strength. Not long ago the

preschool committee was under terrible pressure and was unable to attract parents to serve as committee members because the previous government had placed severe burdens on committees of management.

I am pleased to say that the preschool now has a complete and dedicated committee and a great staff, because of the support this government is providing with its assistance package, which I welcome.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Plowman)** — Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

#### Schools: student welfare coordinators

**Mr KILGOUR** (Shepparton) — I advise that during Education Week I also visited primary schools, particularly Tatura Primary School, where I spoke to the students about public speaking and communications. It was during my discussions with the people at the school and with other principals during Education Week that I became aware that we have a major issue in our primary schools with student welfare, in particular the escalating number of welfare issues that staff are required to deal with.

Under the current system there is no direct provision of professional welfare support personnel to individual primary schools. We believe the secondary education system model, where funding is available for welfare officers, is what is required at the primary school level. Welfare officers have been appointed to deal with welfare issues at the secondary school level, but that is not so at the primary school level.

This proactive approach would result in problems being managed at primary school level rather than passing on escalating problems to secondary school welfare officers, as happens now. The existing school resources which have been put in place to assist in welfare areas are not sufficient to both manage welfare issues and deliver core educational functions at the primary school level. I would hope that we can do something about providing welfare officers for primary schools in the near future.

#### Wendouree West Jobs Expo

**Ms OVERINGTON** (Ballarat West) — I wish to bring to the attention of the house the launch of the Wendouree West Jobs Expo, to be held on Saturday morning from 11 until 4 in the afternoon at the Yuille Primary School. The jobs expo has come about through the work of a subcommittee of the Wendouree West community renewal program. It has involved all of Ballarat, because it has been supported by the university, all of the schools and the Ballarat *Courier*.

They have all been very good sponsors, as has this government, which has put in \$5000 to allow the expo to go ahead.

A number of very dedicated people have also given a great deal of their time to make this expo a success. I am sure that, although 1 June will be the first day of winter, it will still be a fine day in Ballarat and the expo will attract many people. As I said, the expo will highlight the opportunities open to many people within the Wendouree West area, showing where they can obtain future employment.

As the house will know, the Wendouree West renewal program received a massive \$3.4 million from this government for that community.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Plowman)** — Order! The honourable member's time has expired!

### **Shannon's Way Pty Ltd**

**Ms ASHER** (Brighton) — I draw to the house's attention the fact that either the Minister for Workcover has just misled the house or the evidence tendered by the Victorian Workcover Authority before the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal is false. Anne Randall from VWA informed the tribunal that the panel which selected Shannon's Way Pty Ltd was made up of Victorian Workcover Authority senior staff. She said this before VCAT on two occasions. The Minister for Workcover has just said that Anton Staindl was from the Transport Accident Commission (TAC). Either the evidence tendered before VCAT is wrong or the minister has misled the house.

I believe the fact of the matter is that Anton Staindl used to be at the TAC and then went to Workcover, where he sat on the panel which awarded Bill Shannon and Shannon's Way a lucrative multimillion dollar contract — and now Anton Staindl and Bill Shannon are in business together. The company is called Social Shift, and its directors are Bill Shannon and another woman called Marie Ferris, who also gave evidence to VCAT in trying to prevent the opposition from finding out about the multimillions of dollars that Premier Bracks has shunted over to his mate Bill Shannon.

I draw to the house's attention this grave concern about the Minister for Workcover misleading the house.

### **Refugees: human rights**

**Mr LEIGHTON** (Preston) — In the office I share with the honourable member for Clayton there is a poster with the caption 'A bundle of belongings isn't

the only thing a refugee brings to his new country. Einstein was a refugee'.

Last week, along with a number of other colleagues from this side of the house, I attended a public forum at the Melbourne Town Hall which was entitled 'Refugee rights are human rights'. The two keynote speakers were Moira Rayner and Malcolm Fraser. Malcolm Fraser's opening comment was:

I want first to speak of some of the things we have achieved as a nation and how, in important respects, in recent years we have betrayed those achievements.

Later in his speech he had this to say:

The government has attracted support by playing on insecurities, by emphasising difference, by exaggerating numbers and by claims that in the event were totally untrue.

Among the recurring themes discussed at the rally were, firstly, that indefinite mandatory detention breaches our human rights obligations. A comparison was done with the United Kingdom, which manages the issues far more humanely. A second recurring theme was that, particularly since the Second World War, our program of immigration has substantially benefited this nation. I now have a copy of that Einstein poster on my wall at home to remind my children of their roots.

### **Horses: welfare**

**Mr McARTHUR** (Monbulk) — I urge the Minister for Agriculture to take urgent action to end what appears to be some dreadfully cruel treatment of three horses in the Werribee area. There have been significant numbers of reports about this, and so far the minister has done nothing. I point out to the house that there are allegations that these three horses have been locked in darkened stables for a significant length of time. They have been deprived of the normal conditions that you would expect prisoners convicted of serious offences would be allowed to enjoy.

There are reports that some of these animals are suffering from serious injuries and are in a dreadful state. There is certainly strong community opinion that something must be done, but the minister has done nothing. I point out to the minister that these animals need expert assessment. He should send the chief veterinary officer, Dr Hugh Miller, out to those stables to assess the situation, and he should exercise the powers available to him under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, sections 9, 21 and 22. If Dr Miller wants further expert advice he should invite Dr Alistair McLean, one of Australia's leading horse vets who is also out in the Werribee area, to accompany

him. The minister should exercise the powers he has to assess and end this dreadful situation.

### **Gisborne: swimming pool**

**Ms DUNCAN** (Gisborne) — I congratulate the Bracks government and in particular the Minister for Sport and Recreation, the Honourable Justin Madden, on allocating \$1.9 million for the building of a new heated indoor pool in Gisborne. This is great news for Gisborne.

The push for a new pool has a very long history. Many people have lobbied for this pool over many years. I take this opportunity to thank them on behalf of the community for their hard work and tenacity. There have been many disappointments along the way as submissions have been put forward and feasibility studies have been done. It makes this announcement all the more valued by our community. The Gisborne community has committed to raise \$100 000 towards the cost of this project, and this will be done through local fundraising efforts.

I had the pleasure several weeks ago of attending the Gymbarella Ball organised by local users of the gym, who see the benefits this pool will bring and who also hope to see this as stage 1 of what will be a bigger project that will include a new gym and creche facilities. The ball was a major fundraising effort. I look forward to being involved in many more. I acknowledge the work of Alan Perry and Trevor Armstrong, among others — all those people past and present who have contributed to this initiative.

### **Birregurra: waste water**

**Mr MULDER** (Polwarth) — Last week Mrs Nancy Whan presented a petition to my office on behalf of the residents of Birregurra. The petition contains 295 signatures and seeks urgent action from the Bracks Labor government to hasten the introduction of a waste water treatment plant for the township of Birregurra. Birregurra is superbly positioned close to the coast and major centres. It has a growing population and excellent infrastructure but lacks a badly needed waste water treatment plant. Many homes in Birregurra are situated on double blocks to provide the appropriate seepage for the septic tanks that are currently used. These extra blocks could be used for additional homes if the town had a waste water treatment plant.

During heavy rains the open drain system in the town discharges into the nearby river and poses both a health and an environmental problem for the town and downstream residents. Although Birregurra lost its

timber mill, which was one of the town's largest employers, it attracted one of the smallest grants announced by the Minister for State and Regional Development in a program designed to assist towns which had suffered due to cutbacks in allocations.

Employers on the nearby Surf Coast have great difficulty in staffing their tourism industries due to the fact that staff cannot afford to buy homes and live in the coastal towns. Birregurra is ideally situated to provide low-cost housing for families wishing to work on the coast, and because it is close by it enables low-cost transport for workers.

I thank Nancy Whan for putting the petition together and urge the government to help the people of Birregurra.

### **Workplace safety: legislation**

**Mr LANGUILLER** (Sunshine) — A shameful act took place in another place last night. The opposition, hiding out in the darkness of early morning, voted down the Crimes (Workplace Deaths and Serious Injuries) Bill. It was a shameful act for the protection of cowboys in the corporate sector, and it happened in a draconian place. I believe the opposition knew well that only very few cases would get before the courts, that guilt beyond reasonable doubt would have to be established and that a whole range of health and safety measures would have to have been infringed in order to put these corporate cowboys before the courts. However, it protected them. The opposition went up there in the most ideological and shameful manner to protect the very few employers who should be treated like criminals.

## **MAGISTRATES' COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL**

### *Second reading*

**Mr HULLS** (Attorney-General) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

When an infringement notice is not paid on time, it can generally be registered for enforcement with the PERIN (penalty enforcement by registration of infringement notice) court. The procedure for enforcing infringement notices in the PERIN court is set out in schedule 7 to the Magistrates' Court Act 1989. The PERIN court then issues a court order called an enforcement order. The enforcement order demands that the defendant pay the infringement penalty and associated costs. Failure to

pay on the enforcement order leads to a warrant being issued against the defendant.

The question was raised in a recent court case about whether 'enforcement agencies' and 'appropriate officers' within the meaning of the act have been acting under their correct names. The matter was withdrawn from the court and advice was sought on this issue.

Subsequently, it was discovered that a number of bodies which issue infringement notices have been acting under incorrect names. For example, the toll enforcement office has been seeking to have infringement notices registered for enforcement under the act, instead of an individual police officer as required by the act. There is no question that the bodies which took the action in question had every right to take that action; however, they have done so under the wrong name.

As certain enforcement agencies have been taking action under the act under the wrong names (that is, not in the names of proper enforcement agencies), the enforcement orders issued as a result may have been improperly made and may be voidable. Additionally, some of the action taken under the act by appropriate officers may not in fact have been signed by appropriate officers as defined in the act.

Consequently, many enforcement orders which have been issued under the act are at risk of being voided by way of legal challenge. These enforcement orders could date back to 1989 when the act commenced, or to 1986 when the PERIN system began. Enforcement actions taken on the strength of the enforcement orders could be subject to legal challenge.

As a result of the discovery of this error, the PERIN court has ceased to process applications for enforcement orders, and enforcement action on the strength of these enforcement orders in question has also ceased, pending the passage and commencement of this bill.

The bill amends the act to:

validate any actions that have been taken in the name of the incorrectly named enforcement agency;

validate any actions that have been taken in the name of the incorrectly named appropriate officers; and

disallow any legal proceedings that could otherwise be taken against the state as a result of the incorrectly named enforcement agencies or appropriate officers.

The proposed validation of actions will ensure that any action that could be doubtful solely due to the use of an incorrect name for the enforcement order or appropriate officer is valid. This will prevent the need to recall a very large number of enforcement orders, and will ensure the continued smooth operation of the PERIN system.

Clause 4 inserts a new section 139A(1A) into the Magistrates' Court Act 1989 stating that it is the intention of clause 29 of schedule 7 (as proposed to be inserted by clause 6 of this bill) to alter or vary section 85 of the Constitution Act 1975. I wish to make the following statement under section 85 of the Constitution Act 1975 of the reason for altering or varying that section by the proposed new clause 29 of schedule 7. That clause prevents the bringing of proceedings (including in the Supreme Court) that seek to challenge or question matters which are deemed valid or lawful by this bill. This is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the validation of past actions effected by this bill and to protect the state and state officials from potential liabilities arising out of those actions.

Prospectively, the bill amends the act to change the definitions of 'enforcement agency' and 'appropriate officer' in clause 2 of the schedule. The amendment allows enforcement agencies and appropriate officers to be prescribed. This is to allow the continued use of the names that have been used for enforcement agencies and appropriate officers. Without this amendment, the PERIN court computer system would require substantial changes to be able to accept information from the very large number of potential enforcement agencies and appropriate officers. This amendment will minimise disruption to the operation of the PERIN system.

I commend the bill to the house.

**Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs ELLIOTT (Mooroolbark).**

**Debate adjourned until Tuesday, 4 June.**

## PATHOLOGY SERVICES ACCREDITATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 16 May; motion of Mr THWAITES (Minister for Health).**

**Mrs ELLIOTT (Mooroolbark)** — The opposition supports the Pathology Services Accreditation

(Amendment) Bill. The bill is of vital importance to everybody, but particularly women. There is a painting by Rembrandt of his wife which shows that quite clearly she had breast cancer. She probably did not know and she probably died of it. Medieval texts refer to women dying of the flux, which was obviously a haemorrhage with gynaecological implications. In those days there was no screening for diseases, not only those relating to woman but ones that affect men like prostate cancer, bowel cancer and other forms of pathological diseases.

Our bodies can let us down. There is not a person alive who at some stage does not fear getting a positive diagnosis. However, Australia is one of the leading countries in the world in this area. Through education and the provision of screening services Australia has achieved a remarkable drop in the number of deaths from these sorts of diseases. As the second-reading speech said, since cervical screening was introduced there has been a 40 per cent drop in deaths. I know many women, including a close friend, who are celebrating survival from breast cancer for longer than the five-year mark which is considered to be the point at which one can feel reasonably secure.

People feel confident if they have confidence in the pathology screening services. Pathology testing laboratories in Australia are subject to a commonwealth act, the Health Insurance Act, which says that unless pathology laboratories are accredited they cannot receive reimbursement through Medicare. Victoria is alone in having its own act, the Pathology Services Accreditation Act 1984, which says all testing laboratories must also be accredited by the state. The Pathology Services Accreditation Act established a board, the Pathology Services Accreditation Board, which keeps a close watch over those testing laboratories.

There is a margin for error in screening tests. That margin for error is quite low and any laboratory which gets above it by any significant amount immediately attracts the attention of the National Association of Testing Authorities and the Pathology Services Accreditation Board. Honourable members would be aware that recently one laboratory was found to have had suspect tests over a two-year period. For some time the name of that laboratory was not revealed to the general public. Fear and anguish was rampant among women who thought they had had negative tests. The name of the laboratory was eventually revealed to the public but that did not reassure many women.

Most women go to their general practitioner for their smear tests and do not know to which laboratory those

tests are sent. General practitioners around the state were flooded with calls from anxious women wanting to know whether their smear tests had been sent to that particular laboratory and whether they were at risk of a misdiagnosis. Every week counts with these diseases. That is one of the reasons women in the target age groups are urged to have tests frequently, sometimes as frequently as every 12 months.

What happened at that time — the anxiety and fear instilled in so many women by the fact that that laboratory had underperformed and reported positive tests as negative for a considerable period — led the Minister for Health to become quite properly aware that the act contained a flaw that meant he could not act with great speed. The flaw was that pathology laboratories could only have their accreditation suspended or totally withdrawn — it was not possible for accreditation for particular tests to be withdrawn. This bill has been introduced to allow the withdrawal of a laboratory's accreditation for particular screening tests while still allowing it to carry out other tests where it has not had suspect results. This will increase the confidence of people who are dependent on those results for their peace of mind.

There was a similar scandal in New Zealand and women in that country suffered as much as women in Victoria and indeed Australia from the fear that their results may not have been accurate. The federal health minister acted speedily to reassure those Victorian women. I give credit to the state Minister for Health that he has done the same thing.

We need to have that level of confidence in our testing procedures in this state. This bill will allow the accreditation board to withdraw accreditation for particular tests from laboratories which for some reason or another do not meet the rigorous standards expected by the board. This will be a matter of great reassurance for general practitioners around the state: they will feel they can send their patients' smear tests off to laboratories in which they can have complete confidence. However, people must take responsibility for their own health and keep at the back of their minds the fact that no test can be assured to be totally accurate at all times. Therefore, all people, male and female and particularly those in the risk categories, should take responsibility for their own health and ensure they have these screening tests on a regular basis.

The opposition has no problems with this bill. The fact that it is being passed through this house today will be reassuring to many people around the state. I wish it a speedy passage.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** (Wimmera) — On behalf of the National Party I rise to speak on the Pathology Services Accreditation (Amendment) Bill. The primary purpose of the bill is to amend the Pathology Services Accreditation Act 1984 to enable the Pathology Services Accreditation Board to impose limitations or restrictions on the type of pathology testing that may be carried out by accredited pathology services.

From the start we would all agree that the people of Victoria must have confidence in the pathology system. Pathology services are a vital part of the Victorian health system, not only for individual patient diagnosis but also for public health programs across the state. It is pleasing to see that the Minister for Health is in here listening to the debate. I know that my colleagues have given some of the other ministers a bit of a tickle that we have not had ministers in here to listen to other debates.

**Mr Hulls** — We have two ministers listening!

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — Is that another minister there? It is good to have two in the chamber.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kilgour)** — Order! The honourable member for Wimmera should ignore interjections, especially interjections from the table, which are disorderly.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — I think it is bit like a game of football, Mr Acting Speaker — it really encourages greater performance. That is what I found when I was playing football for that great team Essendon.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kilgour)** — Order! The honourable member for Wimmera, on the bill.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — The National Party was pleased — —

**Mr Hulls** — Were they called Essendon then?

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — They were called the Mighty Bombers, Windy Hill.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Kilgour)** — Order! On the bill!

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — Getting back to the bill, members of the National Party were pleased to have been very kindly briefed by Nicola, Rosemary and Jenny from the minister's office. They provided us with good background information and further understanding of this important legislation.

The National Party consulted widely. It sent the second-reading speech and the bill out across country

Victoria where it is based — to places like Bairnsdale, Benalla, Stawell, Mildura and Shepparton — to various organisations that rely on or provide pathology services. I am pleased to say that the National Party will not be opposing this legislation. From reading through it we understand that it closes a loophole in the principal act and that is good for confidence in the pathology system in Victoria.

As we know, pathology services in Victoria are regulated by both the state and commonwealth governments; through the National Association of Testing Authorities at the commonwealth level and through the Pathology Services Accreditation Board in Victoria.

Under the Pathology Services Accreditation Act 1984 it is currently an offence to undertake pathology testing without accreditation. As the honourable member for Mooroolbark said, it is either an all-or-nothing situation. Pathology services cover a broad range of tests that are carried out for health service providers in Victoria. I also understand from reading the current act that it is an all-or-nothing situation, so you cannot close down a certain part of it without this legislation going through.

As the National Party sees it, the deficiencies in the act were highlighted in recent events relating to a particular laboratory and its testing of Pap smears. As I said previously, the Pathology Services Accreditation Board is unable under the current act to impose limitations or restrictions on the type of pathology testing that an accredited pathology service may carry out in Victoria. The National Party believes these changes will resolve that.

My understanding from the briefing is that 600 000 Pap smear tests are carried out each year. We know that women between the ages of 18 and 69 are encouraged to have a test every second year, or within that period of time. My wife told me that it is a very uncomfortable and not very pleasant test to have. Interestingly enough she said to me, 'If I am going to have to do this test, I want you to undergo a similar test for males'.

**Mr Wilson** interjected.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — Not quite that similar! It is one of those things that are difficult for women to talk about, but it is a very important service.

I understand that under section 25 of the act an inquiry can be triggered by the board or any person in the community. I trust that that will continue to be the case.

The commonwealth Health Insurance Act 1973 provides that a pathology test cannot be paid for by Medicare unless the pathology service is accredited under the act. It is interesting to note that in the case that occurred earlier this year GDL lost its commonwealth government accreditation and therefore its funding source was cut off. No doubt we are all aware that GDL took the matter to VCAT. For a start it tried to keep the matter quiet, and then it tried to be put back into the Medicare system. That is when it all came out in the newspapers and the community became aware of all those things.

I emphasise that it is an offence to undertake pathology testing in Victoria without having accreditation under the Pathology Services Accreditation Act 1984. Cervical screening has been responsible for a more than 40 per cent drop in deaths from cervical cancer since its inception. In preparing my speech I looked through some newspaper articles about this matter, and I shall just highlight a couple of them. Under the heading 'Paps plea: don't let it occur again', the *Herald Sun* of 10 March said:

Victorian women want a guarantee that this week's Pap smear scare will never happen again.

Unfortunately, as the honourable member for Mooroolbark said, Pap testing is not an exact science, but it is nonetheless very important. The more tests that are done, the greater the reliability, but it will never be an exact science. However, women want to feel confident that the service they are getting is as accurate as possible and meets the standards required by both the federal and state governments.

Australia has a world-class testing system, but a review of this service has been ordered by the federal and state governments. I am aware that its findings should be brought down in June or July this year, which should result in improved standards of Pap smear tests across Australia. Because of the problems that happened earlier in the year there was a double-checking of the Pap smear tests, which caused enormous concern for women across Victoria.

Another article that I found very informative reported on research by AAP. As we know, Pap smear tests are among the most unpopular medical procedures for women, but the early detection and the prevention of cervical cancer are crucial to their health. According to information I have been able to source, it is a disease which back in 1998 killed approximately 269 women.

Part of this test includes cells being collected and sent to a laboratory, where they are screened for changes that could herald cancer. According to a federal health

department, regular two-year screenings can prevent 90 per cent of most common cervical cancers. Because of this the push for regular universal Pap tests is the centrepiece of a joint commonwealth, state and territory initiative against cervical cancer which was implemented more than 10 years ago.

Despite the need for checks, experts say that no-one should assume that Pap smear tests are 100 per cent foolproof. Pathologists believe that these tests fail to pick up pre-cancerous cells in up to 20 per cent of cases, and 5 per cent of cancerous cells are missed.

The medical director of the Federated Family Planning Association, Terri Foran, said Australia had world-class standards for testing but there were built-in limitations. She said:

(PAP smears) never were and never pretended to be fail proof.

Pap smear testing was developed in 1928, when Dr George Papanicolaou —

**Ms McCall** — That's why they are called Pap smears.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — That is exactly right — and it is not too hard to work that out! In 1928 he discovered that cells in the cervix change in appearance before they become cancerous. In the laboratory the tests are conducted manually by a scientist, who sits down in front of the microscope and searches slides for abnormal cells. Although technology can improve the quality of the slides, a subjective human element is always present.

My research shows that an automated computer screening system, Papnet, was used during the 1990s, but unfortunately the company involved went broke and it is no longer used in Australia, despite findings in a 1995 study that it could pick up abnormalities missed during manual screening. Although we are talking about the human element involved in the process, a computer screening system has been developed — but it seems it is not economically viable. Just as importantly, though, it is still not the answer to all the concerns.

Australian doctors have been testing for cervical cancer since the 1960s, but screening became coordinated only under the 1991 national cervical cancer screening program. This program has been responsible for establishing a quality assurance program for laboratories and setting up an Australia-wide network of registries which remind women when the time is due for another test. We have come a long way in this

regard since this test was developed in 1928. It was not until the 1960s that testing occurred in Australia, and we now have one of the best systems in identifying cervical cancer and helping women overcome their concerns for their health.

The events of earlier this year, as highlighted in the newspapers and in this house, exposed some significant deficiencies in the act that have impaired the ability of the board to act in a timely manner to ensure that public health is protected. We have already read about and heard the concerns raised by many of the women affected. A lot of them have had to get letters and go back for a secondary test. As I said, it is not the most popular test, and that caused great anxiety for women in Victoria.

The Pathology Services Accreditation Act 1984 currently provides for the accreditation of pathology services by the Pathology Services Accreditation Board in one of five categories. These categories mirror the categories adopted by the National Association of Testing Authorities and the Health Insurance Commission in their accreditation purposes, which ensures consistency with commonwealth requirements.

There is one very important thing that we asked the advisers about in the briefing on Monday. We know there are both state and commonwealth requirements for testing, but at least at this stage — and I hope it continues — we have a consistent accreditation process. I also know a review is being conducted. Fortunately we live in a country surrounded by water, so we do not have to cross borders or go through point guards and those types of things, but at the end of the day we still have lines on a map defining the states. Whether they be the Murray River or lines on the map between South Australia and Victoria, at the end of the day we cross those lines regularly and women need to be assured that whether they live in Canberra, Sydney, Alice Springs or Horsham in western Victoria, the best possible health service is available to provide them with the best advice on any problems that could arise.

The various categories I spoke about earlier relate primarily to the requirements for supervision and control of pathology services in these categories, rather than to the type of tests performed. As I said from the start, the National Party will not be opposing the powers of the board to impose limitations or restrictions on pathology services in Victoria. As another honourable member said earlier, the National Party is comfortable that pathology services cover a broad range of services and if certain parts are not up to standard that issue needs to be addressed immediately.

The National Party will not be opposing this bill because it thinks this is commonsense legislation which will give the board power to limit the type of pathology testing services in this important health service in Victoria.

**Mr NARDELLA** (Melton) — The bill before the house is a very important one and both the honourable members for Mooroolbark and Wimmera have made a very good case as to why their parties are supporting it. This bill is about protecting people in our society who use pathology services. It arose from a very serious case recently where some cervical screenings were taken to a pathology company in Melbourne whose services were not up to standard; the error rates were too high and both the Pathology Services Accreditation Board in Victoria and the Minister for Health had difficulty in dealing with that situation. This bill, in its limited form, allows the board to take any action that is needed decisively and quickly. But this bill also contains appropriate checks and balances to ensure that it is not abused.

The review that I undertook with a number of eminent persons on the pathology accreditation system in Victoria showed that the Pathology Services Accreditation Board is staffed by very committed people who believe they are doing their best for the industry. They believe they have put in place a procedure to encourage and support the best pathology services in Victoria.

The problem that was recently highlighted showed that this board had limited powers because even though the Health Insurance Commission was able to withdraw its accreditation and Medicare rebates were not available to the laboratory, this company was not responsible in doing the right thing by the women whose tests had been processed through its laboratory. This legislation is really about making sure that situation cannot continue and that even though companies have deemed accreditation in the pathology area the Pathology Services Accreditation Board can take action quickly and decisively.

This legislation goes back to 1984. Just prior to that time the states and the commonwealth were trying to work through a national uniform scheme of which Victoria was to be the lead agency. As it turned out, Victoria was the only state to put in place the Pathology Services Accreditation Board. The commonwealth went through the National Association of Testing Authorities system and through the Medicare system to deal with the accreditation, not so much to do the types of things that we do here but to safeguard the medical insurance aspect of its programs. So Victoria was the

leader in that field. The review that I undertook is now being added to by a national review, and we are waiting on that before any further changes occur within the Victorian system. I agree with the honourable member for Wimmera that we need to have uniformity within Australia.

As with many biotechnology areas, pathology is developing rapidly. Doctors now conduct a great many mass screenings, and this bill will assist in that monitoring. One of the great benefits of this technology is that it is reducing the death rate within our society. I support the bill. The legislation is needed and it is timely. It is about protecting people, which is what this government is all about. I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms McCALL** (Frankston) — Very rarely does a piece of legislation come into this house that perhaps the women of this Parliament might claim as one of theirs. This is the second time I have stood in this Parliament to speak on such legislation, the first, under the previous government being the legislation on female genital mutilation. I would not suggest for a minute that having a smear test is quite the same, but perhaps some of us who have endured them might say they are fairly painful.

The opposition — the Liberal Party in particular — certainly commends the bill. We commend the government for acting as speedily as it did over a very unfortunate course of events that removed the faith that many women in Victoria had in the results they received from the laboratories conducting Pap smear tests. It was timely and therefore we have no difficulty in supporting the legislation. We have heard a little about the history of the smear test and an explanation of the details of the legislation from the honourable member for Wimmera, for which I thank him.

It is important for women of Victoria to recognise the necessity to protect their health and to have regular tests, whether they be Pap smears or breast screens. Whereas these tests affect directly the health of women, the impact of those tests have an enormous effect on everybody else — families, friends and the community in general.

I am delighted that, firstly, we have the legislation to close the loophole, and secondly, that it is an opportunity for us all to remind the women in Victoria that this piece of legislation is important to women's health, which most of us take very seriously, although I do understand the broad grin the honourable member for Malvern is wearing at this moment. A large number of us — certainly the women on this side — wish to

make a contribution to this debate, so I will simply say, firstly, that I urge all women to remember that these tests are important; and secondly, that women have every right to expect that the tests they have undertaken have been conducted with all the appropriate safeguards put in place and that the results when they are distributed are as near to accurate as they can be. Finally, I urge all honourable members to offer this bill a very speedy passage through both houses.

**Mr LEIGHTON** (Preston) — I welcome the opportunity as a former health practitioner and member of a health practitioner registration board to speak in this debate. I have always taken the view that the regulation of registration of health practitioners and the accreditation of health providers must be of the highest standards in the interests of protecting consumers.

This bill comes about because of a series of reports of events arising from the National Association of Testing Authorities which identified deficiencies in the standard of Pap smear testing being undertaken by Victorian pathology service general diagnostic laboratories. During 1998 and 1999, 14 000 women had Pap smears. If there are irregularities with the standard of testing then the concern is that you could end up with false negatives, exposing women to the risk of not being detected for cervical cancer. That is not to say for one moment that there are anything like 14 000 young women — just as there is a risk of some of the women who have not been notified — having false positives. In the interests of health consumers I find it frightening that there was a move in the first instance to suppress the name of this company, and I would certainly congratulate the Victorian Minister for Health on the lead he showed in protecting women and bringing it to the public's attention.

This incident highlights the inadequacies in the existing legislation for the Victorian board to deal with the issue, and notwithstanding the review of the board being conducted by the honourable member for Melton it is critical that we act now to pass this legislation, so I also welcome the opportunity to support the bill.

One other comment is that when our bills committee was briefed one concern I had was to ensure that the board really can act quickly. The advice I am being given is that in the interests of natural justice obviously the provider would have to receive some sort of written notification from the board of its intentions to limit or restrict its ability to conduct tests in a certain area, but that is a process that can be gone through in days, whereas at the moment the problem is that the Victorian board does not have the power to restrict or limit the accreditation of pathology providers to provide certain

services. The bill is a very welcome measure; it protects the health not just of Victorian women but in fact of all Victorians.

**Mrs SHARDEY** (Caulfield) — I think we all read with a little dismay on 8 March that the results of 36 000 Pap smear tests were in doubt after authorities revealed that a private Melbourne laboratory company was under investigation by both state and federal medical watchdogs. The report said it is believed that hundreds of women who were given the all clear by the laboratory in the past three years should have received positive test results indicating the existence of pre-cancerous cells. We were also told that the Health Insurance Commission had taken the rare step of cutting off the laboratory's Medicare accreditation, a move that the laboratory was contesting with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. We also heard that the state-based Pathology Services Accreditation Board was investigating the laboratory and was looking at revoking its licence to do Pap smears with screening for cervical cancer.

While I do not wish to mention the name of the particular company, there was an issue about the name of the company being published — it was held back for some time. The Prime Minister, however, and I believe also the Minister for Health in this state spoke out against that and felt it was important that women knew which company was responsible so they could gain some assurances as to whether they had had their tests done by this company. The Prime Minister said:

I feel very, very much for those women ...

I think the anxiety of thinking you may have been given a Pap smear clearance which was wrong would be awful, absolutely horrible.

I don't think that anything is more important than those women ... knowing exactly where they stand, and whatever is needed to bring that about I will support.

The women of Victoria were certainly very pleased to receive that assurance and support from the Prime Minister and, I believe also, from the state government. Subsequently, as we know, thousands of Victorian women received letters to tell them that their tests needed to be repeated to ensure correct results. We also know that some women who may have had cancerous cells but had received negative results were given the all clear. It would have been a very difficult time for some women. We should also raise the possibility that some women may have received positive results and had surgical procedures. Some of those women will be wanting to receive their slides to absolutely check whether they in fact had cervical, uterine or ovarian cancers.

Many of the public health programs in this state rely on pathology tests and it is most important — and we all agree on this — that they be of the highest standard. Pap smears have meant that there has been a 40 per cent drop in deaths from cervical cancer, so we appreciate how important it is that women are tested regularly. There have been very strong campaigns in Victoria and possibly throughout Australia to ensure that women starting from quite an early age have tests every two years. In Victoria we have a register, and when I was asked by my doctor if I was happy for my name to be put on it I said I was because it means that every two years you get a reminder notice and then, if you do not have your test, there is a further reminder. I think that has been a very good thing for people in Victoria.

The state government is responsible for providing accreditation under the Pathology Services Accreditation Act and the federal government is responsible for the payment for such tests under Medicare.

The government is to be congratulated on the bill because it means that it has moved quickly on the issue. We on the opposition benches strongly support the introduction of this bill and will support its passage. I am very pleased to be joined in debate by three of my female colleagues as well as the honourable member for Bennettswood. It is important that women, particularly in leadership positions, raise the issues of women's health and are prepared to stand up and talk about the importance of women's health and the high priority it should be given. Tests available for women that ensure their good health must be of the highest possible standard, and those benchmarks have been laid down.

The bill fulfils the state's responsibility to allow the Pathology Services Accreditation Board to improve limitations or restrictions on the type of testing that can be carried out. It is to be hoped that the changes proposed in the bill will address the issues raised through the publication of the events that occurred here in Melbourne. We recognise the federal and state responsibilities and the fact that there has been a review taking place in Victoria and a broader review at the federal level.

The bill will give the board the power to impose restrictions on pathology services in Victoria, either at the time of accreditation or at the annual review. Importantly, it will allow limitations to be placed on the type of testing being done, and it will be an offence for a service to perform a test if it does not have the appropriate accreditation or authorisation to do so. That is a very important step.

As the shadow minister for aged care I would further like to bring some focus to the fact that women in their older years are apparently more at risk from breast cancer, cervical cancer, uterine cancer and ovarian cancer. Although it is not to do with this bill it is important to note that the highest incidence of breast cancer occurs in women aged 65 to 69 years. The highest incidence of cervical cancer occurs in women aged 70 to 74, with 17 out of every 100 000 women developing cancer of the cervix. Mind you, the incidence of these cancers starts in the early 40s and goes through to the latter years. The highest incidence of uterine cancer occurs in women aged 70 to 74.

Most post-menopausal women think they will not be at risk, but it is important that the message be passed on to them as they reach their latter years when it is more important than at any other time, with the incidence being more than 60 per 100 000 women. These high figures start kicking in at about the age of 50. The highest incidence of ovarian cancer is in the age group 70 to 74, although ovarian cancer starts to occur in women aged much younger than 70.

It is important that we continue to strongly support women having the tests but also ensure that governments rigorously apply appropriate standards and that women have confidence in the system that has been put in place to protect their health.

**Ms DUNCAN** (Gisborne) — It gives me great pleasure to speak on the Pathology Services Accreditation (Amendment) Bill. As other honourable members have said, although the bill addresses particular concerns about testing for women it is critical that all Victorians have confidence in any pathology testing or screening that has been encouraged over many years to get men and women tested in a proactive way. We should encourage people to take responsibility for their own health by using advances in science and by providing access to technology that will give early warnings of any potential disease.

As we have seen over recent months there has been an enormous blow to that confidence through recent media reports about certain pathology laboratories and some of the readings they have produced from their testing. It is critical that we maintain public confidence in the tests. As other honourable members have said, we have seen an enormous drop in the rates of particular sorts of cancers, for example, but also in a whole range of medical conditions and diseases as a result of more women being tested early and at particular intervals throughout their lives. We must ensure that women continue to access those services, and that they do not lose confidence in the system simply because of a

particular laboratory and consider it is not worth while having the tests done. That would be disastrous. We would then see the rates of some of those diseases slowly increase, as until now we have watched the incidence decrease. We want that downward trend to continue.

The bill is about trying to restore public confidence in pathology services in Victoria. The bill does that by giving more flexibility to the board when it is authorising accreditation. Currently in Victoria anybody wanting to set up a pathology laboratory must follow both state and commonwealth legislation. The commonwealth legislation, as I understand it, applies to various tests that are covered by Medicare, whereas the Victorian legislation is much broader and covers all forms of pathology testing. Particular aspects of the bill enable the board to be more flexible in the way it applies accreditation. The bill gives the board the flexibility to respond quickly should it need to do so as a result of any problems that are brought to its attention because of a particular pathology laboratory not performing tests or giving test results that are inconsistent with the standards set down.

At present it is an offence to undertake pathology testing in Victoria without first being accredited under the Pathology Services Accreditation Act 1984. That act will continue in operation. The bill amends that act to enable the Pathology Services Board to impose limitations, in some instances, or restrictions on the type of pathology testing that may be carried out by a particular accredited pathology service. The recent events publicised in the media about the standard of testing undertaken by a particular laboratory have exposed some of the deficiencies in the act. The bill seeks to redress them.

The 1984 act provides for accreditation of pathology services by the board in one of five categories specified by order in council. These categories mirror the categories adopted by the National Association of Testing Authorities and the Health Insurance Commission for their accreditation purposes to ensure consistency with the commonwealth's requirements. The government supports and will promote that.

We need to ensure that all testing in all laboratories meets particular standards, which need to be subject to ongoing review. Action needs to be taken if and when it is deemed that the testing procedures of a particular laboratory are not within acceptable levels. The bill will give the board the ability to do that by limiting or restricting the types of testing a laboratory can perform. It is critical for good public health in Victoria and the confidence women have in the testing that the board

can act quickly to impose limitations, where necessary, but being mindful that there is a current commonwealth review of the areas in which it has some regulation — that is, testing covered by Medicare. Notwithstanding the importance of that review — and the government will look keenly at its outcome — it is important for the Victorian government to act in a timely fashion. The bill seeks to make those changes now, but that is not to say that other changes may not be made down the track.

This important bill will allow Victorian men and women to maintain confidence in the public health system. It is important for the control of disease in this state. I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr WILSON** (Bennettswood) — I am delighted to add my comments to debate on the Pathology Services Accreditation (Amendment) Bill. The Liberal Party supports the bill, and I commend the Minister for Health for bringing the bill before the house and for arranging adequate briefings for the opposition.

In his second-reading speech the minister makes some very valuable observations:

Pathology services are a vital part of Victoria's health system, not only for individual patient diagnosis, but also for public health programs. Many of our public health programs rely on pathology tests which must be of the highest standard ...

The people of Victoria must have confidence in the pathology system which underpins the program, the quality of which is also vital for patient diagnosis.

The second-reading speech tells us that:

the purpose of this bill is to amend the Pathology Services Accreditation Act to enable the Pathology Services Accreditation Board to impose limitations or restrictions on the type of pathology testing that may be carried out by an accredited pathology service; and remedy certain identified anomalies in the act.

The bill comes before the house after the recent public revelations that a Victorian diagnostic laboratory may have supplied incorrect Pap smear results. The Pap smear results of up to 36 000 women tested were in doubt. I commend the actions of the federal and state governments during that period. Both governments moved swiftly, and the Prime Minister led the charge to restore confidence in pathology testing in Australia and particularly in Victoria.

On 8 March 2002 the Prime Minister made the following comments:

I feel very, very much for these women.

I think the anxiety of thinking you may have been given a Pap smear clearance which was wrong would be awful, absolutely horrible.

I don't think that anything is more important than those women ... knowing exactly where they stand, and whatever is needed to bring that about I will support.

The Prime Minister went on to say he would discuss the issue with the federal health minister, Senator Kay Patterson, that day.

Subsequently the federal Minister for Health and Ageing and her Victorian counterpart worked hard to restore confidence in Victoria's pathology services. Although confidence was largely restored, a great deal of anxiety remains. The bill before the house will significantly add to the restoration of confidence and the alleviation of anxiety.

While pathology testing is not limited to Pap smears, there is no doubt that providing adequate testing for cervical cancer has provided the impetus for the bill before the house. In 2001, 277 000 women had Medicare-rebated Pap smears, and statistics tell us that in 1999, 48 Victorian women died of cervical cancer. That is 48 deaths too many.

Honourable members on my side of the house have joked that I could be the token male from the Liberal Party to speak on this bill. As a man who has lived in the world of women all his life, and on behalf of my mother, my two sisters, my wife and my daughters, and indeed all Victorians, I applaud the bill that is under consideration, and I wish it the speediest of passages.

**Mr SEITZ** (Keilor) — I rise to support the Pathology Services Accreditation (Amendment) Bill and congratulate the minister, his department and parliamentary counsel on the speedy way in which this bill has come before us. It is a very important step towards our community having confidence in our pathology services. Women who have had Pap smears and who have lived with uncertainty until they have had further tests will be assured that pathology services are being well controlled and that the tests are being carried out properly. Naturally in those circumstances they suffer a lot of trauma, concern and worry. Like the previous speaker, I was brought up in a family of women, as I lost my father in the early days of the Second World War.

These sorts of tests can cause great concern for women, particularly when they front up to doctors to have the tests carried out. It is the same with a number of other tests. Some women have a problem visiting medical practitioners and having their private parts examined, and that in itself needs to be taken into consideration. Often it is not just about the test, it is also about fronting up and about facing the uncertainty afterwards, which can cause great concern.

Pathology services are an important and integral part of our health system, both in Victoria and throughout Australia, because those services identify sicknesses. In this case it is not a contagious disease, but imagine if it were and it was not properly diagnosed and isolated! That could lead to all sorts of problems in our society. The minister has taken the necessary steps, and we now have legislation. There is also commonwealth legislation, but that is mainly concerned with the Medicare rebate. The Victorian legislation deals with the services that are provided. Accrediting pathology services is important so that the Pathology Services Accreditation Board can act swiftly. That is what these amendments are about, and they are a very important step.

I note that the minister has appointed the honourable member for Melton to carry out the review of the provision of Victorian pathology services. Again I commend the minister very highly for taking that action so quickly. Hopefully the Victorian review, together with the commonwealth review, will restore pathology services to their rightful place. They play an important part in keeping Australia a healthy nation. Although there are fewer women in Victoria with cervical cancer than there were, we need to be at the forefront in providing these services, because, after all, it is important for the survival of our community and our society.

I often hear of new mothers — I was going to say young mothers, but these days that is not correct! — who by the age of 30 or 40, having established their careers, decide to have babies and start their families. They then start to worry about those issues, and sometimes it is only then that they discover they have problems. Therefore we should have a system for the proper accreditation of pathology services so that they cannot be set up by just anybody. It was this need that initially led to registration in the first place.

Who signs off on the tests and the reports is also important. Too many times that has been done by the trained technicians who operate the computers that carry out the tests. My committee looked at one pathology service which also carries out tests for the veterinary unit of the Minister for Agriculture! Jokingly my committee expressed the hope that their tests and samples did not get mixed up in the laboratory. Again, it is important to look at that sector of the health system and at how those services are provided.

In conclusion, it is also important that these laboratories are well set up and hygienic and protect the workers, technicians and pathologists who operate them. I hope that will be taken on board when the honourable

member for Melton has his review. With the world becoming smaller and people being able to travel to and from this country very quickly, any sorts of diseases can be brought in. Tests need to be conducted so that contagious diseases are identified and the workers involved are protected.

With those comments I assure the women of Victoria and Australia that the Bracks government is concerned about this field and aims to make sure that the health system and pathology services in particular function well for them and for the rest of society. I wish the bill a speedy passage.

**Mrs FYFFE** (Evelyn) — I am pleased to rise to speak on the Pathology Services Accreditation (Amendment) Bill, which is supported by the Liberal Party. It is good to see that we are able to respond quickly and responsibly when an issue such as this arises in the community. It is also important that as legislators we reassure Victorians that they can have confidence in the system.

The bill will enable the Pathology Services Accreditation Board to impose limitations or restrictions on the type of pathology testing that may be carried out by an accredited pathology service, and it will also remedy certain anomalies in the act.

The recent series of events surrounding the news that 36 000 women may have been given incorrect Pap smear results highlighted the deficiencies in the act. The bill will empower the board to act quickly and decisively in imposing limitations. Pathology laboratories have been accredited since 1984, and a close watch is kept by the pathology accreditation board on the testing they carry out.

The legislation will allow the board to withdraw a particular test that does not meet the standards while still allowing the pathology laboratory to continue to perform other tests. We rely more and more on pathology testing to aid in the diagnosis of disease. Pap smears, like any other screening test, have some inherent limitations and can never be 100 per cent accurate. Michael Quinn, a professor at the Royal Women's Hospital, has said that the normal rate of errors could be as high as 20 per cent.

Women should have Pap smear tests every two years to reduce the likelihood of any abnormality being undetected. The anxiety faced by those 36 000 women in thinking that they had been given a Pap smear clearance in error would have been very stressful. Like the Prime Minister, I feel very much for these women. In fact I feel for every woman who is suspicious that

something may be wrong. Waiting for the results of medical tests is horrendous — whether it is 48 hours or four days, five days or a couple of weeks. We have made many advances in science over the last few years, and many more diseases are being diagnosed early, but individuals still experience anxiety and stress while awaiting results.

The actual Pap smear test is invasive and uncomfortable, as is the test for prostate cancer. Breast cancer screening is also often uncomfortable. Most people have tests when there is a suspicion that something may be wrong, but many, many women and men put off having regular tests either because of the nature of a test or because they lack the time to visit the doctor and obtain the referral.

In 1999, 48 Victorian women — almost 1 per week — died of cervical cancer. It is essential that we use every means at our disposal to encourage more women to have routine Pap smears. As a woman, I ensure that I undergo regular tests, unpleasant as they may be. I also encourage my friends to do the same.

We should also encourage more men to have routine prostate cancer tests. The incidence of prostate cancer is high. Because of the nature of this bill we have been emphasising women's health. However, we must also be conscious of men's health and as legislators do everything in our power to encourage men to have regular tests. It is important for the health of each individual, for families and for the community as a whole that the incidence of disease, the treatment costs and the emotional trauma involved are reduced. The total effect on families must always be considered.

I encourage every woman to put up with the discomfort and to make the time to undergo regular testing. It is also important that all men are tested for prostate cancer and present themselves for any other test a doctor may recommend, having regard to family history and the predisposition to heredity disease. I commend the bill to the house and wish it a speedy passage.

**Mr HAMILTON** (Minister for Agriculture) — I thank all honourable members for the sensitive and serious manner in which they have contributed to the debate on this bill. There are a number of examples of sensible debates on issues such as this, and today's contributions have illustrated one of the better and more positive sides of the Parliament. I again thank all honourable members for their contributions.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Read second time.**

*Remaining stages*

**Passed remaining stages.**

**TOBACCO (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL**

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 29 May; motion of Mr THWAITES (Minister for Health).**

**Mr DOYLE** (Malvern) — I am delighted to continue the remarks I began last night. I will not go back to the start of my comments, because I am sure they are uppermost in all members' minds as I begin again today.

**Mr Hamilton** — Haven't forgotten a word.

**Mr DOYLE** — I have not forgotten a word, either, but I equally think you may not have remembered a word!

I thank the department for providing a table summary of the effect of the smoking restrictions contained in the bill. As I said last night, it is a complex regime when one considers whether or not clubs and pubs are gaming venues, whether they have one or more rooms in operation and what the principal activity in each of those rooms is. I will refer to this table as an accurate summation of what these bans mean for pubs and clubs, which is in line with what I said last night.

We need to consider the types of premises that are being referred to and the number of rooms those premises have in operation. It is only then that we can determine what the application of the new smoking bans will be.

Let's first consider licensed premises which are non-gaming venues and which have only one room. This is something of an anomalous provision; nevertheless it is a step forward, and the opposition will be supporting it. As I have also said, if bingo is being played there the area must be smoke free during each session. If it is simply a licensed premises with a non-gaming venue, then no other new smoking restrictions will apply. For a licensed premises which is a non-gaming venue with two or more rooms, the occupier will have to designate one smoke-free room, which may be the bistro or the room containing the dining area. That, of course, may change over the course of the day as the use of the rooms changes and as they are opened or closed.

For licensed premises where bingo sessions are held and there are two or more rooms, the area where bingo is played must be smoke free during the session, and the occupier of the premises must also designate one smoke-free room, which can be the room where bingo is played, so there must be one smoke-free room.

If it is a licensed club which again is a non-gaming venue with one, two or more rooms in operation, then smoking bans will apply as they do in other licensed premises. Again the designated smoke-free room may be a room open to the public or open only to members. If there are gaming machines, however, then the rules change slightly.

If a gaming venue has only one room the gaming machine area must be smoke free. This is the anomaly I mentioned last night. If a single room has a gaming area it is not physically separate from the rest of the room and it will only be the gaming area which is smoke free. We all understand that environmental tobacco smoke moves across imaginary lines, and we are not suggesting in any way that it does not. It may not seem entirely logical that an area has been designated smoke free, without a discrete or physical barrier to the movement of environmental tobacco smoke but the opposition is prepared to support this bill because it believes it is at least a step forward from where we are at the moment. If a gaming venue has two rooms in operation then it is the gaming room which must be totally smoke free. If a gaming venue has more than two rooms in operation the gaming room must be smoke free and the occupier of the premises has to designate one other smoke-free room.

Although that is a fairly complex series of arrangements — and later I will come to some comments on the necessity for a coherent and readily understood plan for smoking bans — as I have said the opposition believes these are steps forward with pubs and clubs and will therefore support this legislation.

I indicate that the bill is an interesting way of dealing with the casino. One of the things that I applaud is that the casino itself is smoke free, and that is a designation of this particular piece of legislation; however, within the bill is a ministerial discretion to declare areas to be smoking areas. I will take up the two areas which the minister can designate as smoking areas and publish in the *Government Gazette*: bars and high-roller areas. I understand the amendments will also allow TABs in the casino to be exempt, as they currently are in pubs. The opposition sees that as a consistent and reasonable amendment.

Firstly I will go to what I see as the overall problem. It is what I started on last night but wish to make clear today — that is, if this were a consistent piece of legislation — and I understand the difficulties in drafting it and I do not mean this as a criticism, merely as an observation — consideration would be given to the default position for each of the entertainment venues.

The default position for a bingo centre is that it is smoke free because smoking is prohibited. The default position for the casino is that it is smoke free because the minister has to give particular exemptions to bar areas and high-roller rooms. Theoretically the minister could say there are no exemptions, and if the minister were to do that the casino would be entirely smoke free. So we can say the default position for the casino is that it is smoke free. But the default position for pubs and clubs is that they are smoking venues — as the usage of the rooms changes during the night, if no more than one room, a single room, is in operation, the default position is that pubs and clubs are smoking venues. Later I will come to what I consider to be an alternative. I point this out by means of observation rather than criticism, but consistency would argue that the default position should be the same for all three.

The two issues I wish to raise relate to the exemptions for the casino. I will not touch TABs; we accept that they are currently consistent with clubs and that the casino should continue to be consistent with that position. Firstly I turn to the high-roller room. This is an interesting definition. I think if you were to ask the man in the street for the definition of a high-roller room he would say it was a room where the patrons had a turnover of a certain amount of money. I mean, that is what a high roller is — someone who gambles in large denominations of money.

The government has chosen to define a high-roller room not by turnover but almost by passport. The bill defines the term 'high roller room' as meaning a room in a casino that is used substantially for gaming by international visitors to the casino. That may well mean that some of those very high-roller rooms at the top of the casino tower will be smoking areas for international visitors but for Australian persons would not be designated as high-roller rooms. That may be a wrong conclusion. The minister may determine that the room itself will be a smoking room regardless of patronage, but that is not what the definition says.

There are further questions I wish to ask, for instance, about the new forms of gaming like the VIP slots. Although electronic gaming machine gaming is not generally recognised as high-roller gaming, the style of

business carried out in this area of the casino would by general acknowledgment be considered to be of the high-roller type of gambling. It will be interesting to see whether that falls into the definition of a high-roller room.

Similar decisions will need to be made for areas like the Mahogany Room at the casino, and one other area which I think from memory — and I may be incorrect on this — is the Maple Room. That is a room to which the casino often has packaged tours for international visitors. Typically they come on a reasonably short stay of around a week or slightly longer and game together in these particular rooms. They do not stay at the casino; they stay in some of the hotels around the casino precinct. By legislative definition the Maple room would be a high-roller room because it is largely patronised for gaming by international visitors, but in that area the individual's turnover may not be very high. On a serious matter, if I could risk using irony, it is more like a sort of low-roller room and I am not sure whether that area would be considered exempt from the non-smoking general rule for the casino and be allowed to be a smoking area. As I say, these matters will be designated by the minister.

The second area of ministerial discretion is the minister's determination of the bars that will be designated as smoking areas around the main gaming floors. While I have no great objection to that, I must note with some irony, now that the minister is here, that I recall when the positions in the house were reversed and the opposition was on the other side, and the now minister, along with a number of other now senior government ministers, did not like the sort of provisions which provide for ministerial discretion in decision making. I note with rueful irony what a difference an election sometimes makes to one's point of view.

Again, the opposition does not object to that, and I would add only one note of caution to it. It is the one that is always made, and I hope it will not be of concern in this instance, but it needs to be made. I am convinced that these arrangements have been arrived at with the best will in the world and with a meeting of minds of the government and the various venues — I have some confidence in that process, which is why I am pleased to support it — but the nature of politics and business is that individuals move on and views change but legislation remains.

That designation of the ministerial discretion remains in the legislation and that means that a future health minister could create more or less smoking at the casino according to ministerial direction. I am confident that what is in the minds of the government and the venue

operators is entirely appropriate at this point and will provide some smoking venues, but given that it is within the gift of the minister of the day that is something that can change in the future. It goes to one of the larger points that I will make a little later — that is, in this area the public, the entertainment industry and the health industry are ready for certainty and I am not sure that ministerial discretion provisions provide for great certainty either now or in the future. I will briefly come to that later.

There is a section 85 provision in this piece of legislation. I must understand with due — —

**An Honourable Member** — A what?

**Mr DOYLE** — A section 85.

**Ms Asher** — I don't believe it.

**Mr DOYLE** — No, regrettably there is.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr DOYLE** — I thank my colleagues for their considerate help. I am not sure I am in need of it. Yes, there is a section 85 provision in this — —

**Mr Baillieu** interjected.

**Mr DOYLE** — No, they would not want to highlight a section 85 provision, and I thank the honourable member for Hawthorn for his continued help.

Despite the explanation provided by our excellent public servants I still have no idea why this section 85 provision is necessary and am not clear why the section 85 provision in the headline act is not sufficient to cover the new provisions and the new offences created by this miscellaneous amendments bill before us today. I note, as was pointed out by my friends, that when in opposition the now government railed against section 85 provisions, noting that the previous government scattered them like confetti. Yet here we have another one from this government.

I come back briefly to the idea of consistency. I do not want to take up too much more time, so I will do this very quickly. As the minister has noted on a number of occasions, tobacco policy has had bipartisan support, and the opposition certainly supported the previous piece of legislation on smoking bans and tobacco reform, as indeed it will support this bill.

However, I make this observation: when smoking bans were introduced into restaurants they were generally well understood and well regarded, but let us not kid

ourselves; they were well accepted not because of occupational health or safety reasons or even public health reasons but essentially because to most people smoking in restaurants was aesthetically unacceptable. The unacceptable nexus between smoking and eating was, in the public's mind, a reason for banning smoking in those restaurants so it did not inconvenience other patrons and the work force was not exposed to environmental tobacco smoke. We all accepted that.

As I have said, the Liberal Party is supporting the bill. However, the difficulty is that the bill advances in tobacco policy by seeking to tie further bans to activities — in this case, to gaming activities and the nature of particular rooms within venues. I am not convinced logically of the ability to tie further bans to activities. Many venues where smoking is permitted will not be covered by this legislation. There is no immediate nexus in my mind between gaming and smoking and using gaming as a mechanism by which we will define further smoking bans, even allowing for the ministerial discretion in the case of the casino. It is time that the Parliament put its mind to coming up with some coherent plan that is understood by the public and by industry about how further smoking bans will proceed.

I do not believe further smoking bans will be logical or as readily accepted if they are tied to further activities, whether that is dancing or whatever else it might be that we wish to tie further bans to. We need something beyond the notion of activity if bans are to be further extended.

In that way the opposition proposed what is now a Liberal Party policy. I hope tobacco is not something that becomes the subject of partisan argument, I hope it is something the Parliament feels comfortable to move forward with. I would have thought one thing we could consider would be to keep all existing smoking bans and move to banning smoking immediately in all enclosed public spaces which are not entertainment venues. What are we going to do about workplaces? The ministerial discretion in this bill allows the Minister for Health to define bars in or out of the smoke-free areas of the casino. I would have equal confidence that such a discretionary power could be used to define areas in the entertainment industry, while all other workplaces should perhaps be the next place we make smoke free.

As I said, I do not believe activities are useful in defining how smoking bans are extended. One proposal the opposition has put forward is that bans could be defined by floor space: one could say all enclosed public spaces, including entertainment venues, are

smoke free, but there is ministerial discretion to allow up to 10 per cent, for instance, of floor space in a particular venue to be a smoking part of that venue. That would give us a chance to be consistent across all venues. It would cover all venues in the entertainment industry and other workplaces and areas that are enclosed public spaces would be smoke free. That would allow individual venues to identify areas of their own businesses which could be given over to smoking; one would hope it would be a discrete and separate area, and not necessarily a serviced area.

You would not allow minors in that smoking area and you would review compliance with smoking areas after a couple of years. If the health industry is correct then many venues would see the wisdom of being 100 per cent smoke free. However, if evaluations showed that there was a role for some smoking to be allowed in venues, that decision could be made and certainty could be brought to the entertainment and health industries and the general public. I do not see this as a matter for combat but something where useful discussion in the Parliament could move this very important area of public policy forward on an agreed and coherent basis.

In conclusion, given that the Minister for Health is present, I hope he will take this up because I do not mention it entirely in jest. I promised my son that I would mention this because it is a point he made to me when we were driving to hockey last week. It was an intriguing point. I will quote him directly. He said, 'How come you can't use a mobile when you are driving but you can smoke? Isn't it a two-hands-on-the-wheel thing?'. I thought to myself that it is quite an intriguing prospect. I am not sure why it is. I do not know the answer to that —

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr DOYLE** — I could often take his advice; I am not sure that that would be for good or, as he would say, for real, but never mind. I promised him I would mention his point during the course of the debate, so I have fulfilled that family commitment.

Finally, I would like to say that the Liberal Party supports this bill on the basis that we believe it is a step forward. Although I have pointed out some anomalies, particularly with the one-room venue, the opposition believes any step forward in this area is a good step and a positive one. However, I would point out that in furtherance of my argument about the lack of certainty it seems now that with every sitting of Parliament there is a further amending bill on tobacco, and sometimes they seem to come from left field.

As I have said, tying further bans to activity is limited in its utility for coherent public policy. The Liberal Party would suggest that for the certainty of the entertainment and health industries and the public at large who want stability and certainty in public policy making, there is need for a coherent public plan for any further tobacco reform. The Liberal Party, as the opposition, would certainly pledge itself to playing a constructive role in that public policy debate. With those comments the opposition will support this bill and wishes it a speedy passage through the house.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** (Wimmera) — I rise on behalf of the National Party to speak on the Tobacco (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill. As honourable members know, the bill contains six key purposes. It will mean that smoking will not be permitted in the vast majority of gaming rooms within approved gaming venues, and in the case of Crown Casino, the main gaming floors will be required to be smoke free. Another key measure means that licensed venues with two or more rooms in operation will be required to indicate that smoking is prohibited in one of those rooms.

Bingo centres will be required to be smoke free. Other places where bingo is played, such as school halls, sporting clubs and the like, will be required to be smoke free during the bingo session. The bill also makes some minor amendments to the definition of 'product line' in relation to the display of tobacco products. The National Party thanks Wendy Tabor, Jenny Hughes and Nicola from the minister's office for meeting with its members on Monday and providing a briefing on this important piece of public health legislation.

The National Party attempted to consult widely with many organisations such as bingo centres, hotels, clubs and local councils. In the short time they had to look at the second-reading speech and the bill, bodies such as the Australian Hotels Association, Crown Casino, the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union, Vichealth, the Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority, the Club Hotel in Kaniva and the Horsham Sports and Community Club provided us with valuable input into the party's decision-making process. I state up front that the National Party will not be opposing this legislation. It is a positive step forward in relation to this very important public health issue.

It is interesting that it is legal to smoke, but my personal position is that I am a very strong antismoker. The smallest area that I want to be in with a smoker is a 40-hectare paddock. When I was at the football or a restaurant it used to annoy the daylighters out of me that a smoker would sit or stand there with their smoke in

hand and the fumes would be wafting into my face and not theirs. The honourable member for Malvern referred to his family situation. I have three sons who are very independent in their own right now. One thing I am grateful for is that although they might have picked up a few bad habits in their lives they do not smoke.

We have a notice on the door to our house which states, 'This is a smoke-free environment'. I can remember years ago when my sons would come home from discos and the like and try to sneak in. We would be sound asleep in the top room, but it was a dead giveaway that they had been out to the discos because they would reek of smoke even though they did not smoke themselves. It would be in their hair and clothes and it was putrid — you could smell them coming into the house from 20 yards away where you were sleeping. Smoking is a major concern, particularly from the point of view of public health.

The National Party will not be opposing this, but I want to highlight that some concerns have been raised. Eating house proprietors and restaurateurs are quite angry that the government is inconsistent in its approach when they and shopping centres have to be smoke free: they do not see the consistency.

I understand and believe that the government is taking a step forward with this approach, but the National Party has some concerns, particularly with the implementation of the legislation. The honourable member for Malvern has highlighted a bit of that, and I shall do the same in my presentation.

When I was researching this legislation I found an article dated 11 March that was headed 'More smoking bans would help social smokers quit: study'. It reported on a study conducted by the Cancer Council of Victoria — a very important and worthy organisation in the Victorian community — which found that:

... smoking bans in pubs, clubs and nightclubs would help young social smokers quit the habit.

As I am the youth spokesman for the National Party, that is one of the drivers in my approach to this legislation.

Last night at about 10 o'clock I walked out of Parliament House with two visitors. The man is a podiatrist, and he and his partner are very strong antismokers. As we walked out onto the front steps we hit an environmental hazard — there were cigarette butts everywhere. It is common to see people smoking outside public buildings and other buildings around the place. We want them to go outside, and we recognise it

is legal to smoke, but it just looks terrible to see cigarette butts all over the front steps outside our state Parliament building.

Quit supplies receptacles that people can put their butts and the like in, and unfortunately I think we will have to put some of those out the front of this building. I know the minister is in the house, and now that his parliamentary secretary has his job back he might take that up and try to provide some facilities out the front and at the doorways of this place to hold all those cigarette butts.

**Mr Doyle** — Perhaps at Spencer Street!

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — That far away, you reckon? It might be a good idea to put them down at Spencer Street and make them walk that far to have a cigarette!

The newspaper article continues:

The study of 400 Victorian smokers at the night-time venues has found 70 per cent of social smokers smoked more or binge smoked when they were out.

As happened with the introduction of legislation to ban smoking in restaurants, I believe this legislation will encourage more young people to give away the habit. Whenever I am with people who say, 'We're going out for a cigarette', I tell them that fewer and fewer people are going outside for a cigarette because it is a dying habit. Unfortunately if they do not give it up it will impact on their personal health.

The National Party spoke to many organisations about this bill. The feedback from the Australian Hotels Association was interesting. I know it has been working with the government to develop this legislation, and it has to work with it. It believes this bill is a step in the right direction of implementing good public health policy, and we agree with that. It believes most owners will manage their venues to work within this new legislation.

The Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union is extremely unhappy, because it does not believe the bill goes far enough. The union wants a smoke-free environment for its members. If I had my way I would agree with that. But I also understand that we need a transition period so we can get to that stage as quickly as we can.

The honourable member for Malvern highlighted the environmental problem people face in going into restaurants where smoke is wafting all around, but it is the same in casinos and bingo centres. During my football years — and I was coaching at the time, so I had to play my part — we used to call bingo. It was the

most mind-zapping job of all time calling 'Legs 11' and so on. I found it very disturbing looking out over the members of the crowd sitting there with three or four bingo books in front of them and a cigarette in one hand and a biro or Texta in the other. It was an environment I did not want to be in, because I am an antismoker.

The National Party received a couple of written submissions on the bill. The Heart Foundation called on members of Parliament to support the smoke-free gambling legislation, as it called it, but we know it obviously goes much further than that. We must work towards having smoke-free environments, particularly in confined areas; as I said before, if people are out in a 40-hectare paddock they can do what they like.

The Victorian tobacco legislation was introduced 15 years ago. As has been highlighted a number of times in this place during the short time I have been a member there has been bipartisan support for this type of legislation, and that is continuing with the bill we are debating today. I strongly believe that passive smoking remains a significant public health issue. The research I have done shows that an estimated 1600 deaths occur each year because of passive smoking. We know that lung cancer, heart disease, low birth weights and respiratory problems in children can be attributed to passive smoking.

I have a brother-in-law who is a surgeon, and he often gets very upset when he has to operate on people who have been in accidents. He says that when he opens them up he can tell straightaway, without looking at their charts, whether they are smokers. He says that although he is working his backside off trying to save them, they are not even trying to help save themselves.

One of the concerns I have — like honourable members opposite, I visit hospitals to see how things are going — is the disturbing number of nurses, both male and female, who smoke. I do not know whether it is because of the anxiety levels in the environment they work in, but it is unfortunate that although they are helping patients, they are not doing justice to their own personal health by walking outside the hospital to have a cigarette.

The bill covers many areas, which I highlighted at the start of my contribution. The gaming machine area is one that is talked about a lot in the bill. The restricted areas will now be known as gaming machine areas within the new gaming legislation. If a gaming venue consists of only one room, only the gaming machine area in that room as defined under the Gaming Machine Control Act 1991 will be required to be smoke free. There will be other venues where it will be possible for

the bar to be excluded from the gaming machine area, meaning that the bar will not be required to be smoke free. It is a bit like the question of whether one can be half pregnant! This is one of the implementation issues that I want to highlight. As we know, in venues with two or more rooms smoking will be prohibited in the room that has gaming machines.

In his second-reading speech the Minister for Health said:

Smoking will generally not be permitted within Crown Casino's main gaming rooms.

The government has stated that Crown Casino will be permitted to apply for exemptions for VIP gaming areas with substantial international high-roller clientele.

Exemptions from the smoking bans may also be considered for some of the bars on the main gaming floors of Crown Casino.

I know there are some exemptions. I also note that the honourable member for Malvern has been informed, like the National Party, that there are some house amendments that will allow the two TAB facilities within Crown Casino to be smoke free. I find that unnerving. I think we are making progress, but all gaming facilities should be smoke free. It is concerning that the government has taken two steps forward and one step back in this legislation.

The bill provides exemptions for Crown Casino from the smoking provisions, and that change will be made after consultation between the Minister for Health and the Minister for Gaming.

I received some information from the Quit organisation titled 'Behind the smokescreen'. I shall quickly read a paragraph from the executive summary in relation to passive smoking:

Tobacco smoke contains gases, vapours and particles, including 60 known or suspected carcinogens. The smoke from the end of a cigarette (sidestream smoke) carries many compounds in greater concentrations than that breathed in by the smoker (mainstream smoke). Sidestream smoke particles are smaller which means they can be inhaled deeper into the lungs.

I thank the Quit foundation for providing me with that very important documentation.

In summary it refers to the literature that they have collated and lists the diseases and conditions that can occur. Adults can develop heart disease, lung cancer, sinus and cancer. In infants and children there can be sudden infant death syndrome, impairment of foetal growth, bronchitis, pneumonia and other lower respiratory tract infections, asthma, middle-ear infection

and damage to the respiratory system. Therefore smoking presents major concerns not only for the health of adults but also for the health of our young people.

I spoke about implementation of the legislation in gaming machine areas. This is where the minister will have problems. The definition of gaming machine areas is not black and white — it has many grey areas that will cause the minister and the department enormous problems in implementation. As we know, and as the honourable member for Malvern highlighted, common bar areas service both drinkers and people who are gaming.

The honourable member for Gippsland West is showing me a note. I am sure the message is important. It says: 'Please stop soon'. No way! She sits in front of me all the time giving me a lot of cheek, and the last thing I am going to do is sit down.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Lupton)** — Order! Will the honourable member come back to the bill!

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — I am coming back to the bill, Mr Acting Speaker, I am just talking about implementation and why I think the minister will have problems with it.

There are common bar areas — rooms that have gaming at one end and people consuming alcohol or whatever at the other end. So that at the end of the day the configuration of it might be understood by us humans, it will be up to the occupier to highlight which is a gaming area and which is a common bar area and to point out that we should keep within those boundaries. But cigarette smoke does not know about barriers, and it will waft around the room. As I highlighted to people last night, there is nothing worse than to be in a room that is partitioned in a way so that smoke can waft over the partition. The configuration of the venues will not assist in the administration of this legislation. The old saying is that you cannot be half pregnant — you either ban smoking or you do not ban smoking in those rooms. In my opinion you need a fixed area where smoking is banned, even to the extent that there should be separate airconditioning.

I will try to get through so that the honourable member for Gippsland West has time for her very long dissertation. Can I say that 30 bingo centres will be required to be smoke free but other venues will not. Again this highlights the difficulty of implementation.

I will now deal with some of the enforcement problems. We were pleased to receive from the briefing session a summary document on the effects of the smoking

restrictions in the Tobacco Act, and I thank the briefing staff for providing that to us. I will not go through that today because of lack of time but I am sure there will be people in my area who will want a copy of that summary document to fully understand the implementation.

Enforcement is to be done by environmental health officers. I highlight the fact that these people usually work from 9 to 5 but most of these activities occur after hours. We were told that the police can be called in, and I refer to an email which advises that the police do have the authority under the Tobacco Act to undertake prosecutions but that they cannot distribute infringement notices. I know that the councils were given about \$1.9 million for the implementation of earlier tobacco legislation dealing with smoke-free dining, smoking in shopping centres and restrictions on advertising of smoking. I also know that the department and the government will work with councils to set up implementation teams.

Importantly we have to address how to deal with problems which arise after hours when the environmental health officers are not working. The reality is that police will have to be called and that will cause confrontations with people within the facility — smokers, and importantly the owners of facilities who will be trying to enforce these concerns — so we will need a better system. Another concern which has been raised by my colleagues is border anomalies.

The National Party will not oppose this bill. We believe it reinforces the intention of the earlier legislation particularly to provide smoke-free venues and the regulation of product lines and advertising in shops. My colleagues, who have a lot more experience in this place than I, wanted me to highlight also the section 85 statement in the second-reading speech. It will be interesting to see what the honourable member for Gippsland West has to say about that!

I am pleased that the minister has put up with my long presentation, particularly as it relates to country venues. In summary, the National Party does not oppose the bill. It has some concerns about implementation, particularly in one-room venues, and enforcement by environmental health officers.

**Mr VINEY** (Frankston East) — It is a pleasure to again support further reforming legislation on tobacco, this time dealing with further passive smoking reforms in bars, nightclubs, gaming areas and bingo centres. The bill also makes a clarifying amendment to the definition of the tobacco product line.

The bill is one of a continuum of legislation introduced by this government to reform tobacco legislation and achieve continuing health benefits for the community. The legislation is about matters of health and that is a very important principle. The bill changes patterns of behaviour in the use of tobacco products, thereby reducing the potential impact of passive smoking.

The honourable member for Malvern raised a criticism of the government's approach to this reform and suggested we have introduced legislation on it in just about every sitting of this Parliament. However, for the last two or three years the government's approach has been one of incremental reform to tobacco legislation — introducing reform, testing it and making sure those reforms have been accepted and understood by the community, and then progressing further with other reforms.

As a result of that approach the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Council on Smoking and Health (ACOSH) have assessed Victoria to be the leading state on the Australian national tobacco scoreboard. I refer to the media release from the AMA national conference 2002, which states:

At an award ceremony at the Hyatt Hotel in Canberra today, AMA federal president, Dr Kerry Phelps, said Victoria had shown courageous leadership in tobacco control issues. 'Their comprehensive regulations on smoking in enclosed public places, restrictions on tobacco promotion and general support for Quit campaigns have pushed it well beyond other Australian governments', Dr Phelps said.

In fact the scoreboard shows Victoria has 57 points and the next nearest state has 49 points. Quite clearly we are well ahead of the rest of the country in this very important social reform that we have been leading since coming into government. I am certainly very proud to be part of a government that is doing that.

I will briefly pick up on an issue raised by the honourable member for Malvern. He questioned which rooms may or may not be exempted at Crown Casino. I refer to the media release of 14 April of the Minister for Health in which he is quoted as saying:

'Based on information received, we are likely to approve exemptions to high-roller private salons, the VIP Mahogany Room and the VIP slots room, which are not accessible to the general public'.

It goes on to say:

It is not proposed to exempt the Maple Room and the Oak Room, because they do not fit the requirements ...

It is important to clarify that matter in relation to the casino.

A number of people want to speak on the bill and there is limited time so I will conclude my remarks by saying that this is a continuation of the great reform this government has been delivering on tobacco. I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms DAVIES** (Gippsland West) — I have the opportunity to make only a short contribution on the bill, but I am pleased to see that the minister has brought this legislation into the house. It goes further than the private members bill which I originally proposed at the end of 2000, and that is good. The extension of the ban on smoking will be into gaming machine areas of gaming venues, into bingo venues, which were not part of the original private members bill, and into rooms in licensed premises. That will be good for the health of Victorians and certainly good for the health of the people who work in those venues. Ultimately it will be good for the viability of a lot of businesses.

In February 2000, when I first raised the issue of banning smoking in gaming venues and suggested a private members bill, the Premier very emphatically and quickly stated, and I quote from a newspaper of the time:

... the government did 'not support any extension of our smoking ban. We have a smoking ban on restaurants. We haven't extended that to pubs and clubs and gaming venues. It is not in our plans. It is not something we will support'.

It was not just the pressure from the private members bill that changed the Premier's mind. Public opinion has changed more quickly than anybody anticipated and certainly health issues and the possibility of venues being fined for creating an unsafe workplace and killing off their employees was probably part of the motivation for bringing in the changes to the law earlier than anticipated.

In May 2000 I tabled a petition from 500 Crown Casino employees asking for a total ban on smoking in the casino. I know that those employees are not completely happy with this bill and the changes. They would have liked the smoking ban to be total. I have suggested to them that the progress which has been made and which is demonstrated by this bill has been very substantial. It is necessary to bed the changes down before we aim for a total ban on smoking, which health requirements will make inevitable in the end.

The law the government is bringing in, with its exemptions and variations, is somewhat complex in some areas. In a licensed premise that has two or more rooms in operation the occupier of the premises must designate one smoke-free room, and that smoke-free

room can be the bistro or room containing a dining area. The room that is designated as smoke-free may change over the course of a day as different rooms are opened and closed. In practice, different requirements like that are going to prove somewhat clumsy and difficult to implement and will need to be closely monitored not only for compliance with the law but also for unnecessary complexity caused in the businesses.

In a recent article a cafe owner said that with the ban on smoking in cafes a lot of hotels are becoming pseudo cafes — I think he referred to them as cafetels or something — and people were getting around the smoking ban in cafes by having a cup of coffee and a smoke in hotels. The bill, which will extend the ban into some bistro areas of hotels, will not get over that complexity. We will need to monitor the changes as they occur, and, ultimately, if the law is applied in all public buildings no one business will be able to say that it is being disadvantaged.

The government firmly believes and has stated many times that it does not want to match smoking bans with gaming reform. I believe the ban on smoking in gaming rooms will have an impact on problem gambling. Of all the achievements that I sought to make with the original private members bill the ban on smoking in gaming rooms is the most significant change to have been accomplished. I hope that some of the more hysterical fears that were expressed over the ban on smoking in gaming rooms will be relieved when it is seen to happen in practice. Less than 30 per cent of Victorians smoke and that number is still decreasing.

I commend the government's somewhat prompted but nevertheless substantial efforts to reduce smoking and the health dangers that both workers and customers face when they attend public venues, which up to now they have been able to smoke in. I commend the bill to the house.

**Mrs MADDIGAN** (Essendon) — I am pleased to speak in support of the Tobacco (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill. There is no doubt that passive smoking has some harmful effects; it is an area related to smoking that more and more people have been concerned about.

In a research study in January 2001 the National Health and Medical Research Council came to this conclusion:

The scientific evidence shows that passive smoking causes lower respiratory illness in children and lung cancer in adults and contributes to the symptoms of asthma in children. Passive smoking may also cause coronary heart disease in adults. It is estimated that passive smoking contributes to the

symptoms of asthma in 46 500 Australian children each year and causes lower respiratory illness in 16 300 Australian children. It also causes about 12 new cases of lung cancer each year in adult Australians. Passive smoking may also cause 77 deaths a year from coronary heart disease.

I think figures of that sort offer the evidence people are really concerned about. Passive smoking is of concern not only to people attending the venue, but also to employees who suffer prolonged exposure in venues where people smoke. In particular, employees are often not in a situation where they can remove themselves from the area — unlike people who can come and go at will. It is for those employees particularly that I am concerned.

I am therefore pleased to support the amendments proposed in the bill. The removal of smoking from the vast majority of gaming rooms within approved gaming venues is a very positive move. I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr THWAITES (Minister for Health)** — I will sum up very quickly. I thank all honourable members for their contributions. I am very pleased that this bill has support from all sides of the house: from the Liberal Party and the National Party and also from the honourable member for Gippsland West who, we should acknowledge, introduced a private member's bill into this house previously in relation to these smoking restrictions.

Like the honourable member for Frankston East I am very pleased that both the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Council on Smoking and Health have declared Victoria the leading state in tobacco control this year, and I think this legislation will further add to that reputation.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! As the second-reading stage of this bill requires to be passed by an absolute majority and there is not an absolute majority of the members of the house present, I ask the Clerk to ring the bells.

**Bells rung.**

**Members having assembled in chamber:**

**Motion agreed to by absolute majority.**

**Read second time.**

**Committed.**

*Committee*

**Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.**

**Clause 4**

**Mr THWAITES (Minister for Health)** — I move:

1. Clause 4, page 3, line 28, omit "room; ." and insert "room;".
2. Clause 4, page 3, after line 28 insert —

“**TAB area**”, in relation to a casino, means an area in the casino in which wagering or approved betting competitions (within the meaning of the **Gaming and Betting Act 1994**) or both are conducted in accordance with the wagering licence granted under Part 2 of that Act;.”.

**Mr DOYLE (Malvern)** — The opposition agrees with these amendments because they provide consistency between pubs and clubs.

**Amendments agreed to; amended clause agreed to; clauses 5 to 8 agreed to.**

**Clause 9**

**Mr THWAITES (Minister for Health)** — I move:

3. Clause 9, page 8, line 15, after "bar area" insert " , a TAB area".

**Mr DOYLE (Malvern)** — Again the opposition agrees with this sensible amendment.

**Amendment agreed to; amended clause agreed to; clauses 10 to 15 agreed to.**

**Reported to house with amendments.**

**Report adopted.**

*Third reading*

**Motion agreed to by absolute majority.**

**Read third time.**

*Remaining stages*

**Passed remaining stages.**

**Sitting suspended 1.03 p.m. until 2.03 p.m.**

**APPROPRIATION (2002/2003) BILL**

*Second reading*

**Debate resumed from 16 May; motion of Mr BRUMBY (Treasurer).**

**Mr BAILLIEU (Hawthorn)** — The Cain and Kirner governments ran unsustainable taxing regimes in Victoria, and they topped it off with unsustainable

expenditure regimes. They got what they deserved and were handsomely rejected by the Victorian people. The successor Kennett government ran moderate taxation and expenditure regimes. The Kennett government turned Victoria around and recovered the ground lost under the Cain and Kirner governments. Now Victoria has a Bracks government that is running an unsustainable taxation regime in Victoria yet again. Frankly, the Bracks government is taxing the stuffing out of Victorians.

**Mr Maxfield** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Barker)** — Order! The honourable member for Narracan is out of order and out of his place.

**Mr BAILLIEU** — The only way the Premier can seek to sustain his taxing regime is to jump at the first opportunity at an early election. No doubt, that is what the government intends to do — to run to the people before the storm hits, as I said last year.

I will comment about matters concerning my electorate and then about some portfolio items. I compliment the government for at least, and finally, funding the development works at the Camberwell South Primary School, which assistance we have been pushing for over a number of years. I am pleased that stage 1 has been funded. I take this opportunity to urge the government to move to stage 2 of the master plan for the Camberwell South Primary School. It is a tight site that has been master planned and that master plan has been approved. Stage 1 of the project involves new classrooms but a refurbishment of the main buildings is essential. The sooner that happens, the better. The sooner the works are completed, the less disruption there will be to neighbours, and students and staff on site. The school has already been forced to double load its non-classroom spaces and certainly its outdoor spaces. I urge the government and minister to approve stage 2 funding, and go straight to the planning stage of that.

In the same light the program established under the Kennett government for the Camberwell High School continues. That funding has been approved and has been welcomed.

I have said on two occasions that there are still outstanding issues in Hawthorn. I have pressed for funding for upgrades at the Hawthorn West Primary School, which has been neglected for a long time, as has the Hawthorn town hall. Also, desperate assistance is needed for works at the Camberwell town hall because of structural problems there.

Other programs in the electorate of Hawthorn are worthy of support. The City of Boroondara's graffiti program has already been a great success and is readily transportable to other municipalities. I urge the government to support that, as I urge it to make available additional maintenance funds for the Yarra River and its banks.

In the past I have urged — and I again urge — the government to support a help program that was entitled the Can Survive program. It is a volunteer network of those people who have survived life-threatening illnesses. It has now changed its name to Hopeline. It is professionally run, innovative and deals face to face with people who have suffered from unfortunate illnesses. The Hopeline project has donations ready to support it if the organisers can get matching funds from the government. I urge the Minister for Health to consider that seriously.

In the past I have also drawn attention to what I then said were gathering stamp tax and land tax burdens. Those burdens have increased, not diminished in recent years, and in the last year they have grown to almost outrageous proportions. By way of example, I refer to the situation facing the owners of a newsagency in Burke Road, Camberwell. In 2000 that family business, which has been there for a number of years, faced a land tax bill of approximately \$6500; this year its bill will be \$23 000.

As the owners of that business have said to me in correspondence:

Do you have any suggestions as to how we can address this situation? This impost is threatening the viability of our family business.

The government cannot continue not to address the land tax burden it is imposing on many small businesses and families in Victoria.

I mention again the issue of the Hawthorn police station. It seems the government is holding out on making public comment about it. According to senior police the Hawthorn police station is set to be closed within the next six to eight months. The government is refusing to make a decision. The council has been advised that it will close. I have been advised it will close and the reality is that the government is holding off so it can tick off another promise. If it is to close we want to the government to tell us. All it has done so far is say that the Hawthorn police station will maintain a desk. That is it! A desk police station! That is a totally unsatisfactory response for an area regarded by the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria as the fifth most burgled suburb in Victoria.

I now move to portfolio issues, and firstly, to my shadow portfolio area of gaming. One of the key promises of the Labor Party at the last election was to reduce the reliance on gambling taxes. What has happened? Gambling taxes now rate as the second-highest source of state government revenue. It is \$1.89 billion behind only payroll tax, which is at \$2.7 billion. Total gambling taxes in Victoria have risen by 31 per cent — from \$1.44 billion in the last year of the Kennett government to \$1.89 billion. Taxes from poker machines now exceed \$1 billion annually for the first time. Poker machine taxes have increased since the last Kennett government budget by \$152 million to over \$1 billion. Again, that total taxation take has been concealed by the government in the budget documents, with GST reported separately and not broken down to show what comes from poker machines. In a deliberate act and despite many requests, that GST has been concealed, although it eventually comes back to the Victorian government.

The rise of gambling taxes from last year is \$130 million, or 7.4 per cent. Interestingly there is almost no comment in the budget papers on gambling revenue, unlike previous years. In budgets of previous years the government has even tried to claim that gambling taxes have been reduced but the reality is different. The claim that so-called responsible gaming measures would have an impact on the tax take clearly has now been abandoned and certainly does not appear in the budget papers any longer. In fact gambling taxation is estimated to continue to increase.

There is one telling statistic. Over the last four years of the Kennett government gambling taxes amounted to around \$5000 million. The reality is that gambling taxes in the four-year lifespan of the Bracks government — if it goes four years! — is to be \$6.8 billion — that is, an extra \$1.8 billion over the life of the government. How many honourable members on my side of the house who were here in years when we were having to recover from the damage done by the Cain and Kirner governments would have liked to have had that much additional surplus? This government is taxing the stuffing out of Victorians!

When it comes to gaming compliance the only output measure of any significance mentioned by the government is a reduction in the estimated number of compliance services — audits and inspections. In short this government is taking the money and stuffing the promises. It promised one thing and it has done quite differently.

In the planning area no money is shown for the metropolitan strategy nor any revised timetable. I am

told that the metropolitan strategy, which has been preoccupying the planning industry for two years now, has been turned upside down and basically the industry is dedicated to writing the government's planning policy for the next election because the minister is not up to doing it. They have had to get in professionals to do it. There is no money for that. There is only output funding for some planning projects: \$1 million for a Transit City project, \$4 million to continue the Kennett government's Pride of Place program and \$4 million for the public heritage program. I note there is no money for the royal society, despite its heritage building all but falling over, yet there is heaps of money for the Trades Hall building just down the road.

There is no funding for in-ground infrastructure upgrades — drains, sewers, et cetera — despite calls from councils all over metropolitan Melbourne that this is a groaning and a growing issue. The funding of the Infrastructure Planning Council is another public relations stunt by the government and its future is unclear under this budget document.

In the planning area I also note that the budget documents record what are said to be 'unquantifiable contingent liabilities' which are retained by the state as a result of an agreement to share home warranty reinsurance. Already we are getting mixed messages as to what the reinsurance risk is for the government. It started off at 10 per cent of the total reinsurance risks and I am now being told it is up to 60 per cent of that reinsurance risk. In planning it is the same old shows. There are no big moves happening. There are public relations stunts all over the place and infrastructure is very much a buried issue, but the problems are growing all the time.

I conclude by briefly telling a story of a constituent. A young family who bought a house recently are new to Victoria and were shocked to find the impost of ridiculously high stamp duty. I could only report that since September 1999 across Melbourne there had been a 52.2 per cent increase in the stamp duty payable on the purchase price of a median-price house. Their planned renovations have been scaled down significantly. The builder and the economy will miss the boost that the larger job would have entailed. After settlement the family approached the local council for advice about the planning process. They hoped that the government's rhetoric about simplifying the planning process would ensure clear and simple planning guidelines. Sadly that did not occur.

Instead they found that the council seemed harassed, overworked and uncertain of the implications of the new Rescode provisions. What was clear was that the

design was being dumbed down to fit in with the Rescode specifications. A follow-up call six weeks later revealed that the overworked, harassed and professionally very unhappy planning officer had gone off on stress leave and was not expected to return and that the file had been shifted from one planner to another. A further call a few weeks later revealed yet again that the file had been shifted to yet another planning officer.

The family was advised to expect a six to eight-month delay. The plans are currently sitting at the end of a significant backlog and will be considered in due course. In the meantime the family has gone off in search of a builder. That is not as easy as it sounds, because three of the five builders they have approached have had significant concerns about building insurance and about whether they would be able to practise beyond June 30. All this, and the plans are yet to be approved!

The property council policy platform of 2001–02 states that planning in local government is in crisis. The president of the Royal Australian Planning Institute, Peter Testdorp, was himself recently quoted as saying, ‘There is a crisis in planning’. Those who participate in the planning process should be clear on what is required and how it is best done. Those working within the system should be motivated, and they should be customer focused and appropriately rewarded. Yet this budget does not contain one performance indicator to assess how the planning system is operating or one initiative to improve the system’s performance.

Returning briefly to the issue of gaming, when it comes to performance measures I am staggered to find that performance measures to assess the government’s gaming strategy in Victoria are yet to be put in place. There is not one single performance measure! Worse than that, the government has actually advised the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee that there will not be any performance measures. In responding to a recommendation from the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee last year that performance measures be put in place, the government said no, that will not occur, and in fact no further action will be taken on that subject

As I said at the start, the government has embarked on an unsustainable taxation regime, which Victorians need to be very concerned about. They also need to be very wary given that we are coming up to what increasingly looks like an early election.

**Mr LIM (Clayton)** — I am delighted to be taking part in this appropriation debate, because this is the best

budget Victoria has ever come across. In the words of the federal opposition, we have the best Treasurer in this country in the form of the Honourable John Brumby.

I am delighted to be standing here, because as the local member the one single line item in the budget that keeps me going is the funding for the introduction of the synchrotron. That alone will create 700 jobs, but in the words of the chief executive officer of our City of Greater Dandenong, we are talking about at least 1500 new jobs being created. The most significant thing about the synchrotron for my electorate — and especially for the Monash University campus — is that it says a lot about the leadership at the national level. The construction of a synchrotron was supported by New South Wales and Queensland — in fact along with Victoria they jointly lodged a bid with the federal government — but as we all know, the federal government has provided no leadership whatsoever in this field, because it is too busy picking on the vulnerable in the community.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Barker)** — Order! I remind members of the opposition that interjections are disorderly.

**Mr LIM** — We have only to compare the federal budget with our state budget to see that. What has the federal budget got? It speaks volumes about picking on the poor and the vulnerable, people with disabilities and the unemployed. It is a characteristic of the federal government to pick on the people who can least afford to help themselves. Look at the asylum seekers and a whole range of other things. That is the federal government for you, and that is its budget. Here in Victoria we have a Premier and a Treasurer who are full of vision. With the introduction of the synchrotron we are now putting Australia into the world league so far as science is concerned.

Let me read from the publication that was sent to me by the dean of the faculty of medicine at the University of Monash.

**Mr Wilson** interjected.

**Mr LIM** — Because you were not listening!

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Barker)** — Order! The honourable member for Bennettswood is out of order and out of his place.

**Mr LIM** — I have to read this because it is so significant:

Victorian Premier Steve Bracks came out with a surprise announcement: the Victorian government would build the \$157 million giant molecular microscope, whether or not it wins financial assistance from the federal government. The announcement stunned Queensland and New South Wales. They, with Victoria, submitted proposals to Canberra for federal funding to help secure the synchrotron.

We are not waiting for the people in Canberra. We are forging ahead because this Premier and this Treasurer have a vision for Victoria, which is leading this country with the introduction of the synchrotron.

I welcome the Bracks government's budget, which will deliver a number of other measures including another 900 new teachers, 700 new nurses and a massive investment in the new transport link. This is a massive investment in our future, yet the opposition continues to say this government takes no action and does nothing.

The 2002–03 budget will continue the turnaround in health, education, transport and community safety for the people of Clayton. The major budget initiatives in the Clayton electorate alone include, as I mentioned, \$100 million for the synchrotron located at Monash University and \$1.76 million for the Monash Medical Centre for digital fluoroscopy, X-ray machines and medical equipment. This medical teaching institution was run down by the previous government.

The budget continues to rebuild Victoria's public health system with the provision of \$960 million over the next four years. I recently attended a briefing with the Minister for Health. The Monash medical staff are jubilant and keyed up about the new budget and about the fact that the government is supporting their work and their professional approach. The budget will provide 700 more nurses for the hospital system and lead to 30 000 more Victorians being treated each year.

Education is this government's top priority. We are investing more than \$550 million in education initiatives over the next four years. We are investing \$334 million to cut class sizes, boost numeracy and literacy and employ an extra 927 teachers across the state. We need to contrast that with what the previous government had been doing to the education system. We must never forget the agony that the teaching staff of my local school went through. They were fearful for their futures, because the sackings were so savage and so traumatising.

The government is investing a further \$260 million in upgrading more than 110 schools and tertiary institutions. At the local level in the Clayton electorate, kindergartens and preschools have been big winners. St Johns preschool, which my little boy attended as a toddler, will receive \$10 300; the Ward Avenue

kindergarten will receive \$10 300 to improve its amenities; the Springvale kindergarten will receive \$13 600 for ground safety works; the Sandown Park kindergarten will receive \$7800 for building and ground safety works; and the Olinda Avenue kindergarten will receive \$4370.

All these places have been neglected for so long. Now they have received a rejuvenation of their conditions. That speaks volumes about what this government is all about. It is not about building monstrosities in the middle of the city, but about going out to the community, reaching out to the people who really need it on a day-to-day basis.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr LIM** — The opposition over there can carry on, but government is not about looking after the big end of town. It is about looking after the people who really matter and improving their daily lives.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr LIM** — The budget acknowledges the growth areas of Melbourne while delivering for the whole of the state.

In the short time I have left I will talk about another area of concern that is very close to my heart and with which this government and the former Kennett government can be contrasted — that is, the area of multicultural affairs, which I suspect many honourable members would not have time to touch on in their contributions.

I will start with multicultural affairs. As we all know, this government takes a whole-of-government approach to multiculturalism and delivering services to the multicultural community — for example, the language services area of the Department of Human Services alone has an increase in dedicated expenditure of \$425 000 to a total of \$7.8 million. In aged care there is an increase of \$530 000 in multicultural home and community care funding, bringing the total to \$7.8 million, which is allocated to 61 ethno-specific and multicultural agencies. That was never dreamt of by the opposition.

In the housing and community building area there is a projected increase of \$600 000 in multicultural program funding; in mental health there is a projected increase of \$300 000; in community care there is an increase of \$207 000; and in public health there is an increase of \$124 000. The list goes on and on.

I now come to the proper multicultural affairs portfolio. A press release of 9 May reports the Minister assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs as saying:

... part of the new expenditure included an extra \$4.5 million over four years to the multicultural affairs portfolio.

The new funding includes an extra \$2 million to the Victorian Office of Multicultural Affairs for language services, to improve:

the supply and quality of interpreters, with particular emphasis on regional areas;

client service delivery through awareness training of government agency staff; and

agency data collection and funding administration.

The press release continues:

This budget also commits an extra \$2.5 million over four years to the Victorian Multicultural Commission's grants program, thereby —

and I stress this point —

increasing it to \$1.5 million per year — double what it was when the Bracks government first came to office ...

Let me pause at this juncture and make this very important point. The first thing the Kennett government did when it came to power in 1992 was to completely gut the budget in that era. Not a cent went to multicultural affairs. It took it seven years to fund half of what this government has funded.

**Mr Baillieu** — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the honourable member is clearly misleading the house and I ask you to draw the consequences of that to his attention.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr LIM** — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I did not mislead the house. I have all the statistics I can pass on to the honourable member and to the house to prove my point. I have been doing research on this for the past seven years; therefore, I know what I am talking about.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Barker)** — Order! At this stage I need to rule on the point of order. The honourable member for Hawthorn has raised a point of order indicating that he feels the honourable member for Clayton has misled the house. I am not clear on which — —

**Mr Baillieu** — I asked you to draw his attention to the consequences of his comments.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Barker)** — Order! The honourable member felt the honourable member for Clayton was deliberately misleading the house and has asked me to draw his attention to that matter.

**Mr LIM** — Madam Acting Speaker, in consideration of other members' contributions, I will conclude my contribution by saying that this government not only talks but delivers in the real sense of the word. I congratulate the government for doing so.

**Mr ASHLEY (Bayswater)** — In the budget papers for 2002–03 Victorians have been treated to a stunning piece of choreography conjured by a Treasurer who stretches to the limit the image of a twinkle toes tripping the light fantastic. With every tap of the foot, every twist of the body, every tilt of the head and every thrust of the finger, our Treasurer would have Victorians believe he can dance the most intricate of economic death-defying pas de deux, centre stage, by himself. Strip away the orchestration, the flim-flam, the flag waving, the fanfares, the spin, and what is left? — something much more traditional and dangerous. It is a budget straight from the traditional Labor stable — high spending, high taxing, high strutting and high risk.

This budget is a cocktail of hoping and wishing and praying, of fantasy over cold reality and of an Alice-in-Wonderland figure fudging over hard-nosed accounting. This budget reveals a government flat out like a lizard, lapping up every last drop of moisture squeezed out of the good times with the booming property market, land taxes, and the gambling industry. It depicts a situation of recurrent spending being ramped up to such a degree that come the smallest downturn, the first revenue hiccup, the Treasurer, the government and the state will be dragged down into the sticky mud of a rapidly drying budgetary waterhole.

This budget clearly reveals, yet again, this government's most prominent, outstanding skill. It is great at allocating things — allocating funds, reallocating funds, announcing the allocation of funds, reannouncing the allocation of funds, and reannouncing the reallocation of funds. Allocation is easy, but the ability to allocate does not a good government make. Effective government involves the capacity to drive allocations into real infrastructure and real public goods and services. As soon as you put it that way, Victorians' sense of confidence visibly drains away. Good government is all about getting things done.

**Mr Helper** interjected.

**Mr ASHLEY** — They were coming years ago. This is just the add-ons of coming back, of those who took a

little longer to get back. Good government is about getting things done, not fancy footwork at budget time. It is about demonstrable scores on the board, and not just in major projects. After three years of the Bracks government toing and froing and stopping and starting, you have that strange sensation that you are lost somewhere, perhaps:

Down by the station,  
Early in the morning,  
With all the little fast trains,  
Mothballed in a row.

When along comes the minister,  
Who pulls another swiftie,  
'Toot, toot, puff, puff!',  
Watch his nose grow!

The reason this government has made so little headway and has so many ministers for nothing much is that when it came to office it was totally ill-prepared. Its policy ideas were often little more than vague statements. It lacked both the crystallised imagination and the practical ingenuity to interpret its raw ideas and turn them into hard, structural, tangible realities — in other words, it is a government that has never really emerged from that initial floundering. No wonder it is a government that is happy to beg, steal or borrow to boost its image. It is happy to beg from the federal government for funds for the Scoresby freeway or for irrigation or for the synchrotron.

It steals from its predecessor and takes Agenda 21 major projects and calls them its own with a little bit of rebadging. It also borrows. Its extent of borrowing is quite extraordinary. I find this amazing, because it is even borrowing from me. Page 5 of the budget speech states:

As many people live along the Scoresby route as live in the whole of Adelaide, and the corridor is a major source of exports for Victoria and Australia.

I first started saying that the outer east was the size of Adelaide back in 1998. The first time I used it I said:

The population of the eastern suburbs, east of Springvale Road, is roughly equivalent to that of Adelaide.

I have mentioned many times in the press and also in my winter newsletter of 1999 that:

The outer east is defined as that sweep of suburbs and municipalities which have developed east of Springvale Road. Its population is ... comparable with Adelaide's.

In my winter newsletter of 2000 I said:

Yet somehow the outer east doesn't have an obvious place on Victoria's road map. If it had the recognition it deserves, everyone would be jumping up and down, demanding that

governments provide regionally appropriate infrastructure to service a population which is, after all, bigger than Adelaide!

In this place in the appropriation debate on Friday, 26 May 2000, I said the outer east was being neglected:

... the outer east of Melbourne, which has a population in excess of Adelaide.

And I talked about the structural needs again. Finally in my most recent newsletter I said:

Melbourne's outer east and Adelaide have populations of almost the same size.

The only other person I have come across who has ever used that analogy was Philip Hopkins in an article on the Scoresby freeway on 14 August 2000, when he said:

The corridor has a population of nearly 1 million — a city the size of Adelaide — and contains more than 40 per cent of Melbourne's manufacturing and production ...

It might be seen to be slightly possible to make that analogy, but it goes deeper than that. I received a letter — one of the few responses that the Minister for Transport has sent me in recent times — in which the minister thanked me for my letter of 22 December 2000 and said:

Your letter has been forwarded to Mr Peter Watkinson, regional manager, Department of Infrastructure, south east metropolitan region, as it provides some useful background information for the outer eastern integrated transport study.

I was talking about the extension of Dorset Road. In that letter I mentioned the following:

Because it is a north-south oriented corridor, the dynamics and intra-relationships of the outer east are predominantly configured on a north-south axis. Physical distribution infrastructure for the inwards movement of raw materials and consumer goods and the outwards movement of processed foods, elaborately transformed manufactures and the region's burgeoning high-tech products must take account [of] this north-south configuration. Despite that, there is not a single north-south road in the outer east corridor, a region now generating some 40 per cent of state domestic product —

and these are the important words —

that provides a seamless 'through link' which efficiently, even half-efficiently, connects the region to the rest of metropolitan Melbourne.

In the budget speech the Treasurer says on this matter:

This \$1 billion, 34-kilometre project will provide a seamless link from the south-east to the city —

et cetera. I had used the term 'seamless through link' two years before. I think it is all a bit too much of a

coincidence to be coincidental. I will leave it at that. I need say no more.

In the last few minutes remaining to me in this debate I shall raise briefly the issues that flow from that recognition. If indeed the government credits me with having got it right in terms of a region that is the size of Adelaide certain things flow. What I have said to the Minister for Transport about the need for a modal interchange station in Ringwood clearly must also be factored in as commonsense. I trust that we will start to see some movement towards a new station in Ringwood. I trust we will also begin to see some movement at the existing station in Ringwood to bring the centre platform up to scratch according to the federal Disability Discrimination Act so that old people can get down onto the platform and get up from the platform by using either lifts or a ramp that meets the requirements of that disability act.

I have also said that one of the reasons for making the point about the region being the size of Adelaide is that Adelaide has seven public hospitals. The outer east of Melbourne has three if you configure it in an east–west direction, and if you configure it in a north–south direction it has four; the building of the Berwick hospital will make five, and that is still two short of Adelaide. If you are talking meaningfully, and the Treasurer has recognised it — —

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr ASHLEY** — Where is the tertiary hospital? Where is that kind of facility and resource that a region the size of Adelaide desperately needs to bring it up to scratch? Adelaide has seven public hospitals. With the Berwick hospital factored in we will have five, so there are still two more to go. I think I have come to the end of my allotted time, so I shall leave it at that.

**Mrs MADDIGAN** (Essendon) — I have much pleasure in speaking in support of the Appropriation (2002/2003) Bill. I take the opportunity to congratulate the Treasurer on what is an excellent budget. I think it says a great deal for the budget and the Treasurer that groups from very diverse areas of Victoria all have agreed with it, from employer organisations to community groups. In fact the honourable member for Bayswater said this is an old-fashioned Labor budget, and I am glad to say it is. It is a budget that does concern itself with those in the community who need extra support, particularly those who are disadvantaged. It is most unfortunate that the federal budget did not follow the same lines.

The area of mental health is getting an extra \$60 million. That is really good because it deals with people who have very little political power and who have been ignored for many years, certainly by the previous government.

In relation to hospital services I know my electorate is particularly pleased with the upgrade to the Royal Melbourne Hospital, which includes not only a new trauma centre but also 160 extra beds, and more importantly, a helicopter pad. That means that people in the country or those involved in road accidents can be flown directly to the hospital without having to go through regional airports. In the future patients being delivered will be taken directly to hospital because the helicopters will be able to land there, thus improving the speed of getting them to hospitals and enabling them to be treated much more quickly.

Today I shall talk particularly about the \$101 million allocated for the Royal Agricultural Society's showgrounds. This project has been worked on very hard for a couple of years by the society. I acknowledge particularly the great work done by Jack Seymour, who is currently the chairperson of the showgrounds; by the board of directors, and particularly the current chief executive officer, Stephen Carter, Awad Mansour and of course Peter Payne, who was chief executive officer when the project first started.

I think the showgrounds is a facility that everybody in Victoria likes. This proposal has been greeted enthusiastically by almost everyone. Afterwards I shall refer to a couple of people who may have shown less enthusiasm than one might have expected, but certainly most thinking people in Victoria have welcomed the development of the showgrounds site, the value of which to Victoria cannot be underestimated.

The Royal Melbourne Show is in fact Victoria's largest event. When people think about major events in Victoria they rarely think of the Melbourne show because it has been an established part of Victoria for such a long time. It is not a new major event. Something like 1 million people go through the showgrounds each year, and the average number of people who have been to the show over the past five years has been 650 000 a year. Each year there are about 26 000 entries in the show from about 7500 people, which gives an indication of the involvement of the Victorian people in the showgrounds.

Although the development of the showgrounds will be of benefit to the local community because it supports local community businesses and there is local

employment gain from the showgrounds it will also benefit the whole of Victoria. I know the Royal Agricultural Society looks forward to working with its regional counterparts to ensure the show network, at both Ascot Vale and in regional areas, is maintained as a strong and healthy relationship and that all shows will continue in the future.

I must say I was a little surprised when I heard the response of the Leader of the Opposition to this proposal. He said, I thought in a rather mean-spirited manner, 'Well, I hope this money will be spent for purposes other than two weeks of the show'. I was a little surprised because it would seem to me extraordinary that any government would seriously make an amount of \$101 million available for a two-week event.

In view of the fact that the Liberal Party claims to have a policy on the showgrounds — it does not but it claims to have one — I can only assume that the \$50 million — —

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Mrs MADDIGAN** — The honourable member for Glen Waverley says that we have plagiarised the opposition's policy on the showgrounds. I was not going to go into details about its so-called policy on the showgrounds but now he has raised the issue I think I should mention it in passing. The Liberal Party does not have a policy on the showgrounds. It has a sentence which says, 'We will give them \$50 million'. What for? It doesn't know, the showgrounds do not know and no-one else knows.

**Mr Helper** interjected.

**Mrs MADDIGAN** — The honourable member for Ripon asks when. That is a good point, because they were in government for seven years, during which time the showgrounds were trying to get funding from the state government to improve their facilities. Oddly enough — and this is an amazing coincidence — it was not until just before the 1999 election that the previous Liberal government decided it might consider funding the showgrounds. It said, 'We will give them \$25 million'. It did not say what it was for because it does not have a policy. Then, lo and behold, as I was informed by an ex-employee of the showgrounds, off the former government went, and oddly enough the then Premier and the previous Minister for Planning, who is still a member of this house, found their way to the showgrounds and said, 'Oh look, we won't give you \$25 million, let's make it \$50 million'. That is the sort of economic theory and good planning that the Liberal

opposition had as its policy on the showgrounds — 'We'll give you \$50 million'.

The previous Liberal government promised the showgrounds \$50 million in 1999. It is now 2002 and what is the opposition's policy? It is a sentence — 'We'll give you \$50 million'. Have Liberal members done any work since 1999 on working out how that \$50 million is going to be spent? No, they have not. Showing incredible economic irresponsibility they said, 'Our policy is that we will give you \$50 million, full stop'. What a bizarre approach. They have trotted that around as one of the few policies they claim to have and it is absolute nonsense.

Not only is there no policy but it is economically irresponsible to go around saying you are going to give \$50 million without having a clue what is going to happen to it. It contrasts so strongly with the process that has been undertaken by this government where the showgrounds have worked with a number of departments over a period of almost two years developing a proposal which protects Victorian taxpayers' investment in the showgrounds site and there is a real policy on what is going to be developed there.

This government is going to develop a centre for agricultural and rural excellence which will be a great project for all of Victoria and much better than the lack of attention paid to the showgrounds while the previous government was in power. For the opposition to claim, as the honourable member for Glen Waverley did, that it had a policy is absolute nonsense. I think it has been shown very clearly that the opposition does not have a policy on the showgrounds at all.

It is a bit like its claim to have a policy on Essendon Airport. What is their policy on Essendon Airport? It is, 'We will keep it operating'.

**Mr Wells** — We'll keep it open.

**Mrs MADDIGAN** — The honourable member for Wantirna says, 'We'll keep it open'. I congratulate him, but perhaps he is not aware that it is actually the commonwealth government that decides whether the airport will open or close. Once again that is the opposition's policy — 'We are going to keep it open. What are we going to do with it? No idea! Do we have any forward plans for the development of the airport? No, we haven't got any forward plans. Once again we don't have a policy, we have another sentence: we will keep it open'. I advise the honourable member for Wantirna to talk to his federal colleagues, who will probably explain who has authority over Essendon

Airport. He might then learn something which may be of benefit to him in the future.

I congratulate the government on this excellent budget. The residents of Ascot Vale and Essendon look forward to working with the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria in the development of the showgrounds, and all honourable members in this house — and I include Liberal members — are welcome to come to the showgrounds this year to see what changes are occurring. The development of the showgrounds will be a great asset to the people of Victoria over the next few years. I am proud to be a member of a government that has had the courage to take on this project — in stark contrast to the previous government, which did absolutely nothing about the royal agricultural showgrounds for seven years.

**Mr WELLS** (Wantirna) — It gives me great pleasure to speak on the Appropriation (2002/2003) Bill. I must say at the outset that the opposition is very disappointed at the emphasis the Bracks government has put on trying to reduce crime.

Crime is increasing and this budget does nothing to address this. The government portrays itself as being more interested in the welfare of prisoners and criminals than community safety. At the last election Labor promised to cut crime and assured us that the resources would be available through the budget, but this has not happened. At the time of the last election the now government produced a document entitled 'No more excuses on crime'. We in the opposition call it 'Nothing but excuses for crime'. It states:

Labor believes that the key objective of our police and emergency services is to protect the personal safety and security of all Victorians.

What a joke! The document states:

A first term Labor government will be tough on crime and even tougher on its causes in order to make the Victorian community safe.

What a joke! It also states:

Labor also recognises that the most effective way to combat the rapid rise in Victoria's violent crime rate is through the implementation of a comprehensive crime prevention strategy that deals with not just the symptoms of crime, but also its causes.

The document is capped off with the following statement:

Labor will not accept any more excuses on crime.

That is what Labor promised the Victorian community at the last election. Let us see how those promises stacked up and progressed.

In the police statistics of 2000–01 the figures effective as of 30 June last year showed homicides up 25.6 per cent; robberies up 26.5 per cent; aggravated burglaries, can you believe it, up 44.1 per cent; and theft of motor cars up 14.9 per cent. Crime in this state is verging on being out of control. Labor promised everything, and this do-nothing government has delivered nothing when it comes to crime.

Let us now look just at the police crime statistics for last year. I guess the minister in all his glory leaked some documents to the *Sunday Herald Sun* last week to try to confuse the issue of crime statistics. The headline on page 9 of the *Sunday Herald Sun* of 26 May is 'Big jump in serious offences'. On statewide trends even this document that the minister has commented on shows assaults up 15 per cent, abductions up 9 per cent, arson up 21 per cent, homicide up 16 per cent and theft from motor vehicles up 5 per cent. This would have been the document that the minister would have leaked to the *Sunday Herald Sun*, and I expect he thought he would have had a more favourable response, but it backfired.

A couple of days ago the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee brought out its report on crime trends. Let us look at how the government stacked up in these figures. In the last two years of the spotlight being put on this government in the context of crime we find that assaults have increased by 10 per cent over the last two years. In crimes against the person aggravated burglaries have increased by 45 per cent per year for the last two years. Shop stealing thefts are up 8 per cent. Thefts of motor cars are up 15 per cent per year for the last two years, and other thefts are up 6 per cent. This is a government that has put crime as a second lowest priority, because it has more interest in the welfare of criminals and prisoners.

It is not just Melbourne where this government has failed; it has also failed in regions across the state. In police region 3 robberies are up 51.4 per cent. In region 4, around Wodonga, robberies are up 24.5 per cent. In region 5 robberies are up 20.5 per cent. The increases are not just related to Melbourne.

I draw the attention of the house to page 200 of budget paper 3. Honourable members will hardly believe what they will find on this page. The minimum investigation hours that the police were supposed to use to investigate illegal drug trafficking was 600 000. Under this government the police reached only 560 000 hours. That means our drug squad and police investigating

illegal drug activities fell short by 40 000 hours. I was dumbfounded when the minister said that is because there has been a reduction in the number of illegal drug activities in this state. The Victorian community does not believe him. If fewer police are investigating, of course fewer people will be caught.

I draw the attention of the house to a research report entitled 'Evaluation of the launch phase of the national illicit drug campaign'. Under the heading 'Perceived importance and attitude towards the illegal drug problem' it states that among parents the main concern was illegal drugs; 43 per cent of parents had illegal drugs as their no. 1 concern. Compare that with unemployment, which came in at 14 per cent. Parents have more concern about their kids coming into contact with illegal drugs than they have about unemployment. Among community members 34 per cent had illegal drugs as their no. 1 concern. So how does the minister justify a 40 000-hour reduction in investigations into illegal drug activities? It does not stack up.

What has gone wrong? This government has turned our police officers into prison officers and revenue collectors. In the last budget this government promised so much. It promised to build a 600-bed prison, a 300-bed prison, a 120-bed prison and a 100-bed prison. I know the government will upgrade Langi Kal Kal and Beechworth, but 12 months later we still have not seen where the 600-bed prison will be built. We still have not heard whether the 300-bed prison will be built in the country. We are talking 12 months later!

Then the government went one step further to show how it can be tough on crime. Firstly, it wanted to bring in home detention. Fortunately the Liberals blocked that. We will make that an issue at the next election. Who wants criminals walking around the street under home detention? Certainly not the Liberal Party!

The next phase to make it even easier on criminals is this ridiculous idea of building three 20-bed prisons out in the suburbs. What a ridiculous concept! Twelve months later we want to know where the addresses are. We found one address in Thornbury, and Premier Bracks backed away from that at 100 miles an hour, and now we are being told they will be built in Frankston and Dandenong. We think this open and transparent government should come clean with residents and give us the addresses showing us where it will purchase and put those 20-bed prisons. The Liberal Party has made a commitment that if it wins the next election it will shut down those suburban prisons, because it believes prisoners who commit offences should serve their time in jail, not in the community.

Next there is the issue of police being tied up looking after prisoners in police cells. We expect our police force to be out on the beat, driving divisional vans and ensuring the community's safety, but what happens? According to the last annual report of Victoria Police there is only room for 120 prisoners in police cells. The Victorian police report showed that on average 273 prisoners were being held in police cells every single night of the last financial year. This year, through the minister's admission, the figure is around 220. It is probably taking about 176 police to look after those prisoners in police cells. That is not what we expect. We want our police force out on the street, in the divisional vans, ensuring community safety.

Bipartisan support will always be given to road safety — we are very clear about that — but you have to wonder under this budget why the number of police fines has increased from 903 000 to 1.7 million — almost double. How does this happen all of a sudden? How many extra police will we tie up looking after police fines? Are they out on the road being revenue collectors, or should we have them out, roving the streets, making sure community safety is a no. 1 priority? Many people in the community suspect, when they see this figure in the budget, that the government intends to double the number of police fines to put more effort into raising revenue.

I now deal with an issue in my electorate of Wantirna. I refer to a headline in the *Knox-Sherbrooke News* 'Light rail to city in four years'. I notice in this budget that the government is going to extend the tramline along Burwood Highway through to Vermont. This headline, which screamed, 'Light rail to city in four years', is not from two weeks ago; it is actually from Tuesday, 20 September 1988!

Fourteen years ago they made the same promise! They were going to put the tramline through to Knox City. So we see it again: the same regurgitated press releases and the same regurgitated documents in the budget. They are still going to put the tramline through. They promised it 14 years ago, and they still cannot deliver. We in the outer east do not believe them.

**Mr HELPER** (Ripon) — As was the case last year, it is with great pleasure that again this year I speak on the appropriation bill, because this is a fantastic budget that delivers enormous benefits not only to my electorate but also across the entire state. It is unashamedly a fantastic Labor budget. Many people in country areas are saying, 'Gee whiz! We wish the old Country Party would have produced a budget that delivered as well to regional and country areas as the Labor government's budget has now done'.

**Mr Jasper** interjected.

**Mr HELPER** — Wait your turn to respond to that; that might be appropriate.

I will speak briefly on the broader areas of the budget and how they impact in a positive and constructive way on my electorate as they do on the electorates of every other honourable member and on the community of Victoria.

In health we have seen a \$960 million boost, including \$100 million for medical equipment, \$464 million to bolster a hospital demand strategy and \$36 million for community mental health services. For older Victorians there is an amount of \$69 million allocated to expand facilities and services. In mental health \$61 million is assigned to develop a strategy to improve crisis response, amongst other things. In the child protection area \$65 million has been allocated to enhance support for abused children and for child protection workers.

The common theme in those brief highlights I have just drawn out of the budget is clearly fairness to those most vulnerable in our community. I would have thought all honourable members, no matter on which side of the house they sit, would have the integrity and honesty to applaud that. Instead what we hear from the opposition benches in this chamber is endless, self-indulgent whingeing — the whining and carping that turns the community off and so alienates members of the community.

Again on the broader picture, the education budget has been boosted by \$550 million, which is targeted at, amongst other things, 925 extra teachers. It also supplies \$216 million to construct new schools and refurbish existing schools.

As to the direct impact of the budget on my electorate, the government has kept faith with the community of Stawell by funding stage 2 of the hospital redevelopment. Honourable members may recall that in the last budget we funded stage 1, and now, right on cue, we have funded stage 2.

Redevelopment of Ararat Primary School, a project which the school community has been very keen to pursue and which is very much needed, is included to the tune of \$1.7 million. The community of Ararat will really appreciate that. That funding builds on the results of last year's magnificent budget, which delivered on the redevelopment of the Aradale site as a wine centre as well as on the hospital, and the list goes on.

The honourable member for Wantirna whinged, whined and carped excessively about the area of law and order.

Firstly, my area like every other community in the state benefits from the 800 extra police officers. Secondly, we benefit directly from the redevelopment of police stations. Before this budget in the electorate of Ripon the Learmonth, Lexton and Avoca police stations —

**Mr Jasper** interjected.

**Mr HELPER** — No, under this current government. So far those three stations have already been redeveloped — just to clarify that point for the honourable member. There is a new police station at Landsborough, and I might have left some out. I apologise to honourable members but the list is so extensive that I could not take note of it all before coming into the chamber. In any event a great number of police stations have already being redeveloped and we are now building on that fantastic work by building the Beaufort and Smythesdale police stations. Together with all that, what makes police stations actually function to increase community security is police personnel within them and the infrastructure we are providing in my electorate combines with the far greater resources of the 800 extra police across the state to enhance both community security and the sense of community security that exist in my electorate.

The budget also announces an \$8 million redevelopment of aged care facilities and radiology facilities at Maryborough hospital, which has been received with a great deal of joy by the Maryborough community. The historic green light has been turned on in the Maryborough education precinct through a budget commitment of \$4 million for initial works there.

I return to the theme I referred to earlier — that is, the whingeing, carping and whining opposition. The Leader of the Opposition came to Maryborough to introduce the poor, unfortunate candidate who is to oppose me. I use 'poor, unfortunate' because his introduction to the Maryborough community by his leader surely would have gone down like a lead balloon and would have seen him, no doubt, thinking, 'What on earth have I got myself into in nominating for this seat?'. If the individual initiatives were added up, Maryborough received a \$12 million capital funding boost in the budget, yet the Leader of the Opposition came to Maryborough and whinged, whined and carped well beyond the call of duty of an opposition leader. I appreciate that an opposition party is supposed to whinge and whine, because that is a given, but you need not do it with such excessive exuberance as was shown by the Leader of the Opposition — or you can do it realistically, as other opposition leaders have done previously.

Certainly the visit of the Leader of the Opposition, and his whining and carping, received significant publicity through the *Maryborough District Advertiser*. He made front page news. However, my response also attracted significant space in that newspaper. Maybe it is not just the square inches that are devoted to news items that make them good or bad for either side of politics. Maybe we should look behind that, so I refer to the editorial in the *Maryborough District Advertiser* of 24 May last about the visit of the Leader of the Opposition. It states:

It seems somebody failed to brief Dr Napthine about Maryborough's \$12 million budget allocation in the recent state budget.

Coupled with the \$4.5 million allocation in the 2000–01 state budget for the new state-of-the-art police station, Maryborough can look forward to more than \$17 million of new investment during the next 18 months.

If that is seen as a problem, I imagine it is the sort of problem most country Victorian cities would be happy to have.

Another paragraph of the editorial is very telling, when it states:

So if I can, a small word of advice for Dr Napthine and his endorsed candidate for Ripon, Rob de Fegely — tell us what you can do for our city, how you can help us achieve the goals we have set — don't intentionally take the gloss off what has been a very rewarding and exciting period.

Indeed, it has been exciting. I offer advice to the Leader of the Opposition — stop your excessive whingeing, whining and carping.

**Mr JASPER** (Murray Valley) — I have listened with a great deal of interest to the comments made by the honourable member for Ripon. He is doing what some of the country members representing the Australian Labor Party in this place are doing. He is wearing rose-coloured glasses and is wet behind the ears.

Last year I used a similar term when talking on the budget debate about the honourable member for Bendigo East. What he is saying and what many backbench members of the ALP are saying is that nothing happened in county Victoria for the seven years from 1992 to 1999. I suggest the honourable member visit north-east Victoria and look around my electorate. North-east Victoria has had massive developments occur. It has been tough and hard for people living in country Victoria but nobody can tell me that nothing happened for 10 years in north-east Victoria.

When I look across my electorate of Murray Valley I see the sorts of things that have developed. My electorate has 35 schools, all of which have had money

spent on them. Money being spent on a number of those schools was approved by the former government and some projects are yet to be completed. I mention particularly the Cobram and Numurkah secondary colleges.

Hospitals across my electorate are in excellent condition. They are providing the people of the Murray Valley electorate with a great health service; I think of the Yarrawonga, Cobram and Numurkah hospitals, and the Glenview Community Health Centre. In Wangaratta the district base hospital is undergoing a \$14.5 million redevelopment program — and that funding was approved by the previous government.

The first stage of that redevelopment was opened by the present Minister for Health but no real credit was given to the former government. He simply went there and opened the facility. I was almost not recognised as being there. I always say that credit should be given where it is due. If improvements or works are done, you should acknowledge it with, 'Yes, that was started by the former government but we can do better' or, 'We can perform better'. The second stage of work on the Wangaratta and District Base Hospital has been completed and I presume that will be opened later this year by the Minister for Health. The third stage is under way.

Industry development across my electorate is going forward. As well I think of tourism, I think of the great lifestyle available in north-east Victoria, and the many sporting activities that are conducted. I give credit to the government because we had difficulty in Wangaratta when the plant of Solectron Technology Pty Ltd closed there. It had been employing about 200 full-time people. That was a difficult situation, but the Minister for State and Regional Development acted positively and worked with the Rural City of Wangaratta. The government has put up half of the purchase price to buy that facility and now we are looking at what we can do with it to attract industry to the area. I give credit to the government for that.

Under the Better Pools program the government has allocated \$2.5 million towards work on the \$5 million aquatic centre being developed at Wangaratta. About 12 months ago I accompanied the Minister for Sport and Recreation to Wangaratta and we jointly announced that the funding would be provided. I give credit for that as it has been done in conjunction with people living in my electorate and throughout north-eastern Victoria.

I have never wavered from what I, as the member in this house representing the people of Murray Valley, try

to do for my constituents. I try my best to assist those people. People living in country areas have special problems, and that must be recognised. Governments of all political persuasions have had difficulty in coming to grips with the special difficulties facing country Victorians. But there has been a greater recognition by federal and state governments in recent years that additional assistance must be provided to country people so they can have justice in the provision of facilities and services, and particularly those provided by governments.

It is interesting that government is taking a lot of credit for all sorts of areas, and that there is significant development and confidence in country Victoria. As I said earlier, I acknowledge that assistance has been given by state and federal governments. But the important issue is that primary producers are back in a position where they are earning more money. In the past 20 years primary production has been extremely difficult for those involved in a range of industries across my electorate. Because of the greater returns they have been able to get from a range of products, without going into details, primary producers are in a position of profitability and can spend money. That helps the country cities and towns with industries and businesses that have suffered because of the downturn in primary industry and poorer returns to the people working within those industries. That has spread across the whole of country Victoria and country Australia. It has also been felt in metropolitan areas, but because of the greater returns to primary producers they are in a stronger position to move forward with confidence. Greater confidence is being expressed by most people who live in country areas.

Without digressing too far, I am extremely disappointed with the actions taken by the American government in its trade policies which I believe will dramatically affect primary producers in Australia. We are seeking to maintain free trade and have free trade policies throughout the world. But we are a small player when it comes to the world markets. It is disappointing to see the huge funding being provided by the American government to prop up its primary industries and to not allow them to face the world markets as they rightly should.

Over the years I have been in Parliament I have seen a great range of budget papers presented. Generally the budget papers are difficult to read. It is difficult to get specific information on projects that are proposed not only for your electorate but across Victoria. As far as I am concerned, the 800 pages of budget papers that were presented to us are as difficult as ever to get through, if not worse. It is difficult to find out what money is going

to be spent in the Murray Valley electorate in the 2002–03 financial year.

The only one which is clearly stated in the budget papers is the provision of over \$500 000 for the further renovation of the Wangaratta courthouse, which was last renovated in the early 1980s. It is a marvellous old building, and it will be renovated to provide excellent facilities for the range of courts that operate within north-eastern Victoria. I welcome the fact that just over \$500 000 is to be spent on it.

Another area which is of great interest to me is the bridges over the Murray River. Those members who have been in this house for some time will know that I have mentioned that issue on many occasions. Prior to the opening of the Howlong bridge last year, the last new bridge was opened in 1989 at Tocumwal. As I said at the time, if bridges are to be built at this rate, I will be dead by the time the next one is opened! The federal government has put money in for the replacement of three bridges, at Corowa, Echuca and Robinvale. The Victorian and New South Wales governments are now in the position of having to fund the difference to see that those bridges are built.

We put pressure on the state government in relation to the Cobram bridge, which is over 100 years old and badly in need of replacement. The state government responded positively, and I give credit to the Minister for Transport in coming to Cobram, meeting with people and making an arrangement with the New South Wales government for that bridge to go ahead at a cost of \$10 million, with the two state governments putting in approximately \$5 million each. We understand that bridge will go to tender later this year.

The estimated cost of the bridge at Corowa is \$18 million. The federal government has provided \$12 million, and the two state governments will pick up the balance to see that the bridge is built. Again I understand that tenders will be called for that bridge later this year. To return to my original point, my difficulty is that there is no mention of the Murray River bridges and no mention of the funding in the budget papers.

Last year there was a broad figure of \$40 million in the budget papers for bridge replacement work across the Murray River that included another road, but there were no specifics. Where did I get the specific details from? The New South Wales state budget! It indicated how much was going to be spent on each of the bridges along the Murray River, not only in this next year but in future years. But in this state budget there is nothing at all.

I raised the matter with representatives of the department at one of the briefings given by the economic and budget review committee, but they could not answer it. Although they did not put it so bluntly, what they meant was, 'We do not know where it is'. It really is difficult when you cannot get specific information. We need to know what is going to be spent in our electorates. We do not want to be relying on the whim of a particular department or a particular minister; we want to make sure we get that funding.

I refer to another area of great disappointment in the budget speech. The Treasurer said:

... a major focus of this budget is the expanding suburbs and growth corridors of Melbourne.

He went on to say:

These are the places where Victorian families are increasingly choosing to live — and where much of Victoria's future population growth will be concentrated.

I take objection to that. I believe that while there is need for assistance and support for people living in metropolitan Melbourne, the government needs a stronger decentralisation policy. The government has to actively promote industry going into country Victoria. I know of one industry within my electorate of Murray Valley that operates in both Wangaratta and Melbourne. The directors of that particular company said to me that there is no incentive for them to close in Melbourne and relocate to Wangaratta. I think it would be a logical thing to get that industry to shift from Melbourne and concentrate its operations in Wangaratta.

The government should have a look at what it can do to provide active decentralisation policies for shifting industry out into country Victoria, because once that happens the population will go with it and both those aspects will work in tandem to their mutual advantage.

Let's not talk about expanding Melbourne, because Melbourne is big enough as it is. Let's see if we can get people moving out into those country areas, where they should be. I also refer to transport — and although there are many other issues I would like to cover, I want to cover transport in particular. The government is saying it will spend money on fast rail projects for Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and the Latrobe Valley. but what about north-eastern Victoria?

I wrote to the federal transport minister, and in the letter that came back he clearly indicated that he would support the construction of a standard gauge rail track between Sydney, Albury-Wodonga and Melbourne and

would make sure that it is upgraded. It is being upgraded at present.

The state government has said it will spend \$96 million on the standardisation of the broad gauge tracks including between Melbourne and Wodonga, but nothing has happened to date. The letter from the federal transport minister made it quite clear that money would be provided just for the standard gauge track between Melbourne and Sydney and that the intrastate track between Wodonga and Melbourne would be the responsibility of the state government. The National Party wants to see greater support being provided in other areas of country Victoria. Passenger rail services are an important issue which we will continue to push to try and make sure we get what we believe is justice for people in other parts of the state.

Finally, I want to mention the Victorian Concert Orchestra. The government has said, 'We won't forget country Victoria', so let's not forget the Victorian Concert Orchestra, which has provided entertainment in country Victoria since 1926. Currently the state government is not providing appropriate funding to enable the orchestra to continue giving those concerts. This is an area that the government must look at immediately. If it does not do something to assist the concert orchestra, it will collapse. If that happens we will find that the orchestra will not be able to provide country Victoria with entertainment that I believe it should be able to expect.

I am aware that time is limited. I am disappointed that we cannot have our full time to speak on what we believe are the issues that are of major concern to us as we work to represent our electorates.

The Leader of the National Party highlighted the huge increase in stamp duties and charges imposed by the government and provided percentages for the actual increases in funding that will come to the government in successive years. The government has to investigate that and provide relief for people in Victoria where charges are being increased at a dramatic rate.

Those of us living in country Victoria want justice. I recognise some things are being done to assist, but no-one should say that nothing has happened in country Victoria. We want to go forward, and we want assistance. I look forward to the government providing continued assistance in my electorate of Murray Valley.

**Mr LANGDON** (Ivanhoe) — It is with great pleasure that I join the chorus of approval for the third Bracks government and second Brumby budget. It has excellent news for the state and the seat of Ivanhoe. It

actually has so much good news that it is hard to know where to start, but I will begin with education.

This budget has great news for the schools in my electorate. I will not go into all the details, but Viewbank College has received \$1 576 577 for modernisation; Ivanhoe East Primary School has received \$1.3 million; and Rosanna Primary School — my old school, and the school I am inheriting from Bundoora — has already received phase 1 funding of over \$200 000 and has now managed, in this second phase of funding, to get \$738 000. Rosanna Primary School is a very good example of what this government has done for education. I am pleased to inherit it from the honourable member for Bundoora and Minister for Environment and Conservation — an outstanding local member, I might add. Heidelberg Primary School has received \$265 000 as well.

In my electorate education has received a tremendous boost across the board — and that is just for capital works, not to mention all the money this budget has put into teaching resources and all the other things schools are in desperate need of. That is yet another example of what this government has done so far in education.

From the responses I have had throughout my electorate I know people are thrilled with the budget. I give credit to the school councils of Viewbank, Rosanna, Ivanhoe East and Heidelberg. I know they have worked remarkably hard with the education department and the minister. I make one further reference to the honourable member for Bundoora. I know her electorate officer, Sue Dyet, who is retiring shortly, has spent a lot of time working with the Rosanna Primary School to get things done. I place my appreciation of her work on the record.

The former government and now Liberal opposition is trying to rewrite history with the Austin hospital. I have heard the former Premier say on radio — and the transcripts have been given to me — that his government started the Austin hospital redevelopment. The Kennett government was going to sell it! One of the reasons I was elected in 1996 was that the former government wanted to privatise the hospital. That seems to have been erased from the previous government's records. The Kennett government did everything in its power to sell the hospital, but it botched it. During the entire seven years members opposite were in government the Austin hospital got nothing! As a result all the hospital's resources were wiped out and it ended up in debt.

Under this government the Austin hospital is getting over \$300 million worth of redevelopment — an

outstanding job. I am pleased to announce that two weekends ago the Minister for Health was out there taking part in the very first pour of concrete. So it is not just talk, as it was with the previous government; the present government is actually achieving results. People in the Ivanhoe community are thrilled. They got sick of all the talk and the lies. This government is actually getting down and doing it.

Again I mention capital works. The amount of money being put into hospitals — and nursing — to redress the black hole Labor inherited after seven years under a Liberal government is incredible. It is pleasing to have the Minister for Local Government in the house, although he has heard this speech once or twice before.

**Mr Cameron** — It is a very good speech. I enjoy it every time.

**Mr LANGDON** — The previous government promised many times that it would do something with the Heidelberg police station, but nothing was done. Two weeks ago the police station was moved to temporary premises in Bell Street, and in about a week's time over \$13 million worth of work will commence on a new police station and courthouse that are already under way. These are not the hollow promises of the previous government, with its uncommitted funds. The Kennett government promised everything to my electorate and delivered nothing! As I said, this is a great news budget for the Ivanhoe electorate, and I have not heard one complaint about it. People are rapt in the amount of money the government is spending on capital works in education and health. But we cannot necessarily receive everything we want in the budget straight off.

I want to raise one other issue in the limited time I have. The Banyule Community Health Centre in my electorate is in need of some work, and I know the government is aware of that. The centre had had its hopes raised, because for the past four years it had been expecting funding, even under the Kennett government. During the term of the Bracks government suggestions have been made that the community health centre could move to the repatriation hospital site. Staff at the centre have approached me and asked if they could move the facility to Malahang Reserve. Such delayed processes are regrettable. Representatives of the centre and I have agreed to meet to facilitate following budgets. There is no doubt that some work is definitely needed.

I have a press release from an honourable member for Templestowe Province in the other place, the Honourable Carlo Furletti, dated August last year, about the community health issue and how the centre

should have been funded. It is a normal opposition press release criticising the government, and I can relate to that. But there is one paragraph in it that I take total exception to. It reads:

'Everyone is aware that this redevelopment would have well and truly finished under a Liberal government', he said.

'Well and truly finished'! This from a member of a government that for seven years promised to do something with the Austin hospital but did nothing. Mr Furletti has a nerve to say that everyone knows the project would have been finished under a Liberal government. Anyone who thinks the honourable members for Templestowe Province give a damn about the electorate of Ivanhoe is living in fantasy land!

Between 1996 and 1999 the Liberal government delivered basically nothing to the Ivanhoe electorate. It promised a lot but delivered nothing. It was so hollow in its promises — —

**Mr Cameron** — They delivered you!

**Mr LANGDON** — And redelivered me — and that was not a bad effort, I might add. To give the house an example of how false they are, two weeks before the 1999 election the Honourable Carlo Furletti turned up with the then Liberal candidate promising \$500 000 to the East Ivanhoe Primary School. When we came into government and checked that out we discovered it was never in the budget processes and never in the master planning. It was a typical hollow promise.

What have I delivered to the East Ivanhoe Primary School? An amount of \$1.3 million has been delivered. The school will be rebuilt, and the building will be started this year. This government makes none of the hollow promises of the previous government.

As has been said time and again this is a great news budget for the Ivanhoe electorate. There is still work to be done. I do not think any member of Parliament can say there is nothing to be done in their electorate; there are always jobs to be done, people to be looked after and projects to push. I am very pleased to work with the Ivanhoe electorate to achieve all the things it wants to achieve, not only now but into the future. I look forward to representing Ivanhoe for quite sometime.

**Mr ROWE** (Cranbourne) — What do we have in this budget? A record tax take, record stamp duties and record gambling taxes by this government. What has the government received from the federal government? It receives record GST revenue.

What has the state government delivered in tax relief for the people in my electorate of Cranbourne — the first home buyers and the five families a day who move into my electorate seven days a week? It has delivered absolutely nothing — zero. The government is collecting in excess of \$50 000 a day in stamp duty from the Cranbourne electorate yet it is not prepared to back the building industry and young home buyers by providing a reduction in stamp duty.

The Treasurer claimed he has granted tax relief by removing stamp duty on unquoted marketable securities. For a start, when he was interviewed on 3AW the Premier did not even know what they were, and I honestly do not know that the Treasurer knew too much more either. The reason they did not is that it was not their initiative — it was part of the GST tax package signed off by Alan Stockdale. Look at the financial institutions duty which was removed as part of the GST tax package signed off by Jeff Kennett and Alan Stockdale.

So what has this government delivered? It has delivered a record tax take, record gaming taxes and record stamp duties, while receiving record GST receipts. We heard a lot from the honourable member for Ivanhoe about what he had received in education. In my electorate some money was spent on education. Rangebark Primary School was to receive permanent classrooms — they were originally promised in 1999 but were cancelled under this government — but it has not received the money to build them, it has only received the planning money. Once again it has been put off.

Tooradin Primary School was granted approval for stage 2 of its redevelopment and replacement of portable classrooms, but after making the double announcement — last year and again this year — the government has put pressure back on the school to reduce its spending by 10 per cent. So much pressure has been put on the school that it has had to drop the height of the ceilings and change the quality of the wall lining, and it is unable to put cupboards in the rooms or blackboards on the walls. That is the education budget for you — cut, cut, cut!

It is all very well for the government and the Minister for Education and Training to trumpet about teacher salaries and increased teacher numbers but teachers cannot teach in tents — they need classrooms. The government trumpets about a reduction in class sizes yet it is still funding schools on a 1:25 basis and has no intention of providing enough classrooms to get down to the 1:20 and 1:21 which was to be achieved across

the board but which is now to be achieved only as an average. It has no intention of funding that at all.

What did we not get in education? We never got the Cranbourne Secondary College upgrade of the Victorian certificate of education wing, which is so dilapidated and dangerous that it needs to be replaced. There was a second announcement about the Carrum Downs secondary college. At least these budget papers have finally revealed the secret regarding the college. It was promised to be delivered in the first term of this government but now we find from the budget papers that the school will not open until 2004. In fact from local inquiries and speaking to landowners we know the government has not even completed the compulsory acquisition of the site. What are we getting at the Carrum Downs secondary college? Usually secondary colleges start off with at least the first three years but not Carrum Downs. That is not good enough for Carrum Downs college and it is starting with only year 7. In fact Carrum Downs will not have a fully fledged secondary college until 2009. That is absolutely unacceptable to the people of Carrum Downs.

On roads, the funding for the Cranbourne–Frankston road, which was announced by the Kennett government in 1999, was not delivered by this government until this year's budget, which is a bit late for the families of those people who have died on that road over the last two years in single-vehicle accidents, the last one being only a matter of months ago. There is no money for the upgrade of Thompsons Road, a road for which the Kennett government had a strategy plan with five sections to be completed over a period of five to seven years. There is no money for the most important road — the east–west link from Seaford all the way across to Clyde Road at Berwick.

There is no money for the section of Ballarto Road from the Frankston–Dandenong Road across to the Dandenong–Hastings Road, also known as the Western Port Highway. There is no money for the Lathams Road on-ramp to the Mornington Peninsula Freeway. Again I have recollections of certain ALP candidates saying that that would be a priority in government, but again it has not delivered.

Most importantly, there is no money for the southern end of Clyde Road. The Pakenham bypass, again a project of the Kennett government, will be completed by the end of next year and will increase the traffic flow on Clyde Road dramatically. The road currently has a load limit which restricts its use by articulated vehicles and buses and urgently needs funding, but again there is no money.

On transport, the government promised the extension of rail electrification out to the Cranbourne city complex. At least last year's budget mentioned it; this year it does not even appear. Last year the government allocated \$80 million for three rail extensions but the Cranbourne extension alone will cost \$28 million so it has dropped it from the budget.

Looking at the Cranbourne botanic gardens, in 1999 then Premier Kennett announced an allocation of \$23 million for Australian gardens as a priority project. The first \$2 million was funded but no additional funds have been allocated to that particular project.

It is a shame that the time available for contributions has had to be cut down because there are many more things I want to mention. None is closer to my heart than the early intervention funding that the government trumpeted with massive press releases after the release of the budget. Honourable members may know that I am on the board of Biala South East, an early intervention service. It is a great service, and the difference the service makes to people with babies with disabilities, including developmental delays and physical problems, is unbelievable to see. Over the six years I have been on the board I have seen magical things occur.

Yet what has this government done with early intervention funding? Absolutely nothing. It has put money into kindergartens and preschools but that is not where early intervention starts — it starts with babies. There has been an outcry with the parents of Biala South East saying, 'What about us? What about our babies?'. This government has turned its back on the disabled babies of not only Cranbourne but Victoria by not providing the amount of money they deserve. I must say that there are Bialas all around Victoria that are manned by caring, professional people — none more so than Sally Nadge, the director and manager of Biala South East.

Sally works her butt off with a budget that is inadequate. There is no funding for clerical assistance. There is inadequate funding to pay staff and to attract staff to stay; and we are now actually losing staff back into the education system and into special schools because we cannot pay them. This service desperately needs to be funded. Again I regret that because of this government's bungling and mismanagement of the business program we cannot have our full time to speak on the budget, because there is so much more we could talk about.

I close by reiterating what this government has done. It has a record tax take, record stamp duties, record

gaming taxes, record payroll tax, record GST revenue, no tax relief benefits, no job creation programs, insufficient road funding, no money for babies, and insufficient funding for building infrastructure in schools. I only wish this government honoured its promises in spending rather than announcing them year after year without building the projects. The only things that were opened by this government were started by Jeff Kennett, Alan Stockdale and the former Liberal government between 1992 and 1999. There is not one project that the government has opened that it started, and it still does not have one on the drawing board.

**Mr HARDMAN** (Seymour) — It is a great pleasure to speak in this budget debate today. It has been very interesting to listen to the honourable member for Cranbourne talking about projects. I know that in the Seymour electorate the Kilmore Primary School major upgrade was started and finished under the Bracks government; the Whittlesea Secondary College major upgrade was started and finished by the Bracks government; the Broadford police station was started and finished under the Bracks government; and there are probably a few others I could name. I know the Seymour fire station will be opened by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services on Sunday. They are just a few rebuttals to the statements of the honourable member for Cranbourne. The budget is fantastic for the whole state; and I suppose it is consistent with our theme of turning things around and growing the whole state.

I shall give a few examples of the sport and recreation grants that have been made available in the budget. At Wallan, which is a fast-growing area in my electorate, the Greenhills recreation reserve is getting some new facilities, which is fantastic. The reserve has been after those facilities for a number of years and missed out on having its applications approved. The tennis club will receive some funding for an extension. I went to visit those places last week and the people involved were extremely happy about the Bracks government's investment in their facilities. They know this is a caring government that is looking after their interests.

The people of Wallan were also happy with the transport part of the budget. Over a number of years there has been much controversy, because there was no pedestrian bypass connecting the major part of the Wallan community with Wallan East and the railway station there. People had to struggle over quite a dangerous single-lane bridge with no sides to get to the other side. The budget makes available \$500 000 for that and the community is pleased that it has been successful with its lobbying in that regard.

Another interesting sport and recreation budget grant is for the Lone Tree Hill Cutting Horse Club. Cutting is a sport enjoyed by many people, and is also an excellent spectator sport. The club is setting up at Kings Park, Seymour, a new venue which will be fantastic. Seymour is well positioned in the state and close to everywhere — it is the centre of Victoria. People will be able to come to Seymour from all over the state to take part in competitions. That will be good for Seymour's economy in providing business for accommodation and food venues and that sort of thing.

Heathcote tennis club has received a grant to surface its court. At present it has black tar — bitumen — paving. I am told that after four or so games you cannot see the ball any more. The club is rapt, and it will be a lot better on players' knees and other body parts as they run around the surface. The Yea tennis club is also receiving funding.

In education some fairly significant funding has been provided recently for capital works. The Heathcote Primary School received approximately \$1.77 million to do a major upgrade. It is celebrating its 150th birthday next year — and the school looks like it has not had any major works done on it for probably 150 years. It is a lovely old building, but apart from that there is a fair number of portable classrooms around the school. The school has been working hard and lobbying for that upgrade funding. Alexandra Secondary College, which is coming into the new electorate at the next election, will receive \$1.8 million to upgrade its facilities. Yarra Glen Primary School, which will also be included in my electorate at the next election, received \$953 000 to continue upgrading its facilities.

All primary and secondary schools also benefit from the allocation of numeracy and literacy teachers for years prep to 2, reductions in class sizes and also assistance with numeracy coordinators. All the children will benefit from the middle years program and the innovation excellence program, which is really great. Those initiatives, along with the major investment in the Victorian certificate of applied learning, will work towards achieving the retention of at least 90 per cent of our kids at school. That will mean a lot for the future of our state because our young people will have attained a level of education which the statistics prove will set them up for a better life in employment and participation in the work force.

Another great Labor achievement in education is the provision of some 300 teachers to disadvantaged secondary schools across the state to boost those schools and assist them to offer the quality of education our kids deserve. I think this is just a great Labor

budget, which is obviously funding some great initiatives.

One issue that I want to mention is Kilmore hospital, which is receiving \$130 000 to provide many of the oncology services at that hospital so that country people can stop at Kilmore rather than having to go all the way to Melbourne for those services. That will relieve pressure on Northern Hospital, which also serves my electorate and which received \$1.2 million to upgrade its facilities. That is fantastic.

Preschools all around my electorate are rapt — at Pyalong, Wallan, Yea, Seymour, Broadford — that money has been made available for capital works. All the kindergartens are also getting money for extra administrative costs so they can retain good teachers and offer a quality system, which I think is fantastic.

The State Emergency Service is to receive \$1.9 million. In a similar fashion to some of the grants provided recently in education and in health and to the Country Fire Authority through the community safety support program, this grant means that those brigades have to raise \$1.9 million less from other taxpayers or residents from around our electorates. That is marvellous. When they get that equipment, whether it be the jaws of life or other safety equipment, they will actually also get an improved quality of life because rather than having to raise money and that sort of thing they will be able to spend their time and energy on training. That is also a great little grant.

I refer now to second generation Landcare, for which \$6 million has been allocated on top of what was already there. That was put together by a task force. It means \$1.5 million per year. The government is listening to the community on things like problems with public liability and is providing assistance to allow them to get over those hurdles.

Assistance is also provided to help Landcare groups remain relevant to their communities and also to make sure that through the appointment of regional coordinators, which was suggested by Landcare groups around the state, the amount of paperwork and bureaucracy is reduced. This is a really great investment in our state.

The budget allocates \$3 million for fox control. We will have to see how this initiative goes in the long run, but it has been well received in the electorate. I suppose conditions for farmers involved in lambing will be improved, which is great.

I must not forget the arts. The Broadford arts centre will receive \$42 200 from the Regional Arts Infrastructure

Fund, which is also fantastic. It will use that money for lighting and sound systems so it can continue to stage the great quality shows it puts on for our community.

Putting all that together with the \$2 million for the Maroondah Highway from Healesville to Narbethong and the \$320 000 for the Healesville–Lilydale bus route, this is a good budget for the Seymour electorate and, indeed, for the whole of Victoria. I know funds have been invested all over the state. This government is turning things around in governing for all Victoria, compared to a stand-for-nothing opposition and a mean-spirited federal government which has cut disability allowances — I can't believe that! — and cut back on payments for prescribed medicines for pensioners and others in the community. This government stands out against that. The Bracks government's budget is a great budget, and I commend it to the house.

**Mr McARTHUR** (Monbulk) — Despite the worthy words and pious hopes of the honourable member for Seymour and his paean of praise to this budget, this really is a classic Labor budget. Taxes are up, fines are up and spending is up. In fact traffic fines have almost tripled but road deaths are up as well, so it is really about revenue raising, not road safety. Gambling revenue is up by 30 per cent, despite the government's promises to reduce gambling and gambling taxes. The odd thing is that despite the fact that taxes and spending are up, the community believes that services are down. This is classic Labor Party economic management — tax higher, spend higher and deliver less — and the community is rapidly waking up to it.

I intend to talk briefly about my portfolio responsibilities in agriculture and water resources and to cover problems relating to programs in my electorate of Monbulk.

Let's have a look at what is happening in agriculture and water resources. We have an inadequate number of animal health officers; we do not have enough vets; and there is not enough action on weeds on private and public land and on pests and diseases. Despite the government's promise in the lead-up to the 1999 election that it would solve the ovine Johne's disease (OJD) issue, very little has changed. It made a lot of pious promises, but there are still farming families that are being financially and emotionally crippled by OJD. The government can protest as much as it likes, but the reality is that it has not resolved the problem.

The government also made a promise in the lead-up to the 1999 election that it would meet the Law Reform Committee's recommendations on boundary fencing

and provide funding assistance to farmers and landowners whose properties abut Crown land and who had lost fencing as a result of natural disasters such as fires or floods. But that was clearly a lie, because nothing has happened and nothing is proposed in this budget.

In the water resources area we heard a lot about the Snowy River in the run-up to and in the weeks and months after the 1999 election. We have had many press releases and many photo opportunities; we have had premiers leaping puddles and premiers going fishing — but no water for the Snowy yet, not another litre running down the Snowy at this stage.

There has been no appropriate action on ground water management despite enormous concern in the industry and throughout agricultural areas in Victoria. There has been no action to resolve the problems of the Porepunkah sewage treatment plants for the communities of Porepunkah and Bright, despite the promises of the honourable member for Benalla and the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

There is no money in this budget for the Moe main drain, a critically important refurbishment program in Gippsland. There is and has been no action to meet the government's promises on the Tarago Dam, despite the fact that the honourable member for Narracan promised it before the last election. He was supported by the Treasurer and by the Minister for Environment and Conservation, but nothing has happened. The minister has had two reviews and she has just released a press release saying that she is considering the recommendations of those reviews. Hell, ain't that grand! She has had two reviews and is considering the outcomes — but no action. There has been no action on water conservation measures in urban areas — things like urban rainwater tanks and urban grey water use — a whole series of things where the government could be doing a lot but is doing very little.

There are some welcome initiatives in this budget and it would be churlish not to acknowledge them, so I will touch briefly on some of them. I certainly welcome the funding for the Melbourne showgrounds and the upgrade of the Royal Agricultural Society's facilities there. There is \$101 million in the budget for that, and it is a good idea. I am sorry it has taken so long. After all, prior to the 1999 election we promised that we would fund an upgrade of the showgrounds, and it has taken three budgets for this government to see that what we were talking about three years ago is a worthy project. Nevertheless it is better late than never and I am glad the government has decided to fund it.

I also welcome the \$77 million the government has decided to commit for the completion of the pipelining of the Wimmera–Mallee stock and domestic system. I agree with some of the comments that have been made about that project. This is the most important infrastructure project for western Victoria for many years. It will deliver enormous social, economic and environmental benefits to people in western Victoria, whether they are north or south of the Grampians, so it is really to be welcomed. But I would like to point out to the house that the Liberal Party agreed to fund this project in December last year. The Leader of the Liberal Party and I were in Horsham on 8 or 9 December, where we announced that we would fund that project. The reaction of the governments at that stage was interesting. I have here a press release dated Monday, 10 December 2001, under the banner of the Minister for Environment and Conservation, which states:

'The commitment by state opposition leader Denis Napthine on the construction of the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline is meaningless', Sherryl Garbutt said today.

She said without a commitment from the federal government to match that funding that this was a half-baked idea and a meaningless commitment.

Let me point out to the minister that she is now out there in the community with the Treasurer and the Premier proudly trumpeting just such a half-baked and meaningless idea because their funding, the \$77 million that they have committed, is not yet matched by the federal government and they have no commitment to that. I hope they get the commitment — and we are working on that — but the very same comments she made about our commitment six months ago can be levelled at this budget commitment. It is a good project, it should proceed, but there is some cant and hypocrisy in the minister's change of attitude. There is nothing new; nothing changes in some areas.

Let's look at a couple of other things that are welcome in this budget. The government has agreed to extend the Rabbit Buster program, but only for one year. This is a very good project, initiated by us in government, and the funding for that runs out on 30 June this year. The government has agreed to add an additional \$2.5 million for the fight against rabbits, but it is only for one financial year. I can promise the minister that the rabbit problem cannot be solved in one year, and if this government is serious about pest animals and about reducing and controlling rabbit numbers in Victoria in both urban and rural areas it must commit extra resources for the Rabbit Buster program for far more than one year. A one-year program is laughably

inadequate and the whole rural community will recognise it as that.

Let's look at some of the things this budget could have done. After all, it is in surplus. We have massive increases in taxes and massive increases in expenditure. Where could they have been better placed? I can give the house and the two ministers in the house some suggestions about where they would get a much better bang for the taxpayers' buck than they are currently going to get. Let us look at some really good social programs across rural areas.

Perhaps additional funds could be provided to the Victorian Young Farmers, a voluntary organisation operating for half a century, which this government has cruelly treated and defunded. The government has been dragged kicking and screaming to the table to provide limited resources for the VYF, but they are not adequate. The VYF has been bent over a barrel and been forced reluctantly to agree to accept this package, but it is not enough. It should be more, and for \$50 000 or \$60 000 a year the government could provide enormous benefits to young farmers and their families across the state — far more benefits than a couple of government advisers would ever provide.

The government could honour its 1999 election promise and put some money into the boundary fencing assistance scheme as the Labor Party promised in the run-up to the 1999 election. It could do something more valuable for regional transport than the fast rail links to the urban centres of Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat and Traralgon. The rural community would get a much greater boost if the government spent that level of money in upgrading the freight lines and in providing better freight infrastructure for our rural industries than in doing what is a quick-fix program and probably a pie-in-the-sky program for passenger rail. Regional Victorians would get far better benefits for both the small towns and the regional centres if our freight lines were upgraded and more emphasis was put on standardising some of those major freight lines. It would be a much better boost to rural industries.

The government could provide some concessions on stamp duty for farm families. It could extend its Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) cattle underpass initiative so that farmers in metro fringe shires like Cardinia could apply for it; they cannot at the moment. The government should put far more effort into public land pest management, especially where those pests intrude into farmland. The government should do some work on controlling and redressing issues relating to soil acidity. The government should fund the bush tender program, which encourages

farmers to become environmental stewards for the bushland on their private property. The government should spend more on agricultural research and development, because after all that provides a basis for far greater industry growth in the future.

The government could and should fund through the RIDF the Bendigo Livestock Exchange upgrade. The exchange was funded by us before the 1999 election; it has been so successful that it has now outgrown its facilities in three or four years. It needs an upgrade and the government should come to the party. It should do something about Workcover premiums because they are crippling rural industries. It should do something about Goulburn-Murray Water's debt, and it could use some of the competition policy dividends in order to upgrade facilities and infrastructure in the GMW and other water authority areas.

The government could fund a rebate for farmers and customers in the Wimmera-Mallee channel system who at the moment are getting only half of their dams filled but pay 100 per cent of the rates associated with the system. This is the second year running where they have had reduced farm dam fills — only one in three last year and only one in two this year. The government could and should give the rebates to those farm families.

The government should do far more work providing additional resources to a review of permissible annual volume allocations in ground water management in Victoria. The absurd proposal to conduct a review of 30 to 35 aquifers by a single officer in the Bendigo office of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and provide that poor fellow with \$15 000 to do over 30 reviews, give him three months — or two days and \$500 for each review — is a woefully inadequate proposal and needs far greater allocation of resources.

The government should provide some funding for the Moe main drain. It is a \$1.93 million project, and the local catchment management authority has provided \$503 000 to it, the federal government has provided \$503 000 to it, and the state government has provided nothing and promises nothing. The government should develop a water tank subsidy program for rainwater tanks in regional urban and metropolitan areas. That is a very sensible and very cheap way of promoting water conservation and reducing the demand on our main storage systems, and could be done on a similar basis to the solar rebate scheme.

The government should fix the Porepunkah sewerage issue. It has promised something for three years and

delivered nothing. It should also be doing some work on upgrading some of our problem water storage areas. We spent \$1.4 billion upgrading water infrastructure in the last few years of the Kennett government, but this government has spent very little on it, and there is a good deal more that needs to be done. Those issues are statewide issues. There are substantial resources available to this government and they are being sadly misallocated in many areas in this budget, which will give a limited benefit as a result.

People in the Monbulk electorate, my own local area, are sadly disappointed about what they have received from the Bracks government, which has taken \$1500 from each family's pocket in Monbulk and has given very little back. In fact, for every additional \$20 of additional revenue the Treasurer has taken from families, he is giving \$1 back by way of increased services, tax rebates and business tax reductions. Not a bad take, is it! You pick \$20 out of their pockets, give them \$1 back and then tell them you are a good fellow! They are not fooled by that.

People who move into my area, not a wealthy area, are often first home buyers or second home buyers. If they happen to qualify for the first home buyers scheme they get a \$7000 grant from the federal government. Then they get their stamp duty bill from the state Treasurer and that is generally something above \$7000 and could be as much as between \$10 000 and \$15 000; it is almost always above \$7000. So John Howard gives them \$7000 and John Brumby takes \$8000. That pleases them no end! In essence, as property values have increased in the Monbulk electorate stamp duties have gone up at twice the rate. If your house value has increased by 35 per cent in the last two years the stamp duty bill when you sell it and buy a new house has gone up by 70 per cent. That is a great effort by the Treasurer and the state government.

The government has not funded much-needed works at The Basin Primary School, works that are needed to resolve health and safety issues in some cases. It has not funded any upgrades or improvements at Monbulk Primary School despite a need, and it is threatening to take away the school's portable classrooms. I will have to tell the new Minister for Education and Training that that will happen over the protesting bodies of many of the parents in the Monbulk community and certainly against every protest that I can mount on behalf of the parents and children of the area.

The government has done nothing about the Knox public hospital. It has provided \$18 million to the Angliss hospital, which is welcome. However, it should be providing a tertiary teaching hospital in the outer

east, as we intended to do with the Knox hospital, but that has not been funded.

The government has been dragged kicking and screaming to fund the Scoresby bypass. The Minister for Transport — who has just appeared across the table — just after the 1999 election said, 'Forget about the Scoresby freeway; it is dead'. We have got the press release, Minister. We have got the letter. 'Forget about the Scoresby, it is dead', he said. Then he said, 'Hang on, we are funding it', but he never put any money into it. The federal government put in \$220 million last year and the state government put in \$2 million this year — it has finally been dragged to the table! But we all know the government does not want to put the money in, and the minister is trying to do everything he can to stop it happening. He has not even got the Eastern Freeway to Ringwood yet; he has not even let the tenders for the tunnel — in fact, the locals are very sceptical that he ever will.

The government promised a 12-hour-a-day Olinda police station prior to the election and — guess what! — it is open for 3 hours a week! The community is not conned by that promise. The Labor government promises the earth and delivers a pinch of salt to rub into people's wounds. It is an inadequate budget and a classic Labor budget of high taxes, high spending, lower service delivery and increased disappointment among the people in the community. It could and should do better on behalf of the people right across the state, but in particular on behalf of the people in Monbulk electorate, who I have had the honour to represent for almost 10 years. I can tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that they are very disappointed in this budget. They had hoped for much better. Steve Bracks promised more; John Brumby has delivered less.

**Ms BARKER** (Oakleigh) — I am very pleased to join the debate on the Appropriation (2002/2003) Bill, the third budget of the Bracks Labor government and a budget that we, on this side of the house, all know invests again and invests further in Victoria and its people. We are turning around the vital areas of health, education, transport and community safety.

I will talk a little about education, particularly education in the Oakleigh electorate. I draw the attention of the house to an article that appeared in one of our local papers, the *Oakleigh Monash Leader* of 15 May, following the tabling of the budget on 7 May. The headline was of course 'Education windfall'.

In particular the opposition education spokesman made some comments in it, and as other government speakers have said, it is fair enough that he should have a bit of a

whinge about how good this budget is. But in the article he says that schools in the Oakleigh and Clayton area had missed out on capital works funding altogether. It says:

'Not \$1 has been allocated to upgrade any schools in the local area' he said.

He goes on to say:

The pattern that seems to be emerging is that the Labor government have not bothered to fund schools in areas with safe Labor seats.

It is interesting: I have never considered Oakleigh to be a safe Labor seat, and I point out to honourable members that there is no such thing as a safe seat in politics any more!

However, I point out to the shadow education minister — and schools have talked to me about this — that I understand the capital works terminology and I take great objection to his saying that not \$1 has been allocated to upgrade any school in the local area. The Oakleigh electorate consists of many suburbs, not just Oakleigh. It also includes Mount Waverley, Oakleigh East, Chadstone, Hughesdale, Murrumbeena, Carnegie, Ormond and Glenhuntly. If he had bothered to check his facts, he would have seen that the budget builds on the \$1.6 million already spent on schools in the Oakleigh electorate — schools which desperately needed it. Amsleigh Park Primary School received over \$500 000, Hughesdale Primary School received \$260 000, Oakleigh Primary School received \$240 000 and Sussex Heights Primary School received \$160 000. Glenhuntly Primary School received \$454,872, which consisted of some capital works, all of which have been completed.

The shadow education minister should know that in this year's budget, the largest primary school in the electorate, Murrumbeena Primary School, which has around 540 or 550 students, has been allocated a little over \$1.4 million to commence stage 1 of its capital works project — a welcome project in the electorate. Stage 1 will see the construction of a new library and art, craft and music facilities; an increase in the accommodation capacity of the main school building; and refurbishing and expanding of the staff administration and staff and student amenities.

When I became the member for Oakleigh in 1999 I visited all the schools. I was dismayed to see the size of the staffroom at Murrumbeena Primary School. Many honourable members joke about the size of their offices at Parliament House but the school's staffroom could be directly compared to the offices in what is affectionately known at Parliament as the Chook

House. It is pleasing to ensure this much-needed stage 1 capital works project of \$1.4 million in this budget, with \$1.6 million already having been spent in the Oakleigh electorate on turning around education.

I place on record my thanks to the hardworking school council and community at Murrumbeena Primary School, particularly their very capable and caring principal, Mrs Heather Hill. The school has never sat back and waited for government funding. It has a strong and active school community and it has built a hall, sports complex and canteen in recent years. It was nice to be able to tell the school that this government believes that governments should build school buildings and has committed \$1.4 million to the stage 1 project.

Building on the work that has been finished and is yet to be done in the Oakleigh electorate, the emphasis on capital works is important — schools need buildings — but the increase in the global budget funding has also been extremely well received. This year government primary schools in the Oakleigh electorate will receive \$1.73 million or 22 per cent more in global budget funding than they did in the last year of the previous government, which is a significant rise. On a school-by-school basis it is very telling.

Amsleigh Park Primary School's budget is up by 25 per cent and Glenhuntly Primary School is up 19 per cent. Hughesdale Primary School is a success in itself. It was a school threatened with closure under the previous government. It fought that, although admittedly at that time its enrolments were low, but has since doubled its enrolments and that is reflected by its budget funding, which is up 50 per cent. Murrumbeena Primary School's budget is up 21 per cent; Oakleigh Primary School is up 17 per cent and Sussex Heights Primary School is up 14 per cent. I am pleased to say that Carnegie Primary School will be in the Oakleigh electorate after the next election and its budget is up 19 per cent.

We have also seen 86 computers go to schools in the electorate, with total funding of \$205 000 and not the \$3 for \$1 fundraising requirement of the previous government. This was a grant to schools for computers and for the infrastructure required to install them. There is an allocation of \$20 000 as part of the \$5 million allocation for sporting equipment which is another welcome initiative. Recently there have also been grants from \$1000 to \$3000 for libraries.

In the brief time I have left I place on record my thanks to a hardworking community-based organisation working in the electorate — Bayside Employment

Skills Training, known to all of us as BEST. It is best because it provides best services. It has been working with me for about 18 months on youth issues. We have some problems with youth issues down our way, as do many honourable members in their electorates, but we now have in place an integrated youth service. It is not the permanent solution although we are working towards a permanent facility.

One of the problems we have is that we do not have any government buildings left down our way to put activities into. The Oakleigh Youth Resource Centre is now up and running again. Rocky Varbaro has been appointed as the coordinator and a shopfront has been leased in Atherton Road. A steering committee is made up of all the local and appropriate organisations. Recognising we have a long way to go we now have a coordinated approach to delivering much-needed services for young people in the Oakleigh region.

The government allocated Pride of Place funding to Monash City Council for it to develop a plan for the urban precinct in Oakleigh. I hope that project will identify areas where we can start to look at providing permanent facilities that are desperately needed in that area and which were lacking before I became the local member.

Glen Eira City Council is a significant part of my electorate and already has a proposal in place for the Carnegie shopping centre. It will develop a community centre in Jersey Parade. The Minister for Local Government, who is in the house, will be well aware of the project, because the community centre incorporates a library. Recently we attended the current library and announced a \$500 000 grant to Glen Eira council to assist it to build the new library. That amount builds on further funding to libraries. Recently the government allocated \$15 000 to each library to boost their quality and volume of book stock. We are making a great deal of progress in the Oakleigh electorate.

Health is another important issue and this government is turning things around in the Oakleigh electorate and throughout Victoria. No government member could say things are finished; they are not. We have some way to go, but this budget builds on the work that has already been undertaken in Oakleigh. I am confident that ongoing budgets under a Bracks Labor government will ensure my community is rebuilt, and is strong and viable into the future.

**Ms BURKE (Pahran)** — It is a pleasure to speak about the budget. As I prepared for my contribution I examined and compared the expenditure and operating surplus. The expenditure is shown as \$24.76 billion and

the operating surplus as \$521.8 million. When the Kennett government won office in 1992 Victoria had a public sector debt of \$33 billion and the state had been spending \$3 billion more than it then received in taxes, charges and income. The state was then spending more on interest than it did on education and health.

The borrowing costs in this budget are \$495.2 million. How things have changed! It has not happened only over the past two and a half years. It is interesting to see how quickly the figures fall and become rather depressing. I recall the hard work that was required to bring our financial position back into line.

I turn to my shadow portfolio of local government. I was disappointed to discover that the budget contains no expenditure for drainage, which is something all councils, particularly in inner Melbourne, are grizzling about because those facilities were not supported by developers in the past. The budget also contains no official sign of any allocations for bridges, yet Wangaratta has a bridge for every day of the year; and Strathbogie and a number of other shires have about 150 bridges. The bridges link the rural communities. The budget has no extra funding for roads. Black spot funding has been divided up for important areas, but many spots have been neglected.

The government will spend less on libraries than it has previously. Last year the budget allocated \$37.4 million; this year's figure is \$36 million. Libraries are extremely important in rural areas because they are the only source of arts and entertainment to keep many communities flourishing, particularly for those who have problems with distance and learning. Mobile libraries are an issue and I would have liked to have seen more support given to our isolated communities. We need capital works for both libraries and swimming pools because those facilities date back to the 1950s, the 1960s and the 1970s. They are out of date and tired, and that infrastructure needs an enormous amount of support.

Home and community care (HACC) funding of \$6.5 million in this budget has only just matched commonwealth funding. It has not received any extra. I was disappointed that with all the community concern about HACC funding the 2001–02 budget allocation was not fully spent. In many ways this budget is very much about anti-households; it continues to impose high stamp duties. The budget contains no relief particularly for the poorer members of the community or for our youth who are trying to purchase or establish new homes. I have examples in my electorate of the imposition of extremely high land taxes, from small residences to swimming pools to blocks of home units

to people trying to run shops and businesses. Simply because some businesses operate in Chapel Street or Toorak Road does not necessarily mean they are wealthy. They have to pay very high rents and high land tax imposts do not help.

Income from rates across Victoria in the past two years has increased by \$213 million. That amount is coming out of individuals who are trying to run their homes but with no support. The budget has nothing for pensioner rebates. The government has offered no assistance in any way, shape or form. Many members of the community would be disappointed about that.

The budget also talked about improving public sector performance. There has been quite a shift away from the efficiencies and effectiveness of service delivery to promote more responsibility, credibility and leadership. I agree with the credibility and leadership aspects, but you can never move away from the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery because that is what the community expects from local government. The cost-effective investment in infrastructure development is important and it should be a partnership. The enhancement of better performances and practices is very important, and the national competition policy requirements demand that. However, there must be some assistance in funding to achieve that.

The other area I shall touch on is my electorate of Prahran. I thank the government for the assistance it has given to the strip shopping centres, one in particular that is very poor at the moment. I received \$400 000 in funding for medical research, for which I am grateful, and some other small grants for which the community is grateful.

Another area in which I would have liked to get more assistance, and on which I will continue to ask the government for community support, is for the police station. It is out of date and like a rabbit warren. It needs to be completely revamped. It is a busy and extremely important station. More work should be done there.

My electorate has only four primary schools, although I wish it had more. Stonnington Primary School in particular has real problems that the department will have to confront because of the students from public housing accommodation who often do not arrive at school until about 10.00 a.m. and who sometimes do not go home from school because of the difficulties they face when they get home. There are some real issues in working around those problems. I take this opportunity to thank the teachers and principals in the four primary schools in my electorate, but particularly

those at Stonnington. It is a hard school where staff have to try to work with the different demographics of students and their parents, and their problems.

The other area where I have difficulty is trying to get preschool children into the kindergarten located in the public housing office at the bottom of Malvern Road. They need support.

All round, issues of social advantage and disadvantage are a problem in every member's electorate, but I certainly see the extremes of it in mine. I look forward to the government doing more work in that area to address these extraordinary and unusual situations. It will start with early intervention, and I hope next year's budget has a lot more about that, particularly for maternal and child care, primary schools and those areas where we can influence the lives of young students before they get too far out of control.

In some ways I am delighted to get anything, but I am watching the budget process with interest. Local councils would have liked to see more emphasis on some of the issues that they feel are extremely important in linking their communities. Because time does not permit, I have not even started on the arts and the inability of many municipalities to raise rates. For example, the shires of Yarriambiack and West Wimmera lose two and half ratepayers per week. At the other extreme, the City of Casey gains 80 families. The diversity is enormous, and some municipalities need more assistance than others. I would like to see more assistance in those areas or, to put it in simple terms, a lot less talk and a lot more action.

**Mr SAVAGE** (Mildura) — It is a pleasure to stand in this place and give an indication of the competency of this last state budget. It has been a very good budget, and I congratulate the Treasurer on that. He has managed three budgets in a way that has shared the equity in Victoria fairly and appropriately. I have nothing but praise for that, and I would like to go into some of the details. There is not a lot that my electorate received in the last budget in significant terms, but I recognise the fact that resources have to be shared across the board. That was something that the Independents were very concerned about in 1999 — that is, making sure that every Victorian received a share of the state's benefits. I believe the Treasurer has done that, and I congratulate him on it.

My electorate is very pleased to have received an upgrade in the ambulance service from Mildura. Some satellite communities have had difficulty getting an efficient ambulance service, and the increase in staff at the base in Mildura will mean that Irymple and Red

Cliffs will get a faster and more efficient service. I imagine future budgets will see an ambulance facility being built some kilometres south of Mildura. It is also timely to recognise the new ambulance station that is to be built at Hopetoun as part of the new hospital there. Some of these remote communities do not have a significant staffing of ambulance personnel. Most of the outlying areas in my electorate are staffed by community ambulance officers, who do a remarkable job for no pay, serving their communities 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I acknowledge their efforts and the fact that the government is putting money into those very important facilities.

I also mention the funding of a new police station at Merbein. The current police station is based in an old house. To have a new police station built in that community is very timely. Merbein has been through a difficult time recently. As has happened in many other rural communities, the National Bank has decided to gut its services and transfer the branch access to the post office, which means that the number of access points people currently enjoy will no longer be available. Recognising that Merbein has a future, the government is giving it a morale boost by building a new police station, and I want to recognise that in this place.

Hopefully in future budgets the Mildura police station will be accorded some financial consideration, because at the moment we have split facilities. The current Mildura police station is bursting at the seams because of the increased recruitment of police numbers. In one sense it is a good sign that they are working under difficulties in cramped conditions because there are too many of them rather than not enough! I hope that is given consideration in future budgets.

Preschools have figured very well in this budget. They are a very important part of our education system, although sometimes I think they are undervalued. If you do not have young children you are probably not aware of the importance of the evolving nature of education, and preschools are a significant part of that process. The upgrading of facilities at the Red Cliffs, Nangiloc and Ouyen preschools and the St Margaret's Preschool Centre in Mildura are welcome, and they are worthy recipients of that funding.

I should mention the fox bounty, which was part of this last budget. The Independents are very supportive of the principle underlying it, because foxes are a significant scourge in Victoria. We know that we are not going to achieve the total removal of this feral pest, but putting up that money in the budget will have a significant impact on their numbers. It is a trial. I note

that some of the economic rationalists in our midst would criticise this as a waste of money, but the Mallee fowl population in my electorate is being put at risk because of foxes. I remember when I was a councillor in the 1990s that we wrote to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment asking if it would support a fox bounty. Someone wrote back saying, 'No, we would sooner put the money into fencing off the areas where the Mallee fowl are nesting and keeping the foxes out'. That is a very short-term and limited way of dealing with the problem. We need to bring fox numbers down to such an extent that they are not as significant a pest as they are.

When I was young there was a fox bounty of about 50 cents, which was quite a reasonable amount of money in the 1950s. There was a lot of encouragement for people to hunt foxes. At the moment some of our national parks are havens for foxes, and we need to make sure they are removed. As far as I am concerned, and I imagine most farmers and environmentalists would agree, every dead fox is a good fox. The fox bounty is a great initiative, and it is a pity that the people who are opposed to people wearing furs have reduced the value of a fox pelt to such an extent that it is not viable to hunt. This is an alternative to that, and we can make sure there is an impact environmentally.

The most significant issue the state Treasurer announced in the budget was the funding of the Wimmera-Mallee pipeline. This is an incredible initiative, and although it does not really affect my electorate significantly, it does affect Victoria. The issue affects western Victoria because we have towns relying on a 1920s-style earth channel system whose 16 000 kilometres of waterways are vulnerable to evaporation and seepage. I have heard the channel system loses 95 per cent of its water at the end and about 60 per cent in the middle. In all it loses roughly 93 000 megalitres per annum, which is the equivalent of 93 000 Olympic-size swimming pools, which is significant.

There are no Labor seats within cooe of the Wimmera-Mallee channel system, yet the Treasurer has allocated \$77 million over 10 years. It is a phenomenal outcome. The cynics underestimate the commitment the Treasurer has to regional Victoria. I am convinced that that is the case, because of the federal government's stupidity over matching the funding. Many positive statements have been made by state and federal National Party members in my region about it being a project of national importance that simply has to be completed. The Prime Minister is reported in the last Wimmera-Mallee Water newsletter as saying that he is impressed by the proposal to pipe

the Wimmera–Mallee. But there is one great problem: no money whatsoever was allocated in the federal budget.

That is rather strange, because the federal member for Mallee, John Forrest, and other National Party members have been pursuing this as a great initiative. Mr Forrest has said it is vital that the matter remain one of national significance. He has made the point that there is no other project in Australia which is so crucial to the environment and which offers so much to rural communities and the water supply. Absolutely nothing happened. Their words were meaningless and empty. I know the federal member for Mallee calls himself Mr Pipeline, but I think he is a Wally with water and should change his name.

Warren Truss, the federal agriculture minister, said of the project:

It is not something which the federal government will have in next week's budget.

It was a fairly worthy one, and the commonwealth would consider the proposal put forward by Victoria.

The federal government has known about this since late last year, so I would have thought it would have provided some matching funding, even if it was only \$7 million for the planning. It is a great disappointment, and I am pleased that the Treasurer has reiterated that, even if the federal government continues to be tardy, the state government is committed to this project. Towns such as Hopetoun and Woomelang rely on this channel system for their domestic water supply. It picks up so much salinity that you would kill your lawn if you watered it with the water that comes out of the domestic supply! In some towns the water is putrid because it has settled in the dam. The area simply does not have the treatment plants we enjoy in Melbourne and Mildura.

I congratulate the state government on that mammoth commitment of \$77 million. It is ironic that it has taken 72 years from the inception of this scheme to see a turnaround that will bring some significant benefits. But I sound a cautionary note: we must make sure the project has significant farmer, community and government input; it cannot be hijacked purely and simply by Wimmera-Mallee Water. I would like to see the least input from those people who see this as an empire-building opportunity and who wish to gain influence and achieve personal benefit from the project to the detriment of community.

The system was set up for farmers, and I am going to advocate that farmers not lose any of their water

entitlements nor any of their influence over how we deal with the huge savings. The environment will be a winner from this, as will local industry and farmers. We have to be mindful of the huge on-costs that farmers will have to put up out of their own pockets to ensure that water is used efficiently and is affordable.

I congratulate the government on its fair and equitable response across Victoria. My electorate has not received the capital works funding of other years. However, I recognise that we have to share opportunities across Victoria. I think the Treasurer and the Premier have done an excellent job.

**Ms McCALL** (Frankston) — My initial reaction to this budget was that it continued a couple of good projects that had already commenced within the Frankston electorate. I am delighted that the government recognised the initial works started under the previous government on Darinya Primary School, Mount Eliza Primary School, Kunyung Primary School and Frankston High School. I am delighted that the government has honoured the commitment to finish those projects to enable those schools to be upgraded.

I do have concerns about education, and in particular about primary schools in the Frankston area. Three primary schools seem to have missed out rather badly — Frankston Heights, Karingal Heights and Ballan Park. They are extremely good schools that currently sit in the seat of the honourable member for Frankston East, but they are certainly in need of major work. Whereas their previous maintenance audits may have looked fairly paltry on the ground, there are some serious upgrades that need to be undertaken. I hope the government recognises that, having looked after some of the schools in Frankston, it needs to be even handed and continue to look after all of them across the board.

I have concerns about some other aspects of the budget, and it would be remiss of me not to focus specifically on my electorate. The most important aspect I take very much on board is disability funding for families and others in the community who are less able to make a contribution. I congratulate groups such as Woorinyan, which is responsible for providing support for the mature-aged intellectually disabled. Woorinyan has done a first-rate job for over 30 years and has maintained its facilities to the best of its ability. They are centrally located and staffed by the most wonderful people, including a volunteer board of management. The Woorinyan property, however, is in serious disrepair. The committee of management has come to us and asked us to look seriously at its need for increased funding. There is a strong need for disability

funding right across the Mornington Peninsula, but in particular at Woorinyan and in Frankston.

One of the most important things to remember about the mature-aged intellectually and physically disabled is the ages of their parents. One of the great tragedies is that the parents of these children are now desperately in need of care themselves. The intellectually disabled, who in many respects are unable to care for themselves 100 per cent, are now, because of the nature and structure of the funding, being obliged to stay at home and spend much of their time caring for their ageing parents. It is an issue that the government has neglected in the budget. I am disappointed by that neglect, and I urge it to look at disability funding as a priority. I am delighted to say that not all people in Frankston fall into that category.

One of the other areas in which Frankston seems to have missed out, like most of Victoria, is the increased cost of taxes on the family budget. Under this Labor government each Victorian family is now paying \$1500 per year more than it was under previous governments. I am also particularly alarmed at the increase in stamp duty on properties. Frankston has been recognised as an area where property values have stayed relatively low. It is a very attractive place to live, and those of us who live there love it and are very happy to be there. Property values have remained at a reasonable level.

Along with the increase in property values over the past 12 to 18 months there has been an increase in that ignominious tax, stamp duty. Any opportunity an average family in the Karingal area purchasing a house between \$130 000 and \$150 000 may have gained from the first home buyers grant has been swallowed up by the absolutely greedy tax this government is reaping in by the bucketload. I am exceptionally disappointed that the people of Frankston, in particular those first home buyers with small families and heavy financial commitments, have been unavailable to reap any benefit from this scheme.

Honourable members would understand that Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula boast a relatively high unemployment rate — and I say ‘boast’ tongue in cheek. The state unemployment rate runs at anything between 6 per cent and 8 per cent. On the Mornington Peninsula it is normally around 10 per cent, and with young people it can be as high as 20 per cent to 21 per cent. There is nothing in this budget to encourage small business on the Mornington Peninsula and in the Frankston area to employ more people, particularly young people.

We have already seen outrageous levels of Workcover premiums. Even the minimal change in payroll tax will not make a great deal of difference. We have seen land tax, stamp duty and the cost of running a business increase more and more — to the extent that small business is being discouraged. I hesitate to say small business, because if you look at the demographic profile of Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula you see they have very few major employers. The biggest private sector major employer is BHP at Hastings. The other major employers are the hospital networks and the councils. Small business is the lifeblood, and there is very little, if anything, in this budget to encourage small business and bring unemployment figures down, to encourage the employment of young people through apprenticeships, or whatever, and restore the lifeblood to the community.

I turn to transport, which was covered by the honourable member for Cranbourne. There is a lot of government rhetoric on what it will do about the road toll and improving the roads. Mornington Peninsula still records one of the highest road tolls in the state, particularly of our young people. The money that has been allocated in this budget to improve transport on the Mornington Peninsula is woeful. People should be very disappointed in what can only be termed a B grade movie from a B grade government which has allocated very little or no funding to traffic lights, upgrading, kerbing, and a series of things that could make a real difference in reducing the road toll on the Mornington Peninsula.

I will also comment on the health network. One thing my constituents have been proud of is the completion of the Frankston Hospital on what has almost been a building site for the last 10 years. Whereas the honourable member for Frankston East was very critical about the previous government, work on that site continued from 1992 until earlier this month, as one of the final projects of the previous government came to an end. I note with some amusement that this year for the first time in the 10 years since 1992 in a state budget — and the honourable member for Malvern may correct me if I am wrong — the allocation to Frankston Hospital is less than \$1 million. What happened to the rhetoric of the government about how much money in the budget it was going to throw at the Frankston Hospital?

I am mindful of the time and the other issues my colleagues wish to raise. Finally I want to place on record the concern the Frankston community has raised with me about the motorcycle tax. The extra \$50 tax on families who buy motorcycles, possibly because they prefer motorcycles or because they do not want or

cannot afford to drive a car, is an extraordinary impost. If the government says it will use it as a means of raising revenue for education, most of the motorbike riders I have spoken to say, 'No, it won't; it will just go into consolidated revenue for another project for another day'.

The proposals for the taxi industry also concern me. The Frankston taxidriver I have talked to about part-time licences say that currently the taxi industry is in some difficulty with proposals on surcharges, and on one thing or another. It will become more and more difficult to be and make a good living out of being a taxidriver. Taxidriver on the Mornington Peninsula are small business owners, and more often than not they own their own cabs. They are a very good source of employment. I would hate to see that source of employment dry up and watch the unemployment figures on the Mornington Peninsula increase.

From my perspective as the member for the seat of Frankston, on whose behalf I stand in this Parliament, I can only say that it is a disappointing budget for the people of Frankston from a B grade government.

**Mr MILDENHALL** (Footscray) — How good does it get? How good does government get? I do not think in my time it will get much better than this. If you look at the big picture of where the dollars are coming from and going to and the responsible approach the government has taken with this budget, with its \$500 million surplus and its finishing touches to over \$1 billion in tax cuts, you see it is presiding over a stand-out economy in a thriving national economy. It is an absolutely ideal context in which to run and devise a budget.

There are some magnificent big picture figures in this budget. The amount spent on capital works infrastructure has doubled, and recurrent outlays in the key areas of education, public safety and health have increased significantly. What about the innovation of the synchrotron? What about the leadership? The project was out there, it was up for grabs, and this government went out and grabbed it. It took the lead and put its money where its mouth is, and it is running with it.

Look at the environmental investment — not only in the Snowy River but also the Murray River and Mallee–Wimmera pipeline projects. What a fantastic symbol to our community and regions. Look at the care for the disadvantaged program and the Access to Excellence program, particularly important in areas like mine, which is keeping young people in school. They are strategic, targeted and caring programs. Look at the

care for regional areas with the Mallee–Wimmera pipeline project and investment in infrastructure, and the projects with iconic importance, like the Melbourne showgrounds redevelopment. It is fantastic to be part of a government that delivers in this way.

In my area — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr MILDENHALL** — There are some cynical commentators around the place.

**Mr Robinson** — Some in the chamber.

**Mr MILDENHALL** — Some in the chamber. Some disaffected folks say that Labor ignores its heartland. Let me — —

**Mr McArthur** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The honourable member for Monbulk should contain himself.

**Mr MILDENHALL** — The Labor government comes to Footscray, turns around the neglect of those dreadful dark years of the Kennett government, and what do we have? In my electorate the Footscray police station receives \$12.1 million to house 133 police, compared with 76 at the moment. What a fantastic investment in my area. In fact it comes on top of a 28 per cent reduction in the crime rate in Footscray as a result of the enormous dedication and commitment to dealing with those public safety issues.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! The honourable member for Monbulk has had his turn, and the honourable member for Malvern is having his shortly, so I ask them to be quiet.

**Mr MILDENHALL** — The budget provides \$875 000 to Footscray North Primary School, \$379 000 to the Western Hospital, and \$185 000 to the North Maidstone preschool play centre — the highest allocation to any preschool in the state, on top of the highest allocation to any police station in the state. This is anything but neglect of Labor's heartland.

The budget allocates \$65 000 to the Kingsville kindergarten; \$20 000 to the Maribyrnong kindergarten; \$12 600 to the South Kingsville preschool; and \$15 000 to the Maribyrnong city library. I was out there presenting the cheque the other day, which will provide 750 new books in a high range of multicultural areas. This comes on top of recent other allocations: \$200 000

from the Pride of Place program that brings together a \$900 000 project for the revamping of the Footscray business district; the \$2.5 million allocation from the Better Pools program for the Maribyrnong aquatic centre — and I am very keen to put the rest of the funding package together for this magnificent \$17 million aquatic facility. That comes on top of the \$2.7 million allocation from the Community Support Fund (CSF) to the Footscray Community Arts Centre and the projected allocation of \$500 000 over three years for the community building program.

We are looking at four major allocations out of the CSF to the Footscray area in the past 18 months. In the whole of the seven years of the Kennett government we got one unspent allocation from the CSF. So this is Labor looking after its heartland. We have a range of other projects: the Youth Junction program; the Healthworks street drug centre, for which \$400 000 in capital has been allocated and a full-year recurrent spend of around \$700 000; and the MH Sky youth mental health program — I will accompany the Minister for Health next week when we will be turning the sod — is a \$7 million program. Talk about world best practice: it will be one of the leading edge research and treatment institutions in the country and it will be located in my area. An amount of \$200 000 has been allocated to help refurbish the community health centre. That comes on top of the significant school and university works last year.

That is a fantastic list. It covers a whole page, and it is ongoing testimony to the commitment the Labor government has to its heartland. Let us compare that to the sorts of announcements that this divided, useless and morally bankrupt opposition could put up. What has been its announcement in the past few weeks in response to the budget? Mandatory sentencing! It shows that when you really get to the bottom of the policy barrel and when you have no intellectual or moral standards left, you drag out the mandatory sentencing bandwagon and start bleating about law and order.

The opposition has nowhere to go because of its running down of the police force. It has dragged this hoary old chestnut out of the barrel. Not only its inconsistency but its hypocrisy and bankruptcy can be shown over the last few days when it has tried to run out the crime figures as some sort of news story. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services has shown that the overall crime figures are reducing by some 2 per cent per annum and that Victoria has retained its position as being the safest place in Australia by some 20 per cent.

The extraordinary use of the parliamentary Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee's inquiry into crime trends by the opposition is just breathtaking. The opposition is trying to run out the story that vehicle theft crimes have increased dramatically in the past couple of years. Statistically to a certain extent it is true that between 1998–99 and 2000–2001 there was a 10 000 increase in the number of vehicles being stolen. The comment in the report tabled yesterday was that the long-term trend is mainly attributable to the very large increases in monthly counts that took place after the middle of 1999. Do you know what happened?

Early in 1999 the Einsteins in the Kennett government closed down the stolen vehicle squad. They decided in their deranged cost-cutting frenzy to close down the stolen vehicle squad! Lo and behold, the car thieves came down from New South Wales and from everywhere else. The word from Victoria was that it was open slather. The rate at which car thefts went up was extraordinary. The number of cars stolen went up. In one of those actions that has characterised the new Chief Commissioner of Police as a breath of fresh air through the place, she has reinstated that squad. She has reappointed staff, and appointed staff to the forensic area for that squad. Already the senior police in that area are reporting a dramatic reduction. I will be very keen to see the corresponding graph next year.

We have had an appalling performance by the opposition. The spokesman for police, who has just entered the chamber, has run out the hoary old chestnut of law and order, where the figures do not stand up to scrutiny. The opposition has an appalling record to try to overcome. This government has turned the corner in terms of crime statistics, certainly in my electorate, and is rectifying the dreadful mistakes the opposition made on things like car theft and a range of other indicators. Time prevents me from elaborating further on those matters.

I am conscious that other members in the chamber would like to contribute to the debate and outline to the house the magnificent achievements of this budget both in the general sense, the big picture, and those strategic and very helpful and constructive allocations that have occurred in all of our electorates. I wish the budget all of the best for the coming financial year.

**Mr DOYLE (Malvern)** — I enjoy listening to the honourable member for Footscray and I particularly enjoy following him in debate, because he epitomises so much of what this whole government is about. There is a kind of wonderful sincere insincerity about them. They stand up, they sound so terrific and they go all gooey-eyed. The government is a kind of utopia

compared to the awful pit of inferno that characterised the seven years that went before!

But what was the nub of the argument put by the honourable member for Footscray? Half his speech was spent praising the Bracks government for putting more police into Footscray and the other half was spent proving that there is less crime in Footscray. It seems to me to be a wonderful example of the Bracks government's view of how the state should be run that you would actually put more police — almost twice the number, if I recall accurately, or at least 60 or 70 per cent more — into an area where you claim crime trends are decreasing. That seems to me to be a wonderful example of the 'sincere insincerity' that comes from the government!

Let me give the house another great example of this. During the week I attended the opening of the Alfred medical research and education precinct, which is a great project bringing together the Alfred hospital, Monash University, the Macfarlane Burnett Centre for Medical Research and the Baker Medical Research Institute. Professor John Funder was there, and the Premier and Deputy Premier cut the ribbon. What they did not mention was that this project was conceived, planned, funded and commenced under the previous government. I was delighted to hear Professor Funder describe it as a bipartisan project! I suppose it is bipartisan if you define it as meaning that now in government and then in the opposition Labor at least did not oppose the project. I am sorry, but that is not my definition of bipartisanship!

There they all were, but did they mention Rob Knowles, the former Minister for Health, who presided over the building of the entire project? No, that would have been a courtesy far below them, so they did not bother. It was a wonderful example of this government standing up and saying one thing when the reality is something quite different.

Let me give the house another, different example. This government came into this place for two years, from December 1999 until the Metropolitan Ambulance Service Royal Commission reported in December 2001, telling us what the royal commission would cost, and it later said it finished up costing \$19.4 million. That is what it said in all its sincerity, openness and honest transparency. Yet at the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee hearing last week the Premier revealed publicly for the first time that the final cost — which he admits to now, and only admits to — is \$30.26 million. I asked the Premier in this house today, 'Given that the federal government has made public the salaries of the HIH royal commissioner and the

building industry royal commissioner, how much did you pay Lex Lasry?'. The way he slipped away and refused to answer the question was an indication of that kind of 'sincere insincerity' that characterises this government.

The honourable member for Footscray referred to a long list of capital works. I wish him well, and I am sure they are all good projects, but there is not one that I can point to. You can bet that this government takes care of its heartland — but at the cost of other electorates!

Talking about capital works, every year the health portfolio commands about \$300 million in capital investment in building. That is about what you would expect to see in any health budget. What is it in this year's health budget? It is \$66.5 million. That is a clear indicator that we are in election mode. The government is holding back that money so that it can make a welter of announcements at election time. I repeat: if there is one clear indicator that we are in election mode, it is the paltry \$66.5 million that it has allocated to capital works in health.

Let me give the house another example of how this government is completely bereft of ideas. What is the major ticket item in the health budget? It is \$32 million for the Royal Melbourne Hospital to develop it as the second trauma centre for Victoria. Madam Deputy Speaker, that announcement was made on 14 March 1999. Why was it made then? I can tell you, because I was the one who worked on that project for 18 months with clinicians from all around Victoria, including those from the Royal Melbourne Hospital and the trauma centre at the Alfred Hospital. I worked with some of the greatest clinicians in this country to develop just such a plan for the Royal Melbourne Hospital. But it pops up as the major capital works announcement in this year's budget in the health portfolio. It is absolutely bereft of any ideas of its own! It is really good at cutting ribbons on projects that belong to the previous government, but not so good at its own.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr DOYLE** — Yes, it really does hurt, and I don't mind telling you that. But in making that jibe at me you admit it is true. They are not even your projects!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! I remind the honourable member for Malvern to address the Chair.

**Mr DOYLE** — I will certainly address you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Let me take another couple of program areas where the rhetoric does not match the reality. One program of particular concern to me — and

I am sure to honourable members such as the honourable member for Footscray, who comes from an area where this is a particular problem — is the dental health program. Page 11 of the Treasurer's speech says:

And we will extend a range of vital health services, including dental health ...

That was the rhetoric. What is the reality? If you go to page 176 of budget paper 2 it tells you that this government is giving an extra \$1 million a year over the next four years when in fact the last four or five budgets from both sides of the house have increased dental health funding by \$4 million to \$5 million a year. Not one year — a year.

I now go to page 74 of budget paper 3. What does that show us about the effect on dental health? It shows us that waiting times in the two peak areas will blow out further. So if you want a set of dentures you now wait two years for them, and if you want restorative dental care you now wait 22 months for it. The government has presided over a blow-out in waiting times while at the same time pronouncing that it is doing great things in dental health. There is the reality and the rhetoric — the sincere sincerity of saying, 'We are really into dental health and we are really improving it', as against the reality of people waiting longer because the government will just not fund it. Those figures come from its own budget.

Page 61 of budget paper 3 tells us that the government actually underspent on dental health by \$1.1 million last year. It was supposed to spend \$83.1 million but it could only spend \$82 million. Are government members really telling me that while people out there are in need of dental care it could not spend that last \$1 million? It is just pathetic! Therefore the government has added \$1 million to that.

Let me take a second program area. I am really glad the honourable member for Footscray is here because, politics aside, I do have regard for the honourable member's knowledge and concern in the area of drugs. He is a person with some knowledge. I understand the problems in his electorate. He has been a fierce advocate for drug programs in his area because of the problems in Footscray, and I respect him for that. I know that for knowledge in that area he is among the best in this Parliament.

Again in this house I asked a question in a spirit that was not meant to be combative towards the Premier. It was, 'Why are you cutting funding to two programs in the drug area?'. The Premier categorically denied that that was so, but the reality is that it is, in two very important programs. One is peer education, which goes

from 350 places in last year's budget down to 300 places in this year's budget. More importantly for me, because I mentioned it last year, is the methadone program. I said that 8800 places were not enough for the methadone program and suggested that the government increase that number to 12 000.

I said to the government, 'If you do not hit the target we are not going to come in here and cavil and carp about that because you will be making a real effort to get more heroin addicts onto methadone'. It is not a great treatment — not the best in the world; it is a serious drug in its own right — but it is better than having them on heroin, buying it illegally and being in that world of crime. I said last year that 8800 was not enough but this year the government's target is 7000. It has gone down by 1800 places!

**Mr Mildenhall** interjected.

**Mr DOYLE** — I take up that point in good heart. I know an interjection is disorderly, and I would not take it up, but it is a point I was going to make anyway.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** — Order! But you will address the Chair, won't you!

**Mr DOYLE** — I will certainly address the Chair in saying that the reason given for it going down is found on page 80 of budget paper 3 at note (a), which says in effect that because there is less heroin on the streets the government will reduce drug programs. But my argument is that that is exactly when you increase these programs. If there is no heroin on the streets you get more people who are heroin addicts onto methadone — that number does not decrease because that is when you get them onto methadone. Because heroin is not available there is a real chance to make some inroads into helping those addicts because they cannot get it. They are not going to stop taking heroin, they are not going to stop taking polydrugs, but if you offer more methadone places maybe you have a chance in a heroin drought to increase the chances of getting to those people with methadone.

Instead of that what has happened, and it is typical of this government because the rhetoric is one thing and the reality is another, is that both programs have been cut. Again I do not regard that as a political matter. I think it is a shame they have been cut, and I call on the government to fund them and put those places back, particularly for the methadone program.

That is my complaint about this government. It is really great with the media event, the press release, the ground-breaking ceremony, the ribbon cutting and projects that are not its own and taking credit for

them — but not at giving credit where credit is due. It is great with the lofty pronouncement, changing the name of the game when the news is bad or blaming other sources such as the previous government or some federal minister, and it is great at taking the credit when the news is good. Those are the Labor strengths — the strengths of the press release and the rhetoric. They are not the reality.

Can't you just see government members back at their Labor retreat? Can't you just hear it in every ministerial pronouncement and from every backbencher who gets up on his hind legs and makes a speech in this place? They have been given the key messages all right. You can hear them time after time. In the absence of policy and in the absence of ideas of their own they fall back on the same tired clichés: seven years of darkness, years of damage and years of underfunding, the Bracks government, and selling Steve big out there. My personal favourite, and this must be tattooed on the back of the hands of every government backbencher and every minister, is: 'We are turning the state around'. Really? From what? From solvency? Is that what they are turning it around from — from AAA? Yet that is the rhetoric in this place and in the public arena day after day from minister and backbencher alike. That is the rhetoric but it is not the reality.

Labor is good at the rewriting of history. How else can we explain its making heroes of people like Keating and Gough Whitlam? How else can you make heroes of people like that except by rewriting history? Never let the facts get in the way of good spin. In fact, don't even bother to check for accuracy!

For example, what do most people think about when they think about the health portfolio? They think about patients. Let us look at what is promised as the centrepiece of this health budget. First let us look at the reality. The Bracks government claims to have spent over \$1 billion more on the health system but on the two key quality-of-care indicators it has performed worse than the previous government. People on waiting lists for elective surgery for longer than is clinically appropriate numbered 4765 in December 1999, but the last available figures for this government show that they numbered 6939 in December 2001 — a 31 per cent increase. What about patients waiting on trolleys in emergency departments for longer than 12 hours? There were a total of 4032 in December 1999, and there were 6096 in December 2001 — a 51 per cent increase. That is the reality.

What do we find out about patients in the Labor budget? I said Labor is really good at spin, so let me quote from the various budget papers what the

government says about its centrepiece of health policy. Try following this and working out what it means. Budget paper 1 at page 11 states:

The budget provides additional funding of \$464 million over four years, enabling Victoria's public hospitals to treat 30 000 more patients and employ 700 more nurses and health workers.

Now if you go to page 18 of the budget overview paper you find it states that the same \$464 million:

... will provide for more beds to treat extra patients, including 30 000 patients in hospital emergency departments and 14 000 extra elective surgery, renal, palliative care and radiotherapy patients.

Suddenly for the same amount of money we have 14 000 more patients. But that is not all. Going to page 76 of budget paper 2 you see that same \$464 million will provide for 30 000 extra patients treated in public hospitals, 16 000 extra patients admitted from emergency departments, additional mental health services for 3500 people, and 14 000 extra surgery, renal, palliative care and radiotherapy patients. Just in case that was not enough as a separate set of figures, in budget paper 3 at page 58 we are told that the Bracks government will treat more emergency and elective patients, improve patient management processes and prevent the avoidable use of hospitals by providing more community and home-based services.

No matter where you go in its budget papers the government cannot get its own stories straight. It cannot make the numbers add up. That same \$464 million is apparently going to treat 30 000 patients, then 30 000 plus 14 000, then 30 000 plus 16 000 plus 14 000 plus 3500. The government cannot get it right even in its own budget papers!

What does the health department produce in order to explain these figures? Forty-six pages of spin! If you go to the health department web site and download the 46 pages of spin there, do you know what they tell you? Don't worry about the number of patients, let's look at how they will be funded and hope that at least the government was consistent with that \$464 million. But no! In explaining that the government states that there is a \$464 million boost to funding, it says that there is an additional \$113 million in 2002–03 which will be used to provide in this budget — and this is what it says under 'Capacity' — \$93 million for elective and emergency, an additional \$6 million for mental health, extra funding of \$20 million in clinical practice, and an additional \$16 million in hospital admission MSK programs.

That adds up to \$135 million, not counting the \$6 million for the ophthalmology targets and the \$6 million that was apparently provided in 2001–02 but will be used this year for ophthalmology. So whether it is the number of patients or the actual figures you cannot tell what the budget means or what it is providing.

I mentioned before the paltry \$66.5 million for capital works in health this year. In the last year of the former government that figure was \$318.2 million. As I said, one of the beneficiaries is the trauma centre at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, the establishment of which was announced in 1999.

A final illustration is a program that I am proud of because it was one I started, and I refer to training the public in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). This year the government is going to train 20 000 people in CPR at a cost of \$2 million, but last year they trained 30 000 at a cost of \$1.9 million — so they are going to training 10 000 fewer people but the training will cost them more. Why, then, not train 30 000 more?

I was glad to hear the honourable member for Footscray speak of something I mentioned myself last year in my budget speech. At that time I praised the government for its bid for the synchrotron. I also said that \$3 million was not enough and that we had to outbid Mr Beattie — and we did. I am pleased that the government will now be putting \$100 million into that \$157 million project; and to take up the point made by the honourable member for Mitcham, when it actually opens in 2007 I hope I am there to cut the ribbon.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr DOYLE** — At least that would even up for the project down at the Alfred!

Seriously, it is an important project for Victoria, and if you offered us a choice between the Olympics and the synchrotron I would always take the synchrotron.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr DOYLE** — I have one final point, and I hope I can be allowed a small one on a local issue, Mr Acting Speaker. I have three schools in my electorate — Lloyd Street, Malvern Central at the Park Street campus and Malvern Primary School — —

**Mr Delahunty** — Only three!

**Mr DOYLE** — No, they are the only three I want to talk about. The enrolments in each of those schools next year will be 40 to 60 too many for the facilities

they have at the moment, and there is no room on any of those campuses for more portables. The department has said it will get a consultant to take a quick look at it. Well it needs to be quick, and it needs to include — —

**Mr Stensholt** interjected.

**Mr DOYLE** — I will not try to learn the name of the honourable member for Burwood, because he will not be here next time.

It is important, and it needs to be addressed over the next two years. Those schools have agreed to work with that consultancy, and they need to be involved, but the government is going to have to accept that there is no room for portables.

In addition, it will have to look not just at the Labor heartland, as the honourable member for Footscray pointed out, but at the real needs of students around the whole state including, if I may say, those in the Liberal heartland. It should not be about political toing and froing but about delivering the best facilities for students regardless of which electorates they are in.

The disappointing thing about the health budget in particular is that when you read it you find yourself asking, 'Where is the vision in that? What is this government telling us about how it wants the health of Victorians to improve or where it wants capital investment to go?'

**Mr Stensholt** interjected.

**Mr DOYLE** — What is exciting about it? What is new about it? What one idea of the Labor government adds to Victorians' health? There is not one. The health budget is completely bereft of vision, dodgy in both patient numbers and dollar figures and, as is typical of this government, all about rhetoric and not about reality.

They can crow all they like; they will not fool the public for too much longer!

**Mr ROBINSON** (Mitcham) — It is a great pleasure to speak on the Appropriation (2002/2003) Bill and to comment on the government's credentials in managing public funds. I am very confident in my claim that the government is a much better manager of funds than Sue Wiltshire, who was managing the Liberal Party's election campaign funds in Monbulk. She has gone missing, along with a few dollars. The opposition might like to take a lead from the budget management skills of the government so it can learn how to tackle that problem and manage money properly.

This is a terrific budget that is based on strong, sound fundamentals that serve the state well. The core message coming through in the budget is that we are very much turning the state around and plugging the gaps in public sector infrastructure.

That is quite evident in the Mitcham electorate. I draw the attention of the house to the funding allocated in the budget for Laburnum Primary School's stage 2 development program, which is worth \$1.7 million — a tremendous allocation by this government. The school, its various principals and its council president, David Blencoe, have worked tirelessly on the project over the years, and it attracted some attention at the last election. The then Minister for Education very unexpectedly arrived at the school only a few days before the election and announced that the Liberal government — finally, after seven years — understood that there was an issue about upgrading the school and that it would spend \$600 000 to upgrade its facilities. We indicated at the time that we would match the funding to provide adequately for the school.

The previous government failed and the administration changed, and it came to pass that the former government's commitment was examined. The strange thing was that no-one could find out how the former government had arrived at a sum of \$600 000. What did it represent? Where was the planning and the forward assessment? There was nothing. In fact it turned out that the former minister had simply said to his adviser on his way out there, 'What do you think we ought to give the school?'. They worked it out on the back of an envelope and said, 'We think they need about 10 classrooms at \$60 000 a pop. What does that add up to? Is it \$600 000? Okay, let's give them \$600 000'.

That was the way of the previous government — no observance of planning procedures, no prioritisation and making policies and promises on the run. The Bracks government did the hard yards and worked with the school community, the architects and the designers. It came to the conclusion that a lot more than \$600 000 was needed. It is now granting \$1.7 million for the project, which is a terrific achievement.

The granting of funds for Laburnum Primary School means that work is under way on stage 2. Work is also continuing at Mitcham Primary School, which was left in a disgraceful condition in the lead-up to the Mitcham by-election. We have spent something like \$1.25 million there.

Antonio Park Primary School is an excellent primary school, with Hans Keufer as the principal. The school has been subjected to a master plan and work there will

be considered next year. The Blackburn Lake Primary School has been rebuilt at a cost of \$1.1 million and will reopen tomorrow. That is a terrific asset for the Mitcham electorate.

The government has also allocated some \$535 000 to improve public transport, including bus services along Blackburn Road, which is a significant, popular and heavily utilised corridor in the eastern suburbs. That will improve services in the area. I noticed the comments of the Honourable Bruce Atkinson, a Liberal Party member representing Koonung Province in another place. He has a rather strange point of view when it comes to public transport. He has canned the tram extension to Knox, and he is entitled to his opinion, but he actually wants to put a tramline on Blackburn Road.

Nobody has ever thought of putting a line there because that would present a number of problems. The most obvious — although it does not appear to have occurred to the honourable member in another place — is that Blackburn Road is not quite wide enough to hold a tramline unless you are prepared to send in the bulldozers and knock over houses along that road. That is a daft idea, but Mr Atkinson is unique in his suggestions. I am not sure whether that idea represents opposition policy. The government is happy about improving the bus services that are popular and serve the electorate well.

The budget also allocates \$1.5 million in funding to the Box Hill Hospital for equipment purchases. That will further enable it to continue the excellent service it provides to the people in the eastern suburbs.

**Mr Doyle** interjected.

**Mr ROBINSON** — I am sorry that the shadow health minister seems to object to Box Hill Hospital — an excellent hospital — receiving its share of funds. It was so close to being technically bankrupt under the former government that I find it extraordinary that the honourable member for Malvern cannot see the merit in giving that vital and valuable hospital the resources it needs to get on and do its job. I am pleased that the government has allocated extra funds for the purchase of vital equipment to the hospital that services my electorate.

Recently the government allocated a capital grant of \$1 million to the MS Society of Victoria, which has its Victorian office adjacent to my electorate office in Blackburn. Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a disease that affects primarily women from Anglo-Saxon backgrounds. It is a little-known fact that a high

percentage of sufferers of MS live in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The society has chosen to locate its new state office in Blackburn. The government has allocated a capital grant of \$1 million to be used in conjunction with private sector donations to develop a nerve centre.

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Mr ROBINSON** — I do not have the time during this contribution to talk at length about the reasons, but I am sure the honourable member for Glen Waverley and I can discuss this at an appropriate time.

The budget also provides allocations to Heatherdale and Taralye kindergartens. That money for capital works will be greatly appreciated. The Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation has received some \$30 000 which will be put to great use. The budget also commits to funding for the Scoresby freeway, which will benefit the eastern suburbs.

I draw the house's attention to the \$1 million funding for the Melbourne showgrounds, which contrasts with the amount — less than half that — which was offered, again at very short notice, by the former government some years ago. That will provide a sound basis for that vital, valuable, well-loved and well-utilised facility.

**Mrs Peulich** interjected.

**Mr ROBINSON** — The honourable member for Bentleigh seems to have a problem with somebody in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne drawing attention to the good works at the showgrounds. Maybe she and other opposition members do not like people going to the showgrounds and enjoying themselves. The funding allocation for the showgrounds will be greatly appreciated by the many hundreds of families in the Mitcham electorate who religiously enjoy that cultural treat every year, as I did as a child. It is terrific!

In the brief time available I draw attention to the government's decision to allocate some \$77 million for the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline.

**Mr Doyle** interjected.

**Mr ROBINSON** — I was with the honourable member for Wimmera last Friday night in Horsham. I assure the honourable member for Malvern that in my succinct speech there I referred to the government's allocation of \$77 million for the pipeline and the crowd erupted spontaneously into applause. I am glad they did so at some time in my speech.

**Mr Doyle** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Loney)** — Order! The honourable member for Malvern!

**Mr ROBINSON** — I did tell a good story at the start of my speech, but modesty prevents me from doing so again. The honourable member for Mildura was spot on with his assessment that that program will make a huge difference to people in the north-west of Victoria. This is a terrific budget.

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Mr ROBINSON** — I am winding up and I appreciate the ongoing advice. I do not know what we will do in the next Parliament when the honourable member for Glen Waverley has retired.

**Mr Doyle** — You won't need to worry about that.

**Mr ROBINSON** — Yes, I will. I am not sure who will replace him as the Opposition Whip.

**Mr Doyle** interjected.

**Mr ROBINSON** — I am glad they are getting around to preselecting somebody. They had to put a few advertisements in the newspaper to get somebody.

It is a great budget. It delivers the fruits of the government's sound financial management to people across the state. I hope there are many more budgets like this to follow.

**Mr DELAHUNTY (Wimmera)** — Here we have another state budget which follows the tradition of Labor Party budgets — big spending with high taxes. Already major concerns have been expressed in my electorate about the large snowball coming down the mountain that is called high recurrent funding. Who will pay the recurrent funding in the future?

This year's Victorian budget expenditure is expected to increase by 31 per cent or \$5.89 million on the figure for 1998–99. In the public sector wages are expected to increase by 30 per cent or \$2.1 billion over the same period. The revenue in stamp duty on family transactions — on young people who are trying to buy houses and whose great aim in life is to own their own homes — is up by 84 per cent. The government has hit those people between the eyes with stamp duty.

Land tax has increased. Last week I had to issue a press release because the State Revenue Office is sending letters to farmers claiming they have to pay land tax on land that is not taxable. When I rang the office I was told a computer glitch had caused the problem or that it could be a mistake and that, 'We think the land may

have changed'. The reality is that the government is trying to crib back a few more dollars. Insurance taxes are up by 49 per cent, most of which is from the public liability insurance premiums that have skyrocketed, particularly in country Victoria. Payroll tax is up by 27 per cent.

I heard the honourable member for Mildura make his contribution to the debate earlier. I was absolutely flabbergasted that he would have the gall to talk here about the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline. The honourable member has been in this place for six years, but according to my research he has not once mentioned the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline in the house — except for a month ago, when he asked a dorothy dix question of the Treasurer about the pipeline. You would have thought he had invented the bloody thing!

I highlight the fact that he has not mentioned the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline. He does not even understand the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline. The history of it is that we have the northern Mallee pipeline, which is predominantly in the electorate of the honourable member for Mildura. Since 1992, when the first stage of that project was funded —

**Mr Pandazopoulos** interjected.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — He has been doing a lot of work about it! At least he has mentioned it more than once, that is for sure. The Minister for Gaming is over there. He was the minister for major projects, but he got flicked from that — and I will give him a citation for this one, too!

Since 1992 eight stages of the northern Mallee pipeline have been funded primarily by the state and federal coalition governments. The last stage of the northern Mallee pipeline was a process where the federal government was asked to put up \$4 million to fund the last stage. Guess what? It is in the federal budget papers. Is it mentioned in the state budget? Not one dollar is mentioned there. Perhaps the government has made a mistake; I will give it the benefit of the doubt. The government talks about not mentioning things in the state budget, but I can tell you that is one thing that is not there.

The government did not mention paying the \$3.5 million for the detailed design work. It has promoted the fact that it has put together \$77 million for the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline. That is a fantastic announcement and the National Party does not deny that, but let's get the process right! Page 89 of budget paper 2 says:

The Victorian government's contribution of \$77 million —

which has only come about because of a feasibility study; it is not detailed design work and we do not know the exact cost yet —

TEI over 10 years is subject to commonwealth matching funding —

and that is understandable, but also, and I highlight this —

and confirmation of the package's feasibility through detailed design.

That work has not even been done! The state government did not even put any money in the budget to do it. I think it has enough money to be able to afford it because, as we know, in the lead-up to the budget the federal government was asked by the community to put up only \$3.5 million for the detailed design work, and guess what? It has got it!

We know the detailed design work will take probably 18 months to 2 years of very hard work because a lot of issues have to be resolved. There are issues of water used for recreation and the cost of the water; these things need to be resolved. The honourable member for Mildura has one thing right — that is, some farmers are concerned about the cost. All these things need to be resolved in the next 18 months but, importantly, the money then needs to be allocated.

I was interested to hear the honourable member for Footscray talking about this issue, but he did not get it right. He called it the Mallee–Wimmera pipeline, but we will let him off! A lot of Labor members in this place came to me to talk about the pipeline. They did not know it is a project that converts open channels into a water pipeline; they talked about natural gas! The reality is that we would not mind some more natural gas, but that was done by the previous government and not by this government.

Importantly, I want to thank the previous government for putting up \$300 000 for the feasibility study. We have a fantastic steering committee up there that has lobbied very hard. Its members have been to the federal and state parliaments. Led by Stewart Petering, the steering committee has done a fantastic job in highlighting the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline. As their representative, I am pleased to be able to put it on the agenda here in Parliament House.

As we all know, under the Water Act, water is a state responsibility. It is a pity that the Minister for Environment and Conservation does not get off her hands and start getting the process right. If we want to get it up for the next federal budget, the budget after that or whenever it needs to be paid for, we need to get

the process right. Victoria needs to put through the proper application papers.

I highlighted the \$4 million for the last stage of the northern Mallee pipeline not being in the budget papers. Page 205 of budget paper 2 mentions the \$77 million over a 10-year period. We thank the government for that, there is no denying it, but let's get the process right, cut out the spin and get on with the job. Page 205 does not mention anything about the northern Mallee pipeline, which is the northern section of the Wimmera-Mallee pipeline, nor does it mention the detailed design work.

The benefits of having the National Party in the previous government are starting to be realised because not much else has happened in the two and a half years of this government. The previous government got natural gas up through Ararat and Stawell to Horsham, all because of the good work of the cabinet member, the Honourable Bill McGrath, the former member for Wimmera. We got standardisation of the rail lines. We know that in a very, very difficult time —

**Mr Maxfield** interjected.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — Don't you start yakking over there! You have done nothing! The reality is —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Loney)** — Order! The honourable member for Narracan should control himself, and the honourable member for Wimmera should not respond.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — The honourable member for Narracan prattles on.

Not one nail, not one spike and not one sleeper has been laid by this government as part of rail standardisation. In a very difficult financial climate the previous government found \$22 million to standardise the spur lines from Murtoa to Hopetoun, Dimboola to Yaapeet, and Ararat to Portland. It did so because the federal government had put a standardised line through from Adelaide to Melbourne, which disfranchised these lines and caused major concern for the councils. Large grain trucks and mineral sands trucks would have been on the line. I congratulate the previous state government for doing that, but this government has not put in one spike.

Turning to the redevelopment of schools, I was on school councils when the previous Labor government was in power. We could hardly get any paint from Labor governments to paint the schools. I see the Minister for Education and Training is over there, and it

is great that she is listening, because we have seen a major redevelopment of all the schools.

**Mr Doyle** interjected.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — I heard the honourable member for Malvern say he had three schools. I hope he has a lot more than three schools in his electorate. I have got nearly 50!

**Mrs Peulich** — His are all private!

**Mr Doyle** — I have not got a secondary college.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — I have a fair few. The reality is we have seen major redevelopments of those schools over a period of time. We have also seen a major redevelopment of hospitals, and I am pleased to see this government has continued that process.

Under the previous government we saw small-town police stations and residences being developed. It was interesting that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services was up in Rainbow last week promoting the fact that he was opening the police station. Guess what? It has been going for over 12 months, because it was a project commissioned by the previous government. Nevertheless the minister had the glory for officially opening it.

**Mr Ingram** — That's politics.

**Mr DELAHUNTY** — That's politics, says the honourable member for Gippsland East, but the reality is that you would think the government would be a little bit truthful about the matter.

One of the big wins in country Victoria, particularly in the Wimmera, was the \$1.2 billion put aside for waste water facilities. Unfortunately it has taken nearly two and a half years for the projects to continue at Minyip and Hopetoun. I know the honourable member for Mildura was screaming and yelling that it was not going to go ahead, but with the change of government he has changed his tune and now he supports it. In this budget, I will genuinely thank the government for its long-term commitment for the pipeline, but let's get the process right.

I was very worried that the former Minister for Education might have let us down in relation to schools, because we were lobbying for Edenhope, Murtoa and Nhill. In the budget papers the Nhill college was not even mentioned, but I am informed by the Minister for Education and Training that Nhill will be funded, and we thank her for that.

I turn now to hospitals. There have been continuing upgrades at places such as Horsham, and the second stage of the Stawell hospital has been funded, but we are disappointed that the Nhill hospital service in the West Wimmera Health Service did not get up. I pray and hope it will get up next year.

I turn to some of my concerns. I look after health, and there are major concerns in country hospitals about better health services. The enterprise bargaining agreement agreed to by the government has not been fully funded. A lot of hospitals around country Victoria are going into deficit. They are worried about where they will be at the end of the financial year. They are worried that they are going to be asked by this government, as they were by the previous Labor government, to use capital reserves. That is wrong, wrong, wrong. It is important if the government is going to agree to these agreements that it fund them.

I turn to the youth issue. As other honourable members have mentioned, money was pulled off the Victorian Young Farmers organisation, and I hope it is given some funding. It is interesting that \$300 000 has been allocated for Freeza funding. It is a worthwhile project in country areas, and it is great to see the government's courage and wisdom in again funding the program. The Wimmera is having difficulty keeping its youth and attracting trained staff. The vocational education training program is great, and we must work to make sure we can develop that further.

We want positive discrimination for businesses in country areas on payroll tax and stamp duty to help employment and to help keep our young people in the area, because at the end of the day they want jobs and social services around them. In the Wimmera area of western Victoria we want to work with the government and the private sector to develop or capitalise on agricultural diversification and to develop value-adding opportunities. We must also continue to improve community services and facilities. It is disappointing that the Horsham Leisure Centre — a project which has been on the board for about seven years — did not get up in this budget, and I know the council is very keen to talk to the government about why not. I also ask that the Johnny Muller Interpretative Centre and the Kelpie Interpretative Centre at Casterton be thought about for next year's budget.

Preschools have been a major concern to most members of this Parliament. I know there is more money for them in the state budget, and I know the government has commissioned the Kirby report, which seems to be taking forever to be implemented, but importantly we need the finer detail. Looking through

the 800 pages of the state budget — it is like a big press release — you cannot get any detail. I implore the minister responsible for preschools to give the detail to preschools in country areas that are finding it very difficult to operate.

Western Victoria, in particular the Wimmera, is the best kept investment secret in the state. We have a great lifestyle, clean air and improving water facilities. We have top racing at Edenhope, Murtoa, Horsham and other places. We also have top tourist attractions such as the Grampians, Mount Arapiles and the Little Desert. I thank the house for the opportunity to put the Wimmera point of view on the budget.

**Mr LANGUILLER** (Sunshine) — It gives me great pleasure to speak on the budget because this is a very good-news budget for the western suburbs. It has given us enormous pleasure to announce it in the region, and it has been covered very positively by the local press. It makes me and my parliamentary colleagues in the western suburbs proud to be members of a government which has understood very clearly the importance of a good budget and good management.

In the last two days we have heard many complaints from many members of the opposition. As someone not expert in economics and financial management I sat here and tried to work out why the opposition whinges and nags and complains so much every time we talk about taxation issues or financial management. One of the points that need to be made is that opposition members now understand that in fact Labor has managed to strike the right balance. This government strikes the right balance between social justice and access and equity, and good, fundamental financial and budgetary management of the state. It also upsets the opposition that we are responsible and committed to the whole of Victoria.

Unlike the previous government, which governed primarily and fundamentally for inner Melbourne, where most of the jobs were created, and abandoned the regions, this government is fair dinkum about its commitment to the regions — and I am very proud to say so. Again I say that the people of the western suburbs understand that we have to share the cake across the state. The good people in the western suburbs understand that we have to be responsible for the whole of the state and that the regions had been abandoned. One of the things that upsets the opposition, and one of the reasons it has been complaining for the last couple of days about taxation and financial methods, is that this government has now delivered again — as it did when previously in government — to the western suburbs.

Let me give you some examples of what has happened in my electorate of Sunshine. Deer Park West Primary School has received \$1.13 million to support arts and crafts, training, classrooms, information technology and a range of other associated activities to assist in lifting the game in education in the western suburbs after they were abandoned by the previous government. Sunshine Heights school received \$854 000. The Sunshine Hospital has received \$384 000 for medical equipment and patient chairs. What extraordinarily good news for the western suburbs. We are appreciative because we did not receive this level of support from the previous government. The Albion and North Sunshine kindergartens are helped with building and ground safety works and the Brimbank city library is important as well.

In the adjacent electorate of Footscray, which overlaps with my region, we are serviced and represented well by the honourable member for Footscray. The Footscray police station has been allocated \$12 million. This is the government being fair dinkum about community safety. We said before the election that we would commit ourselves to education across the state, and we are doing it. We said that we would commit ourselves to health, and we are doing it. We said that community safety would be one of the top priorities, and we are doing it. We are doing it because we made that promise. We have acted upon each and every one of our promises. We promised nothing we could not deliver. We have delivered everything we promised before the last election, and we are coming through ahead of agenda in a number of areas.

I am very happy this budget struck the right balance between economic imperatives and social and environmental concerns generally, as it did in the western suburbs. It delivers an operating surplus notwithstanding global and economic problems. We need to continue to emphasise some of the fundamental projects the budget has delivered. This is a very good Treasurer who delivered very good news to the western suburbs.

Some of the projects worth mentioning include \$101 million for the Melbourne showgrounds redevelopment. I cannot tell you how happy people in the western suburbs are about that, as indeed are those in the northern and eastern suburbs. The honourable member for Mitcham mentioned how important it is to revamp and bring back the showgrounds as we know them and have known them for so many years.

What an extraordinary place for families, children and grandparents to visit, and what an extraordinary project to have in Victoria. It is one that will make us all proud,

except some opposition members, who were complaining and criticising the honourable member for Mitcham for talking up, as he should, the commitment to the Royal Melbourne Show.

The government has allocated \$100 million towards a synchrotron in the Monash Medical Centre. What a fantastic and absolutely visionary project. It is the way to go for Australia and for Victoria. It will put us on the map in so many areas. The government has also allocated \$77 million for the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline, \$61 million for the Yarra precinct arts integration project, \$40 million for the residential aged care strategy and rural health redevelopment and upgrade program, \$32 million for the Royal Melbourne Hospital redevelopment — and the list goes on and on. I am happy because the Labor government has managed to strike the right balance. It delivers to and grows the whole of Victoria in a financially responsible manner, recognising economic imperatives.

What a budget: it has delivered tax cuts to the business community. This government has done what the previous government never had the courage to do, because this government is genuinely pro-business. It recognises that we can have a fantastic relationship with both the business community and the trade union movement — and I am proud of both. I come from the trade union movement and I reckon that a good trade union recognises how important it is to work in a good, healthy partnership with the business sector.

The opposition has been upset, particularly so in the last two or three days, every time the government has talked about taxes, particularly its tax cuts to the business sector. The government has cut taxes because it brings about economic growth, it brings about investment and it brings about and creates employment. It has created massive employment in the western suburbs. Opposition members are upset because many of those people in the business sector who they thought were barracking for them at the last election are now coming to us.

Many of them are joining Progressive Business. We have fantastic breakfasts and lunches with them. They say to us privately, 'No government has ever delivered to us in the manner in which you have'. Some of them are surprised and say, 'We didn't think you would do so', and we say to them, 'We promised we would. We said we would strike the right balance and manage the relationships between the business sector and the trade union movement'. The Bracks government is doing it marvellously well. It is delivering economic stability, it is ensuring trade union relationships are good and it is delivering growth in all those areas.

I am very proud of this budget. It has come through for the western suburbs, it has given us opportunities and it has gone to those areas that we in the Sunshine electorate particularly think are important — education and health. Good families there recognise that in order to give their children a future the government needs to give them good primary schools, reduce class sizes, improve the quality of teachers and provide teachers with employment stability, which they did not have in the past. The government has given them certainty for the future, pay rises they are entitled to, recognising the good job they do, and a career path. We are proud of doing so because we think investment in education is the best we can do for the whole of the state.

Let me make a final remark to show the stark contrast between this government and the previous government. I will talk about information technology (IT). The previous government allocated funding under an extraordinary formula called '1 by 3' — in other words, for every \$1 raised by schools, the government gave them \$3. Let me give an example and talk about access and equity and social justice. Incidentally, every time I talk about this opposition members dislike it. They move their heads and eyes around and feel very uncomfortable, because they know I am telling the truth.

Information technology is the future. Under the previous government schools had to raise \$1 for IT for the government to give \$3. A school in Sunshine North raised about \$18 000, but a school in Toorak raised about \$400 000. Multiply both those figures by three. Imagine the inequity that arises out of that!

I now conclude my very brief remarks. I am grateful for the opportunity to make my contribution. I am proud of this budget, I am proud of the Treasurer, I am proud of the Bracks government, and I am very confident that progressively we are turning things around.

**Mrs PEULICH** (Bentleigh) — I join other honourable members in commenting on the effects of the third Bracks government budget. My remarks relate particularly to my electorate of Bentleigh, which covers the suburbs of East Bentleigh, Bentleigh, McKinnon, parts of Ormond and parts of Moorabbin.

It is always interesting to follow the honourable member for Sunshine. As a person who was born in a communist regime I always have a bit of a problem when a former member of a communist party — in this case I understand the Uruguayan communist party — says the right balance has been struck between spending and taxation. His notion of a balance is raising additional revenue of \$1.7 billion a year and returning

about \$374 000 in tax concessions. That is his idea of striking the right balance. The creativity underpinning this budget is in finding extra ways of digging deep into people's pockets, especially the people who are not in the heartland of the Labor Party, which includes the constituents of the Bentleigh electorate.

Before focusing on my electorate I will mention in passing the additional revenue to be collected through police fines, higher municipal rates — the Minister for Local Government is sitting on his hands and not doing anything about the rampant cranking up of rates by many municipalities, including my own — the land tax grab, and I will speak about that a little later because it has a profound impact on many of my constituents, insurance taxes, motor vehicle taxes, the cranking up of stamp duty on land transfers and conveyancing, Workcover premiums and the effect they are having on every organisation in the community, business payroll tax and gambling taxes. That is the notion the honourable member for Sunshine was espousing — finding more ways of squeezing money out of ordinary people in order to fund often invisible recurrent expenditure. As the honourable member for Malvern said, this government is very high on rhetoric, very low on reality and even lower on results.

All this invisible spending is hardly ever linked to any sort of performance indicators — for example, there is no doubt that the slogan 'Labor, turning things around' is very true. I will show the house how Labor is turning things around in Bentleigh. Firstly I will talk about how Labor is turning things around in Bentleigh in the area of health. I make particular mention, as I have on many occasions, of the absolutely appalling situation facing people in my electorate and surrounding electorates with accessing health services. I refer particularly to the Monash Medical Centre in the Southern Health Care Network following the Sandringham campus being picked out of the hospital, rearranged and handed over to the Alfred hospital so it can use it to pump through its elective surgery, when the most aged parts of the surrounding electorates have to wait to access elective surgery for increasing lengths of time.

Recently the Minister for Health visited the Moorabbin campus of the Monash Medical Centre to make some small announcement, which of course is always welcome. He and the paid Labor candidate for Bentleigh, who is on the Premier's staff and who campaigns on a taxpayer-funded salary, came in to visit a lady in a ward who had just had surgery for breast cancer. They did not even introduce themselves to her and were very quick to slink into a photo and slink out. But the very next day all elective surgery for the months of March and April for the Monash Medical

Centre was cancelled. What an appalling thing to do, especially given that the Bentleigh electorate has the third highest number of over 65s in the state and many of my constituents are abundantly represented on those waiting lists.

Let me just give the house some indicators comparing the performance levels at Monash Medical Centre under the former Kennett government in 1999 and now under Labor and it will see how the government is turning things around. The number of patients in the emergency department of the Monash Medical Centre waiting longer than 12 hours has increased by 168 per cent since Labor came to office. The number of people on the waiting list for semi-urgent elective surgery has increased by 206 per cent between 1999 and now. The number of people on the waiting list for longer than the ideal period for semi-urgent cases increased by an astronomical 405 per cent. This is turning things around, but I am not sure whether the people of Bentleigh would be impressed by Labor's performance in the key areas which most dramatically affect their lives — health, law and order, taxes and charges and to a significant extent education — and which impact on ordinary people and families as well as business.

I refer now to the crime level. Honourable members have heard Labor talk a lot about putting an extra 800 police on the payroll, but what has happened to the crime statistics? In the Bentleigh electorate there has been a 23 per cent increase in the crime level in Ormond, McKinnon and Bentleigh, and a 16 per cent increase in East Bentleigh. The government is spending more money but it is invisible and it is not delivering or achieving results. It is mismanaging key portfolios, and the outcomes for the community are far worse than they were in 1999.

Today we heard the Minister for Police and Emergency Services claim credit for a 2 per cent decrease in crime. Of course you would expect that, given the introduction of the first caution program for marijuana offenders, and in fact that is the only category that has been artificially reduced. What happens is that when police come across someone who has been apprehended or caught for using marijuana on the first occasion they turn a blind eye. It is never recorded; it is never written down. What happens when they pick that person up the second time? Because it is never recorded it is always the first offence, so of course you will show a decreased level of crime in the area of drugs because the policy is that you turn a blind eye. It is too big to fight and too big to tackle, and in fact it is too hard to do the right thing by our young people and refer them to the services they need to get off drugs.

Symptomatic of the situation in education was the last education gala dinner which I had the privilege of attending — which dinners I have attended for many years. The last one was a very different dinner to the ones I had been to previously. Even the preceding Minister for Education, the honourable member for Northcote, had the good grace to actually acknowledge the opposition but this vindictive successor is so ego driven that she had to relegate the opposition to the corner. She had to be vindictive enough not to acknowledge the opposition and had to bore the hell out of everyone there for 35 minutes while she stumbled over a speech which she did not understand and which offered no vision for education. It was very big on detail, but of course most of the programs were started under the former government. Much of the information was programmatic. There was little about systemic issues or what the government would do to respond, and little was said about the fact that most of the systemic reforms the former government introduced are still in place and will stay there.

The most interesting thing about the gala dinner was the advertisement on the following day. It was supposed to be a dinner to celebrate the achievements in education of stakeholders, parents, councillors and teachers, but what did we see? We saw little photos of the award winners and a very big photo — triple the size — of the minister. This minister comes to a school visit with an entourage of 10 — wasting money — to make an announcement of \$2.2 million. That is the only money so far to be received, including a rollover of \$1.1 million from the Kennett government that Labor had reneged on. She arrived with her entourage of 10, which I invite her to rationalise and redirect to schools. What happened was that this minister's ego is so out of control and her desperate need for PR is so rampant that — —

**Mr Holding** — Any school in your electorate — mention just one!

**Mrs PEULICH** — I would like to mention the schools that do need funding. Bayside Special School desperately needs funding. Bentleigh Secondary College also desperately needs funding. McKinnon Primary School is desperately waiting for funding. There are PRMS — physical resources management system — funds in the budget. The minister needs to release those funds. The schools need to have certainty. They need to have information about what funds they can access. She should make the announcements now about the PRMS funds that are available to those local schools. School communities deserve to be treated with greater respect.

I could speak for a very long time about the mismanagement of key portfolios by Labor which affects the seat of Bentleigh. I wish I could say more positive things about the benefits of the budget. There are two things in the budget: \$2.2 million for McKinnon Secondary College and a new 24-hour ambulance station between Bentleigh and Brighton. I welcome those. The government did list funding to the Cheltenham Secondary College in my electorate, but I suspect that is because the Labor candidate for Bentleigh, who is a resident of Carlton, did not really understand where the boundaries were.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mrs PEULICH** — He does have a job. I mentioned that he is on the Premier's payroll — and what's more, he uses his Department of Premier and Cabinet mobile telephone number as a contact point for constituents. That is an interesting way of administering taxpayers' funds!

It is a very disappointing budget. It is a lot of money wasted. Certainly ordinary members of the community will not benefit. There have been higher taxes and charges at every opportunity. As I said, I would like to speak at greater length, but let me say what wasted opportunities they are, and that Bentleigh is most definitely losing under Labor.

**Mr MAXFIELD** (Narracan) — It is with tremendous pleasure that I rise this evening to speak on what is without a doubt one of the best budgets this state has seen for many years. It is certainly a budget that delivers on the key promises that Labor made prior to coming into power. It is appropriate that the Minister for Education and Training is here this evening so that she can hear how well appreciated the budget is in Narracan. Certainly the focus on education can only be described as outstanding. It grows on the tremendous support of previous Bracks budgets.

I shall touch on a couple of significant announcements in the budget. Trafalgar high school received \$2.8 million for a major upgrade. I congratulate the school on its lobbying and its hard-fought campaign to be looked after. Trafalgar also has a special accelerated learning group, and it will be able to access the improved benefits of the government's bussing policy. Those who wish to come to the accelerated learning class will now be able to access the improved bus services that will be provided as part of the \$31 million allocation for bus services.

Warragul Primary School is a fine school. An additional three classrooms to be built at a cost of

\$474 000 will certainly be appreciated. Over the next couple of weeks another portable classroom will be arriving to assist in the short term, because it is a growing school that needs extra rooms. The Drouin Secondary College is the school I went to with my brothers and sisters, and my mother taught there for 22 years. It will receive some \$480 000, on top of the \$1.5 million it received last year. So it is certainly a significant contribution.

Then we go to the Warragul Secondary College, which received almost \$4 million, not in this budget but in the last two budgets, and it is really pleasing to see that development coming along in leaps and bounds. Then we touch on the recent announcement of \$1 million for refurbishments at Warragul TAFE, on top of over \$4 million for Newborough TAFE. That development at Yallourn campus is currently well under way. I have not even touched on the extra \$200 00 for kindergartens in Baw Baw shire and the City of Latrobe. Then we come to the increase in the number of teachers and nurses that have also been allocated for in this budget. So without a doubt there is very strong support for education.

We also touch on issues like Landcare and the fox bounty. As somebody who just missed hitting a fox running across the road the other day, I think there are too many foxes around. I have received very positive comments on the fact that the government is going to deal with the fox problem, and I welcome its initiatives in that area. Then there is the increased support for Landcare, an issue which is very dear to my heart and must certainly be highlighted.

We then come to roads. One of the disappointing things that occurred last year was the failure of the Labor Party to be elected federally. As a result it is quite disappointing — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr MAXFIELD** — Mr Acting Speaker, I wish to speak to the Chair and will not respond to the mad ramblings from across the chamber.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Phillips)** — Order! The Chair appreciates that.

**Mr MAXFIELD** — But I express my disappointment. The Labor Party promised at the last federal election that it would immediately implement the construction of the Pakenham bypass. Under a Labor government it was scheduled to be finished by 2006. Unfortunately, when the Howard government was re-elected its commitment was not to finish the Pakenham bypass until two years later, in 2008. It is

disappointing that in the recent federal budget for the next financial year, 2002–03, not 1 cent was allocated to the Pakenham bypass. It is disappointing —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr McArthur** — On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, in relation to relevance, the honourable member is misleading the house. The federal government does fund the Pakenham bypass. It is the state government that does not put any money into it. You haven't put in a dollar — not a dollar!

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Phillips)** — Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr MAXFIELD** — As I was saying, the federal government did not allocate 1 cent in the 2002–03 budget to the Pakenham bypass. It is certainly disappointing that an honourable member for Gippsland Province, the Honourable Philip Davis, very sadly lied and totally and utterly misrepresented me in the other house this afternoon!

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr MAXFIELD** — He said that comments I made were incorrect. I put out a press release that accurately stated that in the 2002–03 budget there were no funds at all allocated for the Pakenham bypass.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr MAXFIELD** — He has quite clearly distorted my position in a desperate attempt to explain why he totally and utterly has egg on his face. What he said quite clearly was that the federal government was funding the Pakenham bypass. He would not admit that there was no money in the budget for it.

But knowing that there was a line item in future budgets to show that there may be some funding, he decided to distort the position so it may appear that there was funding when there was not. Certainly it is extremely disappointing that the member opposite misrepresented my position. He owes me an apology.

**Sitting suspended 6.31 p.m. until 8.05 p.m.**

**Mr MAXFIELD** — As I was saying, this is without a doubt the best budget that has been seen for many years across this country. I must congratulate the Treasurer on his more recent announcements about \$1.83 million for projects in my electorate, which will stimulate growth and confidence in the timber communities located in the West Gippsland region.

I will highlight some of the fantastic commitments made earlier this week: \$200 000 to improve the Neerim South townscape; \$500 000 to redevelop the Drouin business centre; \$30 000 for the Rotary arboretum project, stage 2; \$80 000 to enhance the Langwarrin town centre; \$20 000 to improve the Willow Grove streetscape; \$330 000 to redevelop the Erica business centre; \$500 000 to beautify Trafalgar, stage 2, having already funded stage 1; and \$170 000 for the new Noojee beautification project, which flows on from the \$1.7 million already spent on the bridge at Noojee and the \$300 000 we are spending around the Toorong Falls. That certainly shows a strong commitment to our timber communities.

This is what the Bracks government is all about; it is supporting regions and supporting our communities. Certainly we are in a process of restructuring the timber industry, but it is fantastic to see this commitment to our timber communities. I congratulate the Bracks government, which is driving a stake through the heart of the former Liberal government, because it is proving that it can deliver where the former government could not. We are delivering for rural Victoria, for Narracan, for health and education.

**Mr SPRY (Bellarine)** — I think I have just about heard the lot tonight, particularly that last contribution! I must commend earlier opposition speakers on their contributions on this budget, especially the shadow Treasurer, who literally dissected the budget stitch by stitch. In doing so he exposed a very shallow document which was big on rhetoric, as you would expect, but lamentably short on measurable, actual benefits to the community, particularly in my electorate of Bellarine — all talk, no substance.

This budget features a permanent blow-out in recurrent costs, again exactly as we would expect under Labor, especially in salaries and labour on-costs, with no demonstrable improvement in delivery of critical services, particularly in the fields of health, education and law and order, as has been pointed out by previous speakers on this side of the house.

In short, this can only be described as a pedestrian budget lacking in vision for the long term. In many ways — I am sure people in Victoria recognise this — it could be described as a budget of lost opportunities. If I recall correctly it was Michael Gawenda in the *Age*, and he is an objective sort of an editor, who gave this budget 6½ out of 10, and that is about all it deserves. It is Labor's budget, and he gave it 6½ out of 10, and he was probably flattering the government when he said that.

Contrast that with Labor's inheritance when it came into office in 1999. I think it had a surplus of \$1.2 billion. When we came into office in 1992 — the Treasurer would be well aware of this — what were we left with? There was a hard-core cash debt of something like \$32 billion, and the same amount in unfunded liabilities. The way this state was left in 1992 was an absolute disgrace.

It is a familiar pattern of a boom-then-bust mentality under Labor, compared with a mend-and-restore mentality under every responsible Liberal government that has ever served in this state. Sadly the boom-then-bust mentality continues to this day. Record revenues are boosted by iniquitous increases in stamp duty, not only in the real estate sector, where it is nothing less than a slug and is regarded as such by most people, but worse still, on the GST component of other taxes — a tax on a tax, no less — especially in terms of insurance premiums.

Victorians are aware that this big-noting, big-spending, big-taxing Labor government has its hand in their pockets. At the same time the Treasurer and government members spend their time during this debate gloating over their spending triumphs. Honourable members just heard the honourable member for Narracan spouting a litany of spending extravagances in his electorate. Not too much of that is seen in Bellarine. We have not seen one new initiative in spending in Bellarine. All this government is doing is simply trying to catch up on its promises, and it is a long way behind. It is not even getting near it, and the people of Bellarine recognise that.

My experience tells me that when someone is skiting about big-spending initiatives they are usually talking about spending someone else's money, and the people of Victoria recognise that. What are we seeing in Bellarine for all this grand largesse? What have we seen in the past two and a half years? Apart from the completion of the Kennett government initiatives such as the Newcomb Community Health Centre —

**Mr Cameron** — Are you reading this?

**Mr SPRY** — I am referring to extensive notes. There is also the performing arts centre at the Drysdale campus of the Bellarine Secondary College. Most people in Bellarine are well aware that when the Labor member for Geelong Province in another place skites about her achievements she completely neglects the achievements of the Kennett government representatives in that area for the past four and a half years. When claiming the Potato Shed, or the performing arts centre in Bellarine, as a Labor initiative

she insults the people who worked for four and a half years to get that project off the ground.

There have been no real improvements in health. Waiting lists for elective surgery at the Geelong hospital are simply extending, getting longer and longer, and we are getting complaints by the week from people in the Geelong region about the length of time they have to wait.

There have been no real improvements in the classroom. The promised maximum class sizes are still nowhere near being met. There have been no measurable improvements at all in learning outcomes.

There has been no real improvement in crime statistics on the peninsula. In fact there has been an increase in some areas, which affects everyday life. I could go into that in some detail but I will not.

When you look around you see that nothing much at all is happening under Labor. New major projects are non-existent; Federation Square is a shambles, especially its financing arrangements. In fact, the responsible minister was sacked and frankly his replacement is no better. Public transport is in crisis; road and rail infrastructure simply lurches along.

One thing is in pretty good shape, and that is the government's spin doctor department. The public relations propaganda machine under Labor keeps churning away. I refer to the latest document that was delivered to letterboxes on Wednesday featuring Stevie the Wonder Boy. I do not know if everyone else in Victoria received this pamphlet, but it is absolute drivel coming from the Premier. Stevie the Wonder Boy just does not measure up.

I return to Bellarine, which is one of the fastest growing and certainly one of the most livable electorates in Victoria. I notice, Mr Acting Speaker, you nod your head, and I am pleased to remark on the fact that you have been wise enough to buy a property down in Bellarine, and good luck to you. However, Bellarine is characterised by distances between the major centres, such as Ocean Grove–Collendina, Drysdale–Clifton Springs, Queenscliff–Point Lonsdale, Leopold, and the outer Geelong suburbs of Newcomb, Whittington, St Albans and Moolap. What about facilities and services in those areas?

The momentum established by the former coalition government has simply died under Labor. Crowded public transport with people standing on buses in 100-kilometre-an-hour zones is commonplace; recreational and sporting facilities lag to the extent that local communities have to beg for attention. The

Geelong Province Labor representative in the upper house is apparently unaware of or uninterested in this lack of infrastructure, and she is obsessed instead with trying to fulfil a Labor promise to get gas to the residents of Portarlington, Indented Head and St Leonards within the first 12 months of a Labor government, a promise long since broken. I notice the Treasurer himself is hanging his head in shame. However, despite Labor's broken promise on this score, it will be good to see gas come to the northern Bellarine area.

In closing, I see no mention in the budget of several urgent projects which have been lagging in Bellarine for two and a half years under Labor. I see no skate park for Whittington, which is a much-needed facility down there. I see no sport and recreation facilities for the Ocean Grove–Collendina area, despite the fact that Labor's Elaine Carbines has had ample opportunity to do something in that direction. Instead the endorsed Liberal Party candidate for Bellarine, Frank Kellaway, has had to take up the reins, and he is meeting and measuring up to the expectations of the people in that electorate. He is doing a tremendous job, and that is recognised by the people in Bellarine.

I see nothing in the budget whatsoever for harbour and foreshore works for Clifton Springs, and no third groyne for the Point Lonsdale front beach. Where is Labor's acknowledgment of these needs on the Bellarine Peninsula? There is no solution for the Queenscliff High School site. Despite two and a half years to do something about it, Labor has done nothing. There is no solution for the traffic and pedestrian crossings in Leopold. There is little or no money for black spot sites around the Bellarine Peninsula. The daddy of them all is that there is nothing tangible to fix the impending traffic gridlock by way of bypass highway funding in central Geelong. Latrobe Terrace is about to become the biggest car park west of Melbourne on weekends and public holidays.

All in all, this is a chocolate and boiled lollies budget. It looks good at first glance, but it contains no substance, no long-term vision, nothing for the people of Victoria, nothing substantial for the people of the Geelong region, and nothing new for the people of the Bellarine electorate. I condemn the Bracks Labor government's 2002–03 budget as a lost opportunity; sadly an opportunity that has gone forever.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Seitz)** — Order! Before I call the honourable member for Gippsland East, I remind the house that when honourable members refer to honourable members in the other

place they are to use their proper titles, as applies in this house.

**Mr INGRAM** (Gippsland East) — I thank the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance for coming in especially to listen to my presentation this evening. It is a pleasure to speak on the 2002 budget. It is a good budget. It has some good initiatives that the people of my electorate are proud to fully support. It is interesting to note that some of the initiatives in this budget like the business tax package are as a result, I believe, of lobbying from people not only from my area but right across the state.

I have led delegations to see the Treasurer, and the initiatives they were talking about, the big business in my area — —

**Mr Perton** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Seitz)** — Order! The honourable member for Doncaster is out of his place and is disorderly.

**Mr INGRAM** — To achieve a better outcome for business the challenges to employment in my area need to be addressed.

My electorate suffered what must be called a scorched earth policy for a number of years, from both state and federal levels of government. It has a lot of key infrastructure that is well and truly behind what you would call a good standard, so it is not easy to get done everything that really needs to be done in only one or two budgets. There is still much that needs to be done. I am not saying there are not projects I would like to see in the budget. There are a number of things I would like to have seen but on balance the initiatives that are in the budget are incredibly important not only for my electorate but right across the state.

I visited the Boisdale Consolidated School the other day to talk to the teachers. That school is an amalgamation of a number of schools. They are combined on a beautiful site dragging together a number of dairy farming areas. Various portable buildings have been collected on the site. The school has now been granted \$1 million to make the facility more workable, and that is a very good thing. Speaking to the principal and to people on the school council I learnt that they are very pleased with the announcement.

Disabled kids in the far east of Gippsland — starting from Bairnsdale — currently do not have access to any school specially designed for them. Students from Lakes Entrance have been travelling for nearly an hour

and a half on a bus to get to a school in Sale, and the Sale facility is overstretched and overcommitted. The situation was causing some major problems. The building of a new school in Bairnsdale for disabled kids, the new East Gippsland special school, will give them a much better education and much better opportunities, so that is a good initiative.

Aged care is a problem right across the state. A lot of places throughout the state are problematical because they have old facilities. The grant for the Jacaranda House redevelopment in Bairnsdale is terribly important, along with the continuation of funding for the Omeo Medical Centre, another good facility in an isolated area.

One of the really good announcements in the budget is the funding for the Gippsland Lakes. I will have the pleasure tomorrow of welcoming the Minister for Environment and Conservation to East Gippsland to launch a proposal announced in the budget at a cost of \$12 million, mainly for nutrient reduction.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr INGRAM** — A lot of that money will be spent in the upper catchment, some of it in the electorate of Gippsland South, the seat of the Leader of the National Party, and some of it for streamside rehabilitation and nutrient reduction in the seats of Narracan and Morwell. A long-term fix for the Gippsland Lakes is absolutely essential, but it will not happen overnight. It is great to see money going into nutrient reduction to fix the algal bloom that too often is a problem in the lakes. The lakes are one of our greatest assets in the state and form the largest inland waterway in Australia. Anyone who has holidayed on the Gippsland Lakes will know what I mean. I know the Treasurer has had an opportunity to visit them with his family. It is a beautiful spot and I invite all honourable members to get up to East Gippsland because we have got — —

**Mrs Maddigan** interjected.

**Mr INGRAM** — I should not respond to interjections but I have honourable members saying they want to come to East Gippsland for fishing. There is great recreational fishing in East Gippsland. We have beautiful rivers, too, including some of the most pristine rivers in this country in far east Gippsland. We have rivers in national park catchments that are absolutely magnificent and are great tourist destinations. It is important to make sure that those assets are protected.

Also in the budget papers I see mention of the better rivers strategy. That is important, and I know the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for

Environment and Conservation are all very committed to improving the health of our waterways. Obviously there is continuation of funding for the Snowy River rehabilitation to restore environmental flows, which is contingent on corporatisation. I know the Treasurer has a great interest in the corporatisation of the Snowy scheme, having 75-odd documents he has to sign to make sure they go through to the federal minister, Ian Macdonald, and to the Prime Minister — and they have to go through the executive council. Hopefully we can get them through the executive council in the near future so we can see the Snowy corporatisation finalised.

The people of East Gippsland and the southern Monaro area of New South Wales have been waiting for over 35 years for this. The last dam on the Snowy River was built the year I was born and there was a huge outrage in East Gippsland the day that dam was first proposed. To see the river return to some level of health will be a great inspiration, and it is something the Victorian and New South Wales governments, but unfortunately not the commonwealth government, have fully supported. The federal government is signing off on it, but it has not put any money into returning flows to the Snowy. It did put money into returning flows to the Murray River, and I know that is important to a lot of members.

Honourable members not only in this place but in the federal arena and in South Australia often complain about the quality of water flows in the Murray. The honourable member for Mildura is also very passionate about the river right on his doorstep. Unfortunately Victorians take a bit too much water out of the river to suit the South Australians, but not in Mildura obviously.

Improving the irrigation infrastructure is incredibly important, and most of the money allocated to Snowy corporatisation goes to improving irrigation infrastructure.

This brings me to the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline, although that does not impact on my electorate. I was asked to go to a public meeting to discuss the Glenelg River — I had to give an address there. It was interesting. I probably spoke to more members of Parliament on that night than I am this evening, because they all came out. I think it was a bit of a political event. The President of the Legislative Council, Bruce Chamberlain, was there. I had better not get his name wrong again. When I introduced him that night I got his name wrong, so I was severely embarrassed. The honourable member for Wimmera was there, and that did not impress him at all. I apologised sincerely after I realised, because it is — —

**Mr Savage** — What, about the pipeline?

**Mr INGRAM** — Yes, the pipeline.

John Forrest was there that evening — he is the federal member for Mallee — as well as the honourable member for Wimmera from this house, and a number of other MPs were there. We had a very vigorous discussion about it. There was full support from all the National Party MPs.

I used to have a slightly poor view of my federal MP, Peter McGauran. Our relationship was not brilliant, especially when he did not deliver on money for the Snowy. Although he had come out very strongly and said, 'There will be substantial money for the Snowy in the federal budget. We're going to deliver on the Snowy', there was not a cent in the budget for the Snowy, which was disappointing for all those in East Gippsland.

I am sure it is just as disappointing for those people that the reciprocal money for the Wimmera–Mallee pipeline was not there. Anyway, my impression of my local federal MP went up much higher when compared to the federal member for Mallee. There was no comparison between the two. I could never work out why my federal member became a minister until I made the comparison.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr INGRAM** — No, it is just an observation. One of the reasons why — —

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr INGRAM** — No, education is extremely important in our area. There has been a view expressed by some honourable members — and I do not single out any particular party on this one — that private education is much better and should be funded at a much greater level.

I point out to the house — and I know an honourable member by interjection during an earlier contribution said he did not have many schools in his electorate — that country members of Parliament cover large areas and have large numbers of schools. Very few people in country areas have access to private education.

I was at a school function recently with my federal colleague, and after Peter McGauran had made his presentation I was introduced as 'not only a very strong supporter of our school, our MP is also a parent at this school'. After we did the formalities, Peter McGauran came up to me and said, 'Is this school good enough for

your children? Surely you should use the private education system'. I said, 'Well, if it's not good enough for my children, it's not good enough for anyone else's'. But really, in all honesty, in country areas people do not have access to the private education system and that is why it is absolutely essential that the state and federal governments fully support the public education system.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Seitz)** — Order! The honourable member, without assistance!

**Mr INGRAM** — Obviously among one of the disappointments in the budget is road funding. There is a really great need in country areas for road funding and the better management of natural resources. It is absolutely critical that we have more money for pest plant and animal control. I notice the fox bounty in there, which is a great thing.

Previous speakers have mentioned natural gas. In my electorate not one town has reticulated natural gas and I have mentioned that to the Treasurer on a number of occasions. It really impacts on investment and business opportunities in my area because it places businesses at a distinct disadvantage, not to mention householders who pay large prices for liquefied petroleum gas.

I also mention the police station in Bairnsdale. Some funding has gone to country police stations, but a number of police stations need to be addressed in the future. I look forward to seeing some of those issues addressed in future budgets.

**Mr COOPER (Mornington)** — It is always an interesting time when the house considers the budget and debates the appropriation bills. It is a pity that due to the shambles that the government's business program is in we now have a situation where honourable members have to be restricted in the length of their contributions on perhaps one of the most important pieces of legislation that this house can consider in any 12-month period.

I was interested to hear the words of the honourable member for Gippsland East in regard to educational opportunities and the importance of supporting the government school system. I agree with him and think that the question of the availability of private education facilities in some parts of country Victoria would be very different from that of others. Obviously, from what the honourable member for Gippsland East said, the private educational facilities in East Gippsland are very different to those available on the other side of the state.

I have another spin to put on that which the honourable member for Gippsland East might be interested in. That is where people are driven to send their children to private schools because there is no educational facility available for large numbers of students when it should be. A site has been reserved for a secondary college in Somerville — in my electorate — which was in fact originally bought when the Honourable Joan Kirner was education minister. This government seems determined to sell the site even though it has been prevented from doing so by widespread and vigorous community action. It appears the government has now determined not to build a secondary college on that site, even though every day 1000 students are bussed out to schools in Mornington, Frankston, Langwarrin and Hastings — not only to government schools but many of them to private schools because the government will not build a secondary college in Somerville.

The reason advanced for not building a secondary college in Somerville is that the now discredited previous education minister said there was not a sustainable number of students in Somerville. The present Minister for Education and Training continues to mouth the cant that was prepared for her predecessor by the department. They are saying that there needs to be a sustainable number of students of between 900 and 1000 in order to build a secondary college. That is fine; I am quite happy to accept that as the criteria that the government has set down for building a secondary college.

Unfortunately, the government has two sets of rules. It has a set of rules for an electorate outside metropolitan Melbourne — the electorate of Mornington — and the building of a secondary college in Somerville, because it says that we do not have a sustainable number of students there. However, in this year's budget, the government has allocated \$6 million towards the reopening of the Fitzroy Secondary College, which has a projected enrolment for 2003 of 300 students. It has got \$6 million!

**Mr Honeywood** interjected.

**Mr COOPER** — My colleague the honourable member for Warrandyte says they will be lucky to get even 300 students! So the hypocrisy of this government in setting some kind of standard appears to be easily broken down if it is in a safe Labor seat. I suppose I should congratulate the honourable member for Melbourne or the honourable member for Richmond or whosever electorate this school will be located in, because they have been able to go to this compliant minister, who is so high in her standards for the electorate of Mornington, and say, 'We have

300 students and we want to reopen the Fitzroy Secondary College'. She has said, 'Not a problem in the world. The government will contribute \$6 million' — just like that! The government has been able to find \$6 million for Fitzroy, but it does not matter that 1000 students are being bussed out of Somerville each day, having to spend several hours travelling on a bus to and from school, and being sent in all sorts of different directions because they do not have school facilities available to them in Somerville.

I want to point out the hypocrisy of that because I listened very intently to the contribution of the honourable member for Gippsland East and his plea to this government to do more for educational facilities in his electorate. That is a good plea. All honourable members should not only be asking that of this government; they should also be receiving it. There should be some equity and fairness in the government's contribution to educational funding. There is certainly no equity or fairness in the way it has treated the reopening of Fitzroy Secondary College versus its absolute determination not to build secondary college facilities in Somerville for 1000 students who are ready to go there this year and in many, many years to come.

We have a situation where the number of students can be maintained in Somerville. The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council has done the studies, presented them to the government and the education ministry, and has simply been put aside and told that it does not count. The people of Somerville know that they do not count!

Somerville is going into the new electorate of Hastings at the next election. I can say now that the Labor Party may as well not field a candidate in Hastings because the people of the district that extends from Hastings through to Baxter and includes Somerville will know full well and will be reminded full well about this government's desertion of that part of Victoria. As they did in the federal election, they will swing their votes to the Liberal Party in substantial numbers because they know that this government does not have their best interests at heart. The government has deserted them and will continue to desert them.

There are other very important areas throughout the state that have also been ignored by the government. This may be chickenfeed to the members opposite, and maybe they do not hear about it, but I want to briefly address the issue of lifesaving because it is an important area, whether it is the Royal Life Saving Society or the Surf Life Saving Association. These are important organisations that look after the interests of the millions of Victorians and visitors to Victoria, particularly

during the warmer months of the year, in ensuring that people's lives are protected on our waterways. Whether it is in the surf, on the bay beaches or inland waterways, the Royal Life Saving Society and the Surf Life Saving Association do a fantastic job.

We should all be proud of the work they do. The Kennett government was so intent on supporting lifesaving that it established a fund for the first time ever to ensure not only that lifesaving clubs kept pace with their growing membership but also that where new clubs needed to be established there was money to build them to better protect Victorians. This was a fund that was greeted with great joy by both of those associations, and the money has been well spent. I happen to have in my electorate the two biggest lifesaving societies in Victoria, the clubs at Mount Martha and Mornington. They are big, they are successful, and they do a great job for the many thousands of people who use the beaches on the Port Phillip Bay side of my electorate.

It was a three-year fund established by the Kennett government and was greeted with enormous joy by those two associations. What has happened now? It has come to an end and the Bracks government has simply walked away and not renewed the funding. The Royal Life Saving Society and the Surf Life Saving Association have basically been told, 'You don't count. So far as funding is concerned, we're really not interested'. Those clubs have to now spend a lot of time, effort and resources in trying to gather money — fundraise — in order to do the things that need to be done in the extension of their facilities or the building of new facilities.

When I started to comment on this particular issue it may have been a small potatoes exercise; it was not a lot of money. The initial fund was \$6 million, but this government cannot even see its way clear to find \$6 million for lifesaving clubs throughout Victoria. It sends a great message to those volunteers, a wonderful message to them that they really do not feature in this government's priority list. So far as the totem pole of priorities is concerned, lifesavers are right down the bottom, and that is how they feel. They have been let down and ignored, and this government, which is wallowing in money, cannot find \$6 million or \$8 million, or whatever, for lifesaving clubs throughout the state. It sends a shocking message!

I will keep to the agreement in regard to time, although some have not, and try to finish over the next minute or so. I know the honourable member for Springvale is upset about that, and he will be upset when he hears what I have to say in my concluding remarks. I was

fascinated to have recently received information about a friend of the honourable member for Springvale, Senator Conroy, who apparently was very busy at the recent failed ALP state conference. He made some comments which were reported and which I thought should be shared with this house in regard to his opinion — this is a Labor senator in the federal government — of this government and its activities. This is an opportune moment during a budget debate to raise this issue. Senator Conroy is reported at the ALP state conference as having said that he is:

... upset about the direction of the state government.

He says that the government is not doing the job it should be doing for the people of Victoria. He wants some changes made. He strongly urges that the Honourable Theo Theophanous should be back in the state cabinet.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Seitz)** — Order! I fail to see what that has to do with the budget.

**Mr COOPER** — It has a lot to do with the budget. The people who are running the state have a lot to do with the budget, and I am commenting on this government and its activities. A report on the ALP conference says of Senator Conroy:

He wants the government to be more aggressive in supporting its friends and culling its enemies from government boards and the public service. He finds the average ministerial staffer to be arrogant and incompetent. He says the average state minister wouldn't qualify to get a job in his electoral office.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Seitz)** — Order! On the budget. I fail to see what that has to do with the budget. Can the honourable member explain to me what the last statement has to do with the budget?

**Mr COOPER** — Mr Acting Speaker, if you stop being partisan and listen to me then you will hear me say that this budget is a good commentary on Senator Conroy's views because this budget does not deliver what it should. Senator Conroy is clearly so upset with the government that he is prepared to make statements like this. All I can say to the house is that Senator Conroy has got it very right indeed.

**Mr HOLDING (Springvale)** — It is a great pleasure to follow the honourable member for Mornington in his contribution on the Appropriation (2002/2003) Bill this evening. The people of the City of Greater Dandenong are pleased that they have a Labor government to deliver something sustainable and practicable which means something to their everyday lives in the form of the programs and initiatives that the Labor government has been delivering to date.

When we were elected to government the Labor Party had promised that it would restore basic services in Victoria. It had promised that it would act to increase police numbers, and when in opposition promised to increase teacher numbers and to decrease classrooms sizes, particularly in those important P-2 years. They were important initiatives that the Bracks Labor Party had committed itself to. It also committed itself to restoring democracy and doing all of these things within the context of prudent and sound financial management.

What did the former coalition government offer in relation to the City of Greater Dandenong at the last election? We had the spectacle of the former Premier arriving in the City of Greater Dandenong promising the people that if they voted Liberal the city would become a premier city. That is what he said. He also told the people of rural and regional Victoria that they were nothing but the toenails of Victoria.

The people of the City of Greater Dandenong were promised that they would become a premier city, that they would become Melbourne's second city, and would be able to assume that status within the context of the rest of Melbourne. That is what the Premier promised them, but at the same time as he turned up in the City of Greater Dandenong to promise that, he was presiding over a government that had done a deal with private rail franchisees to deprive the people of the Greater Dandenong region of having a significant level of investment and a significant level of opportunity in the provision of new rolling stock on Victoria's rail network.

That is what the former Premier had done — he had negotiated agreements which meant that there would be no local content for rolling stock. When the honourable member for Mornington talks about the budget and tries to put it in context, we remember that he was the Minister for Transport who negotiated deals which meant that there would be no local content in the provision of rolling stock infrastructure for the people of the City of Greater Dandenong. People in that area were to be ignored and were to have local industries gutted and shut down because the former government had been unwilling to provide —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Seitz)** — Order! The honourable member for Springvale, on the budget.

**Mr HOLDING** — Thank you for your direction, Acting Speaker. So we can put this into some sort of context, how does the budget deliver with respect to the commitments the Labor Party made when it was in opposition? What is the situation about law and order? I

mentioned police numbers. The promise and commitment was made for an 800-strong street police task force. That promise has been delivered 18 months ahead of schedule. What does that mean for the people of Springvale? Upon the election of the Bracks government the Springvale police station had 46 full-time uniformed employees; now there are 52 — an increase of 6 officers as at 30 April this year.

**Mr Leigh** interjected.

**Mr HOLDING** — I encourage the honourable member for Mordialloc to check the figures at the Dandenong police station.

At the election of the Bracks Labor government the Springvale police station had 69.53 full-time employees in uniform; the figure as at 30 April this year was 85.84 — an increase of 16.31 equivalent effective full-time employees. That leads to more police on the streets in Noble Park, Springvale, Springvale South and Keysborough. These are real, tangible benefits for the people of Springvale. They wanted the Labor Party to deliver with respect to a safer community and to increase the number of police on the streets. That is what the Labor government has been able to achieve.

What about class sizes in schools? In the southern metropolitan region when the Kennett government was in office, in 1999 P-2 classroom sizes were 22.4 with an overall average classroom size of 24.3. The average P-2 classroom sizes at some of the Springvale primary schools are: Wallarano Primary School, 21.2; Springvale South Primary School, 19.8; Springvale Primary School, 18.3. I am happy to mention Springvale Primary School because I was there the other day, and it is seeing the capital works of its master plan now being delivered, with more than \$1 million in capital works funding to improve curriculum delivery and improve safety at the school. It is a fantastic initiative for the people at Springvale Primary School. They are very pleased to be able to see improved curriculum delivery, that the heritage building at the school is to be preserved, that the administrative and library sections are to be improved, and that they are to have better classrooms, better access to their playing fields and a safer teaching and learning environment.

What else does the budget contain for the people of Springvale? It is not only in education and justice, and I turn to the health portfolio. Earlier I mentioned the Bracks government's commitment upon coming to office to improve the delivery of health services in Victoria. What does that mean to the people of Springvale? This budget includes new health infrastructure investment of \$10 million at the

Dandenong Hospital, which services the needs of most people who live in the electorate of Springvale. The \$10 million of state money will result in a new intensive care unit as well as other ward improvements at the hospital. It also includes a \$6 million investment by the hospital itself, totalling \$16 million worth of capital improvements at the hospital. This means real things to the people of Springvale and better health services.

When coupled with better education services and a safer community because of increased police numbers that all means the Bracks Labor government is delivering on its commitments for the people of Springvale. They are tangible things after seven years of neglect by the former Kennett government: seven years when the people of Springvale were left behind — when classroom sizes increased, when investment in education was allowed to drift, when capital works that were long overdue did not take place and when recurrent funding for restoration and basic maintenance of schools was allowed to be left behind and let go. That was the legacy of the Kennett government — fewer police on the streets, fewer resources for our health sector and fewer resources for our schools. Those deficiencies have been addressed by the Bracks Labor government in a tangible way.

The budget contains information about the Partnerships Victoria project. This important set of initiatives means we will be encouraging private sector investment, where appropriate, coupled with public sector investment. It is putting that into a public policy context that will make sure there is a sensible discussion about the appropriate way to facilitate increased private sector investment in significant public sector infrastructure projects throughout Victoria. It means there will be sensible discussions about the appropriate risk transfer mechanisms that are put in place. It will mean sensible and appropriate discussions about the integration of the design and construction features of the projects. It will ensure there is appropriate third-party access to these projects where appropriate.

All Victorians are pleased that we are having this debate occur within a proper context rather than the way in which the previous government pursued, complete with ideological blinkers, a blanket policy of privatisation. Often assets were sold without the Victorian public being properly informed and having their interests protected during the privatisation process.

I am pleased that the government — and the Treasurer is in the chamber tonight — is continuing its focus on achieving a better and fairer deal for Victoria with respect to commonwealth–state financial relations. I

have touched on that theme in my two previous contributions to budget debates. I note that the committee that the government established in consultation with New South Wales to look into the systems for delivering a fairer share of state–commonwealth financial relations will report in the middle of this year. I look forward to seeing that report.

I commend the budget to the house. It means tangible and real benefits to the people of Springvale. I am pleased to be able to support the bill. I look forward to it receiving a speedy passage through Parliament.

**Mr LEIGH** (Mordialloc) — I am delighted to follow the honourable member for Springvale in the debate because at the outset one would have thought that the world was all doom and gloom for the last seven years. However, the house will recall the facts such as the collapse of the State Bank of Victoria and a \$1.5 billion deficit when it seemed the then government had all that money to spend. The present Treasurer, who admits he modelled himself on the former Treasurer, Rob Jolly — this incredibly responsible Treasurer! — when he was Leader of the Opposition said he would attempt to tear up the City Link contracts once they were signed if his party was elected to government in 1996, yet today anybody who comes to Melbourne hears the Premier say, ‘City Link is wonderful, but we would have built it using the road levy moneys that were collected’. That would have meant the \$200 million a year collected would have been used on City Link and every other road in the state would have been a goat track had that policy been implemented. Let’s get the facts right! I do not mind the criticism of what may or may not have happened under the former administration.

The view of the honourable member for Springvale, the candidate known as Toxic Tim for Lyndhurst, was that public transport was appalling, yet now when new train services are commenced or new trains are bought the Premier and the Minister for Transport squabble about who can get in front of the cameras. I remind the house about all the deals done and entered into under the franchise agreements by the former administration. Let’s get the facts right!

I turn to a couple of other allocations in this budget, including \$105 million that was handed to the railway companies for nobody knows what purpose other than to effect some secret bail-out that the Auditor-General is now chasing. At page 105 of budget paper 3 is one of the most amazing things in the budget that the Treasurer is so proud of. He lists the Melbourne Airport rail link as an achievement despite its collapse after

years of work, study and millions of dollars. And the government was told in the beginning it would not work.

**Ms Beattie** — You were putting it through Broadmeadows.

**Mr LEIGH** — That's right. We said we would put a train through there, but we did not say what type of train it would be. What did this government do?

**Ms Beattie** interjected.

**Mr LEIGH** — But where is it now? Let's get the facts right. Because the Treasurer did not like it going on his side of Melbourne, he decided to spend over \$150 more and — —

**Mr McArthur** — Million!

**Mr LEIGH** — He decided to spend over \$150 million more and rig the study so it could not go one way, despite the fact that Melbourne will require some rail services to Melbourne Airport.

Let's take the example of Heathrow Airport, which has 67 million passengers a year. It has two links: an airport rail link and a suburban rail link. This Treasurer, who is wearing his imitation Alan Stockdale glasses, would say that the airport link is the one that gets people to travel by rail. Not so! It is the suburban rail system that gets people into London, and that is the one the people use. So what did this incompetent administration do? It waylaid the study in such a way that, despite what the opposition told it 12 months before, the deal was going to cost \$350 million. So the government scrapped it because it said it was economically responsible, even though it probably spent \$10 million in studies!

We go on. The government has examples such as the public transport safety regulations. It says it is improving people's safety on public transport. That is very interesting. This year funding for that is to go down from \$7 million to \$3.8 million, yet there is a surplus. Why is the government doing things like that?

What about the deal with Melbourne City Link for Wurundjeri Way, and the material-adverse payment settlement that needs to be done with Transurban? All the Transurban people go down to listen to this brilliant Treasurer and his so aptly named Minister for Finance, Mr Lenders — —

**Dr Dean** — It works well, doesn't it?

**Mr LEIGH** — It does work! The Minister for Finance and the Treasurer and, I believe, the Minister

for Major Projects went down to a Transurban-sponsored breakfast with all their departmental people to talk about what a wonderful deal they had made. It is not difficult to make a wonderful deal when you have decided to tax people more. It is very easy.

A few weeks ago someone rang 3AW and asked the Premier to name 10 things he had done. He had trouble naming three. In the end the guy said to him, 'Premier, any galah can spend money; the trouble is what you do to create it'. The Treasurer, who is at the table, sees himself as a junior version of Alan Stockdale, with a more moderate and slimmer waistline. He is announcing, 'I am the responsible economic policy driver in the Bracks Labor government'.

**Dr Dean** — He doesn't have the eyebrows!

**Mr LEIGH** — For a Labor Minister for Finance to be called Mr Lenders — —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Seitz)** — Order! The honourable member should use the proper terms of address in the house!

**Mr LEIGH** — Absolutely! One should also say this is a great Minister for Finance who is looking after the City of Dandenong so well that Labor members are going there — as did the honourable member for Springvale, the future Labor candidate for the seat of Lyndhurst, which may become a Labor seat — and telling the people of Dandenong, 'You have never had it so great!'.

Then the government announced the cancellation of proposed roads. It did so because, it said, 'We never promised this one, so we are cancelling that one'. The people say, 'But we were actually promised this one by this Treasurer when he was the Leader of the Opposition'. The Treasurer says, 'We are taking the money from the one we do not want to cancel and putting the \$30 million into the Burwood tramline, but we are really cancelling the other one and taking the money from the one that we cancelled'. Does that sound confusing? I agree.

**An Honourable Member** — Can you run through that again?

**Mr LEIGH** — No, I dare not — seriously. That is exactly what the advisers of the Minister for Transport told the *Herald Sun* and others as to what was going on — almost word for word. It is a shame.

This government has so far demonstrated its ability to tax. It is sad that we do not have the time we would all

like to have in this chamber to talk about issues such as the budget. Over the past few weeks we have talked about the increased taxes that the Governor has to pay, and while that was very interesting I would have thought there were more fundamental pieces of legislation to discuss. We have mucked around for weeks because the government does not want to discuss the real pieces of legislation.

Two outstanding things will come out of this government. The first is that land tax and stamp duties will go through the roof. This Treasurer has put an arrangement in place in the City of Kingston in my area based on what he believes the land tax arrangement for this year will be — despite the fact that next year it will be lower — because he, the Valuer-General and the council cannot figure out what they are supposed to be doing. For example, the Thrift Park, which is a shopping centre in my electorate, has paid \$88 000 in land tax this year. Its land tax has gone up in 18 months from \$33 000 to \$88 000, but next year it will go down!

**Mr Baillieu** — Has the Treasurer ever paid land tax?

**Mr LEIGH** — I do not think the Treasurer has ever paid land tax, no. Not at all. He lives in a very nice suburb near the airport rail link which he wants to cancel. My point is that he is going to alter the basis of land tax next year, but he is not going to return any of the money. He is going to keep it. He is ripping everybody off this year and making it look as if he has balanced the books. That is the first thing.

The second outstanding thing to come out of this government is the most disgusting and outrageous misuse of the public interest I have seen in this state, and that is what this government is doing with the mechanism for speeding fines and the like in Victoria. Clearly a deal was done between the police commissioner and the police minister that the government would give the police more money provided the police increased the revenue, and that has taken place.

Who do I think was the conduit of this agreement? I think Mr Ray Shuey has had some part in this. He was an adviser to former police minister Crabb. He has good connections with the minister's office. When the Premier chickened out on what he said were the outrageous demands of the police force in respect of their salaries and superannuation when compared with their New South Wales counterparts and granted them all — that is fine, I agree that the police out on the beat work hard — they reached a deal. The deal was that the police had to go out and book more people.

The police then took away the 10 per cent tolerance for the Australian design rules which every other state in this country has. The police tore up the 10 per cent tolerance, so even that can be included in this year's figure. The police also tore up the black spot camera arrangements for putting cameras at dangerous locations. The members of this government are basically clones of Tony Blair. The government sent the Minister for Gaming over to London.

**Mr Lenders** interjected.

**Mr LEIGH** — I understand. We are entitled to 20 minutes, shadow ministers and backbenchers; that is the deal on our side. Let's get the facts right. The facts are that the Minister for Gaming went over to the United Kingdom to do a deal with them as to what this government should do. He saw the mechanisms they use there on road fines, he came back to Victoria, and off the government went!

In the history of modern politics, this Labor government has torn up the bipartisanship that existed on road safety. I will not take up the full time available to me but I will read a couple of figures onto the record because I think they need to be said. In 1999 when the Bracks Labor government was elected — —

**Mr Lenders** — A wonderful government!

**Mr LEIGH** — You say that. Given what the government is about to do with traffic cameras I can understand why the Minister for Finance thinks it is wonderful. Fines collected from traffic cameras amount to \$99 million. There were 736 000 camera hours involved. The road toll at the time was 407. The Bracks government was going to reduce the road toll. What has the Bracks government done?

**Mr Lenders** interjected.

**Mr LEIGH** — It has broken the bipartisanship of years of Labor and Liberal governments, because you are into ripping off the motorists and you know it, and they know it, and you are — —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Nardella)** — Order! The honourable member for Mordialloc!

**Mr LEIGH** — He should stop interjecting across the table!

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Nardella)** — Order! The honourable member for Mordialloc has been in the house long enough to know that he should debate through the Chair and that he should refer to

honourable members in the third person. I also ask the minister not to interject across the table.

**Mr LEIGH** — Can I say what we have gone to? We went in the government's first year in office to \$103.8 million. In 2000–01 we went to \$177.5 million; in 2000–02 we went to \$206.1 million; and this year in speeding fine revenue the Bracks administration is going to collect \$336.6 million.

The camera hours have gone up from 736 000 when the Labor Party entered government to 1.2 million. And what has happened to the road toll? More people have died, sadly. If the Bracks government wants bipartisanship, let it come out and finally work with the opposition to improve road safety in this state. It has people looking at their speedometers and police hovering around behind light poles. It is an outrage. The time has come when this administration has to realise that just as it is hooked on gambling revenue it is also clearly hooked on collecting from motorists.

In conclusion, am I the only one who is saying that? No, I am not. As late as today the *Age* newspaper's Drive section announced in a heading:

RACV calls for speed camera review

Ken Ogden is reported in that article as having said:

... the RACV supported the use of speed cameras to help curb the road toll, but only if they were used in recognised safety black spots.

He also said:

It would be a major concern to us, and indeed to the whole community, if people developed a disrespect for the police and a disrespect for traffic enforcement if it was seen as revenue raising.

The report goes on:

A spokesman for police minister André Haermeyer —

we always get these spokesmen —

said the state government had no plans to change its speed camera strategy. He also said claims of revenue raising were wide of the mark.

The figures say it all: deaths are up and money is up, and this callous administration still uses this rather fictitious argument that its concern is first and foremost road safety. It is not; it is about making money, because unless it has land tax, stamp duty, speed cameras and gambling it will be back in the days of old: losing money for Victoria. The time has come when it has to change its mind. Is it really interested?

In conclusion, the sad fact is you have this inane, second-string Minister for Finance who is the chief babbler of the Labor Party and who does not even have the guts to turn up and face the facts. The facts are that this man is simply and only the Minister for Finance because he is a number cruncher from the Labor Party. That is all he is — he is a stooge, and that is what people see. He has little or no credibility. The RACV has come out and politicised itself in a sense by saying that the Bracks Labor government is revenue raising.

There are many other issues in this state that I cannot go into tonight. This is the open and new Bracks administration that has said it would introduce new forms and standards in this Parliament so people could speak, but what has it done? It has given us less opportunity while it and its Independent friends pretend they have an interest in what happens in Victoria. Sadly they have little or none.

**Ms BEATTIE** (Tullamarine) — It is an absolute treat to speak on this wonderful budget. I know honourable members in this house have an avid interest in the northern suburban region. Very shortly I will go into what a wonderful budget it is, as have been the previous two budgets.

Before I go into that it would be remiss of me if I did not try to debunk a few of the nonsensical statements that have been made previous to my getting up in this debate. As I say, those were nonsensical statements and I could be here for hours but we have an agreement and I will adhere to the agreement, even if others do not.

Many members on the opposite side talk about the wonderful war chest that Labor inherited. I want to tell you about that war chest, because the opposition would say that it was created by clever management of the economy — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Nardella)** — Order! Will the honourable member for Mordialloc desist from — —

**Mr Leigh** — With the greatest respect, Mr Acting Speaker, if you want to pick on me that's fine, but this clown who pretends to be a minister is the one who was interjecting, not me!

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Nardella)** — Order! Sit down! Sit down! Sit down now! You sit down now! I will go and get the Speaker.

**Mr Leigh** — You go and get the Speaker. I don't have to listen to you. You are a goose!

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Nardella)** — Order! I will go and get the Speaker. Call the Speaker.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I ask the honourable member for Mordialloc to behave himself, and the Chair issues a warning to him.

**Mr Leigh** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, can I say that I am happy to behave myself, but when a minister who is sitting at that chair is behaving in the manner that he was, I suggest you should utter exactly the same warning to him, and on that basis I am very happy to accept your ruling.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I similarly ask the minister to desist and also to behave himself.

**Ms BEATTIE** — I must say that that exhibition tarnishes the reputation of this house. I know the honourable member for Mordialloc has absolutely no time for the northern suburbs, but to interrupt in such a churlish way is very childish and he should apologise to the people of the northern suburbs for interrupting my contribution.

I want to debunk these theories of great economic management that members on the opposite side have put forward. There is no magical formula that the Kennett government had that saw pennies fall from heaven —

**The SPEAKER** — Order! It is with reluctance that I interrupt the honourable member for Tullamarine. The Chair has been fully briefed in regard to the incident and I now ask the honourable member for Mordialloc to withdraw the remark he made to the Chair.

**Mr Leigh** — Which was what?

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The insulting remark that he made to the Chair in regard to the Chair being a goose. I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr Leigh** — I am very happy not to refer to the Chair as a goose. I apologise.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The usual procedure in these matters is for the honourable member to withdraw unequivocally.

**Mr Leigh** — I am very happy to withdraw, Sir.

**Ms BEATTIE** — The people from the northern suburbs will hear about this!

In order to debunk this theory that the pennies fell from heaven under the Kennett government I will tell you what the Kennett government did to leave this so-called

war chest. It closed schools, including the little Bulla Primary School that could not defend itself because it only had 50 pupils and was promised a bus service if it closed down. It did close down but the bus service that the Kennett government had promised never came.

What else did the former Kennett government do to get this magical war chest? It closed hospitals and hospital beds. It slashed police numbers and sacked teachers and nurses. It privatised and sold the public transport system. The shadow Minister for Transport knows this because the Minister for Transport is still picking up the pieces of the mess the former government left behind, not only in the services but also in the ticketing system. What a sham it was. The opposition should actually apologise to the people of Victoria for that sham.

**Mr Leigh** — You apologise for the State Bank and I will apologise for that.

**Ms BEATTIE** — The former government also privatised electricity. We know what dastardly effects that is having on people. What was next? Water was lined up next, but the Bracks government will bring legislation into this house that will see the water industry in public hands, and we will see what honourable members opposite do with that legislation, when they well know they were going to privatise and sell the water of this state.

The next thing I want to debunk is the statements about the airport rail link. The Tullamarine community and I fought to have other lines explored for the airport rail link. The previous government just said to the people of the northern suburbs, 'When we do an airport rail link we will just put it through the northern suburbs. We will not talk to you about it. We do not care about you, we are just going to put it there'. Honourable members know the attitude of the honourable member for Mordialloc on these things in the northern suburbs. He could not care less if it went through the northern suburbs because he thinks the toxic dump should be at Tullamarine, and he has said this publicly.

**Mr Leigh** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I am claiming to be misrepresented. I have never said what the honourable member is saying.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I remind the honourable member for Mordialloc that he is under a warning from the Chair. He is taking a point of order that is clearly not a point of order. I will not hear him.

**Ms BEATTIE** — The other thing that opposition members say boosts the coffers is speeding fines. The partner of the honourable member for Ballarat West is a truck driver. He does not incur speeding fines. Why

not? Because he sticks to the speed limit. It is very simple. These speeding fines are a voluntary contribution. Nobody forces you to put your foot down on the accelerator and contribute to the government coffers. It is totally voluntary. But the honourable member for Mordialloc would have us believe that the government is putting some sort of brick on the accelerator to make people drive fast.

I digress because this is a fantastic budget. I want to tell the house what it means for the northern suburbs, which have been neglected for so long. This crowd on the opposite side of the house has to look up a *Melway* street directory to find where the northern suburbs are, and they get a nose bleed if they actually come out to the northern suburbs. In one of the first Bracks budgets we saw the duplication of Pascoe Vale Road coming out to the northern suburbs. We saw that consultation about the airport rail link, which said the Broadmeadows line is not the way to go because it will end up being the most expensive option.

I want to talk about what the government has done for the Sunbury area in two and a half short years of government. It has provided \$8.5 million for a community health centre. It was promised for seven years under the Kennett government, but the first sod was turned and the centre was opened under the Bracks–Brumby Treasury deals. For seven years a bridge was promised in Sunbury, and it is being delivered this year at a cost of \$4.1 million. Private enterprise has now gained confidence in the Sunbury area, and picture theatres are being built out there. That was always promised under the Kennett government, but it did not have the confidence to actually start that building project.

What I want to tell you about the Macedon Street bridge is that the honourable member for Gisborne has worked very hard with me to obtain this very important project. I feel sure that whenever the next election is and with the redistribution we will see the honourable member for Gisborne become the honourable member for Macedon because just last Sunday the Liberal Party preselected the recycled has-been candidate, Bernie Finn. In three years they could not find anybody better. What a state that party is in!

I want to focus on some of the major projects that are under way in this state, particularly under my new area of responsibility as Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism, Sport and the Commonwealth Games. The Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre is going to be completed — \$53 million has been allocated for that major project. The opposition is fond of saying that the government does not undertake any major projects. I

would like to ask the opposition what it thinks the Austin hospital redevelopment is. Is that unimportant to the people of Victoria, because that was \$325 million? That is a fine project and a major project. The government knows that the opposition thinks health is a very minor thing and not important. One of my special areas of interest is agricultural matters. The Melbourne showgrounds redevelopment at a cost of \$100 million has gone down a treat with all my friends who show dogs.

The other aspect I want to focus on is the Craigieburn bypass, \$306 million; and the Craigieburn rail electrification which will go into my new electorate of Yuroke, \$105 million. That is fantastic. You can see that infrastructure in the northern suburbs coming together to give the people of that area a much needed boost because they were neglected for seven years under the Kennett government.

I am running out of time because I was frequently interrupted by the honourable member for Mordialloc's dreadful antics and disrespect for the people of the northern suburbs. But their voices will be heard. This Treasurer hears their voices and cares for the northern suburbs, and I am happy as the honourable member for a neighbouring electorate to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance in linking the northern suburbs to the rest of the state.

I know that when the redistribution in the next state election happens I can leave my old area of Sunbury knowing it is safe in the hands of the honourable member for Gisborne and the honourable member for Macedon, at the same time knowing that the Liberal Party in a couple of years just couldn't find anybody but the poor old recycled Bernie Finn. What a dreadful state the Liberal Party is in! In closing I thank the Treasurer for actually delivering to the northern suburbs.

**Mr HONEYWOOD** (Warrandyte) — The previous speaker seems to forget that the former honourable member for Tullamarine, Bernie Finn, provided the area of Sunbury with the largest injection of government funding it has ever had in its history as a township. Bernie Finn delivered a new university campus and a new TAFE campus to Sunbury — tens of millions of dollars of state government money that the honourable member seems to have ignored because she is not interested in education.

**Ms Beattie** — On a point of order, Mr Speaker, my understanding is that that university was actually delivered by the Keating government.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The honourable member for Tullamarine is clearly not taking a point of order. I will not hear her.

**Mr HONEYWOOD** — She protests — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The honourable member for Doncaster and the honourable member for Richmond!

**Mr HONEYWOOD** — This was meant to be the education budget. Two days before the state budget was announced we had minister after minister strutting their stuff claiming that this was going to be the education budget to beat all expenditure on education in the history of the state.

How much was the increase in education compared to other departments? It was 7.5 per cent for Human Services, 6.2 per cent for Infrastructure, 42 per cent for Innovation, Industry and Regional Development, 14.5 per cent for Justice, 10 per cent for Natural Resources and Environment, 3 per cent for the good old Premiers department, 4.2 per cent for Parliament — and what did school education get? It got 2.3 per cent, the lowest increase of any expenditure for any government department — and this was the education budget! It followed on from the cruelest ever education budget in the year before, according to Mary Bluett, the head of the education union. So there was an improvement of 0.5 of 1 per cent in the outcome for education from the previous year to this year. What an indictment!

We then come to the smoke and mirror tricks with capital works in this budget. Hidden away in a footnote is how much of the \$53 million allocated for school capital works and the Growing Victoria fund was spent the previous year — \$900 000. What did that leave left over? It left \$52.1 million out of \$53 million, and that \$52.1 million has been magically recycled into new capital works money. So of the \$216 million announced in so-called new capital works money a full quarter — \$52.1 million — was actually money that was announced last year that was deliberately not spent to prop up the budget outcome in the new year. But we all know that the Labor Party is very good at recycling money!

Then there is school maintenance. In the previous financial year to this one how much money was spent on PRMS — physical resources management system — which is a major pool of school maintenance funding in Victoria? Zero — not one dollar was given to any school for major maintenance! What an absolute indictment on a government that is supposed to be

committed to education. How much money was devoted to PRMS year in, year out on average in the last four years of the Kennett government? It was \$100 million a year — a total of \$400 million spent on school maintenance. How much was spent in the last two financial years? It was \$41 million — 10 per cent of what that wicked, mean Kennett government spent on school maintenance. Ten per cent has been delivered by a government that claims to be interested in school education. What an indictment!

Then there are literacy and numeracy benchmarks. Why do we remain the only state in Australia that will not test year 7 students for reading, writing and arithmetic? Why won't Victoria come on board with national testing? It is because the former Minister for Education, the honourable member for Northcote, did a deal with Mary Bluett, who does not like bad teachers to be highlighted — she does not like schools that are underperforming to be mentioned in public. So what do we find? Victoria is the only state or territory in Australia that will not test its kids for reading, writing and arithmetic in the first year of high school. Every other Labor Party government is doing it. Every other Labor government started two years ago, but two years down the track it is not happening in Victoria. We have to protect our union mates, so kids have to suffer and mums and dads are not allowed to find out how their children are going in that crucial first year of high school.

Dealing with teacher-student ratios, the 2002–03 state budget papers reveal that there are no expected improvements in teacher-student ratios for the current school year. Despite the Bracks government's rhetoric about injecting teachers into the system, teacher-student ratios in primary schools have changed by only 0.3 of a student per teacher and only 0.1 of a student per teacher in secondary schools. Again, every high school is required to put its actual class size data into the Department of Education and Training on the last day of February in each year. Within 24 hours of that data being made available to it by primary schools the Minister for Education and Training has headline treatment claiming that class sizes have come down.

However, last year were we able to get the actual high school class size data nine months later? No. The Ombudsman had to interview the private office staff of the former minister to find out why they were refusing to release high school class size data, why the secret state would not provide information that it is so willing to provide for primary school class sizes. So here we are at the end of May, three months after every school has had to provide its class size data and we are told under freedom of information that we cannot have it.

Why? Because it is a bad-news story for the government. It does not want parents to know that high school class sizes are not coming down but are going up in and around Melbourne and in country Victoria.

I refer to transition rates. The Premier claims to be committed to having more young people go on to year 12. Again, the current budget papers do not include, for the first time, a line item relating to student transition rates between year 10 and year 11. This is a crucial indicator. During year 10 most students reach the age at which they are not legally required to attend school. The transition rate from year 10 to year 11 helps to identify students who have entered the Victorian certificate of education (VCE) following the end of their compulsory years of schooling. Previous budget papers have revealed that transition rates have been falling. Presumably the reason we are not allowed to see, for the first time ever, the transition rate from years 10 to 11 in the budget papers is because it is not a good-news story for the government.

Then we come to VCAL, the Victorian certificate of applied learning. This alternative to the VCE is a second-level certificate that has been promoted by the government to prop up retention rates in the VCE and up to year 12. Twenty schools are involved in the pilot program. Before those pilots have been analysed and before they are even halfway through implementing the pilot study, we find that money has been made available, by being shifted from one program to another, so that next year every school in the state, believe it or not, will be implementing VCAL — before it has even been proven! It has been regarded as a public relations stunt and suddenly without being proven up it is going to be put into every school.

There is nothing for funding for disability education in this budget. Not one kiddie with a disability can look forward to an extra integration aide or an extra proportion of disability funding. This Labor government is supposed to be compassionate, a Labor government that cares, but not one extra dollar has been allocated for disability funding. In fact the 'Better services, better outcomes' report that has been paid for by the Bracks government advocates utilising the same pool of money for kiddies with disabilities and for children with learning difficulties. So we will be robbing one child to pay for another. Parents are outraged and public meetings are being held around the state as we speak about this attempt to take money from disabled children and not provide them with a dollar more.

Then of course there is the great Labor Party social justice policy — the education maintenance allowance.

Year in, year out we sat in this chamber under the previous government and heard the rhetoric from the other side about the education maintenance allowance for poor families — how there was no dollar increase and no extra money from the wicked Kennett government to help poor families. Year in, year out we have waited for this government to provide families on the breadline with one extra dollar for the education maintenance allowance.

The government has had two secret reports done, the latest by Don Edgar of the Australian Institute of Family Studies. The first report did not tell the government what it wanted to hear and the second report did not tell it what it wanted to hear. The opposition is not allowed to get those reports under freedom of information because this government will not pay \$1 extra to poor families who cannot afford to send their children to government schools. Where has your social justice gone after three years? Children who cannot afford school shoes — are you willing to help them? No. Children who cannot afford books — are you willing to help them? No.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I remind the honourable member for Warrandyte that the normal procedure in this house is for remarks to be made through the Chair and to the Speaker, not to honourable members across the other side of the chamber.

**Mr HONEYWOOD** — Thank you, Mr Speaker. I can understand the sensitivities of Labor members on this issue because obviously they are not delivering for poor families.

Then we come to the fact that the overall increase in education does not even keep pace with inflation. The Minister for Education and Training had the audacity to come into this chamber and state that the federal government budget provided only a 5.7 per cent increase to government schools in Victoria. That 5.7 per cent is more than double her 2.3 per cent increase to education.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr HONEYWOOD** — The apologists on the other side claim that education is a no. 1 priority but the government has given it nothing but breadcrumbs for the past two years.

Finally regarding Glenvale Road in Ringwood North, which is in my electorate, I have invited the Minister for Transport on two occasions, the first on 28 February 2001, and then personally, to come and visit my electorate to inspect a road that forms part of the border between the cities of Manningham and Maroondah. It is

a busy and dangerous thoroughfare with dangerous intersections at high and low points — it has a big dipper type of topography — stretching over 5 or 6 kilometres. Unfortunately, however, the \$240 million made available by the Bracks government to marginal Labor seats for their roads programs is matched with not \$1 coming to my area. Despite speech after speech on behalf of the Glenvale Road residents, they have not even been given a referral by this government to the independent Road Safety Council for a request for funding for families in danger of their lives on that road. I again call on the Minister for Transport, now for the third time, to come out and inspect Glenvale Road in my electorate.

**Ms ALLEN** (Benalla) — It is my absolute pleasure to talk on the Appropriation (2002/2003) Bill, and I really do not know where to start because this budget is one of the best yet brought down by the Bracks Labor government.

**Mr Perton** interjected.

**Ms ALLEN** — In the years prior to my becoming the honourable member for Benalla, as we all know, the previous member did absolutely nothing in the electorate.

I will start out with what the Bracks government has done as far as schools go. When I first won the seat of Benalla, Benalla Secondary College was about to have its second campus, Dunlop campus, closed. It was the most disgraceful, run-down building anyone could ever see, and no-one should ever have expected students and teachers to operate on that campus. The previous government and the previous local member wanted to sell the building like they sold everything else. It was typical of the previous government that it wanted to sell it. But no, we came in and we saved it.

When I became the honourable member for Benalla the government gave over \$1 million to Benalla Secondary College to upgrade the Dunlop campus, and in this budget we have again given Benalla Secondary College money, this time \$880 000 — nearly another million dollars. We have also allocated \$1.8 million to Alexandra Secondary College, the school I attended myself as a child, for a new science and technology wing — the first round of funding the school has had for 25 years!

The Bright P-12 College in the north of the electorate and in one of the most beautiful parts of it received — and I will give you the exact amount — \$3 574 582! It will now be able to build the big, beautiful secondary college that it has been working on for some time. The

school is already doing so well it is drawing more and more students back to it. It is a beautiful school — —

**Mr Perton** interjected.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The honourable member for Doncaster is being far too noisy.

**Ms ALLEN** — The honourable member for Doncaster cannot get his head out of the city to even know where Bright is!

On the day after the budget was brought down I spoke on ABC radio and the honourable member for Benambra was on just before me. The interviewer said to the honourable member, 'So is there anything in there for Benambra?'. He said, 'I cannot see much. We have only got \$1 million for this school and \$1 million for the TAFE college'.

Then I came on and was able to tell the people that the honourable member had conveniently forgotten to tell them that Beechworth Hospital got \$4.3 million, that Wodonga Secondary College got \$2 million and that \$31 million had been allocated to implement the recommendations of the school bus review. The former Kennett government had done a report based on that review but had hidden the report for four years. The Liberals sat on it and did not implement any of the recommendations in their review; but we have — we have put \$31 million into it.

He also forgot to tell them that we have put \$45 million into preschools from which many country preschools will benefit. Those grants are to upgrade and improve the administration of preschools and implement the recommendations of the Kirby report. In addition, Eildon kindergarten received \$28 400 to upgrade and improve its facilities, and the libraries in the Benalla electorate have received \$120 000: \$49 000 each to Shepparton and Wangaratta and \$19 000 to the Murrindindi Shire Council. I presented a cheque to the Alexandra library only last week and its staff were absolutely delighted to be able to go out and buy new children's books.

Hospitals, of course, were terribly run down under the Kennett government. During the general election we had an ad on TV which showed that the tap had been turned off for country Victoria. During the by-election we put another ad on TV which showed the tap turned back on again. That was to show that the money was coming back into the Benalla electorate and back into country Victoria. What the Bracks government is about is rebuilding country Victoria.

Everywhere I go in my electorate I have councillors telling me that they now have so many funded projects — these councillors, a lot of whom I know are traditionally conservative, told me that under the Kennett government they had projects they wanted funded but could not get a cent to fund them and had no idea where they would get the money from — that they are having trouble finding people to employ to get their projects up and going. That is because employment is increasing in country Victoria. That is what the Bracks government is about: rebuilding country Victoria not only in infrastructure but also in employment.

We have given Mansfield hospital \$41 000 for equipment; Benalla hospital, \$13 000; Starlingford nursing home, \$63 000; and of course I will just mention again that in the north-east we gave Beechworth \$4.7 million. The honourable member for Benambra conveniently forgot to tell the people over ABC radio that the Bracks government had given the Beechworth Hospital \$4.7 million.

In agriculture, again, we are delivering for country Victoria and the farmers — \$8 million for Farmbis and \$10.3 million towards ovine Johne's disease control. We all know, once again, that the previous member had a hand in destroying farmers right across Victoria with ovine Johne's disease by closing the vet labs. Country farmers must never, and will never, forget that the National Party was party to the closing of vet labs right across country Victoria. We are delivering \$6 million towards a second generation Landcare — putting money back into the environment. The Ovens River, under the Victorian river health strategy program, will receive a share of \$10.6 million.

I refer to police stations — and this is what I meant when I said at the beginning of my speech, 'Where do I start?'. I am just going on and on — this is just fantastic news for country Victoria.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER** — Order! I have asked the honourable member for Doncaster to cease interjecting a number of times.

**Ms ALLEN** — The honourable member for Doncaster would not even know where half these towns were. He cannot get his head out of the city!

Whitfield is a beautiful little town in the north-east central part of Victoria, and there are some beautiful wineries around there that are absolutely fantastic. There will be an upgrade of the Whitfield police station, which is a follow-on from the last budget, which was for an upgrade of Eildon and Violet Town police

stations. The Violet Town police station and its new home is almost complete, and I look forward to being there at the opening of the police station and the new house for the sergeant of police.

So the Bracks government is rebuilding our schools, our hospitals, our police force — we have more teachers, more nurses, more police. Last year we granted \$50 000 to kick-start Lake Eildon tourism after five years of drought, while the previous Kennett government did absolutely nothing to help the tourism operators around Lake Eildon. Only the Bracks government cared enough to give them money to kick-start their tourism once again.

Let me go to roads. We know the federal government has ripped \$100 million out of the Roads to Recovery funding. This is absolutely vital money for country Victoria, because local councils rely on it to fund their local roads and bridges. Now they are not going to have funding to be able to do that.

The Leader of the National Party came sniffing up around the Benalla electorate again last week. He went to the Strathbogie Shire Council and announced that he will give \$300 000 towards the upgrade of Kirwans Bridge when he wins government. That is an interesting statement that raises two questions, because there are only two ways he can do that. Firstly, is he expecting the National Party to win government in its own right? Or did he just confirm what most of us already know, and that is that the National Party fully intends to go back to the dark years of the Kennett government and re-establish the coalition once again? It is something he never publicly states — the National Party will never go out and publicly state it — but that is the only way he will be able to give \$300 000 towards upgrading Kirwans Bridge. The National Party will need to win government in its own right or return to the dark years of the Kennett government. I call on the Leader of the National Party to publicly state which is true.

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! The honourable members for Doncaster and Mordialloc should remain silent, as should the honourable member for Monbulk.

**Ms ALLEN** — Where have you been for the last 12 months? The Royal Agricultural Society got \$100 million, and the country people are absolutely delighted about it!

I end by saying that the Bracks government has delivered its best ever budget for country Victoria.

**Mr KILGOUR** (Shepparton) — It is very sad that the honourable member for Benalla is allowed to drive a car with eyesight so bad that she drives around her electorate and cannot see what was done for it by its previous member. She cannot see the tremendous things that happened when the previous member for Benalla was the Deputy Premier of this state!

I will start with sewerage and water. The previous honourable member for Benalla — —

**Ms Allen** interjected.

**Mr KILGOUR** — Have a listen to this! He was responsible for \$400 million being put into sewerage and water in country Victoria. The honourable member for Benalla obviously drives around and does not see the sewerage authorities or that all her towns now have water of World Health Organisation standard. It is a sad thing that the honourable member does not understand what was done before she was elected.

We come today to look at the budget brought down by the Treasurer a couple of weeks ago. There is no doubt that Labor has failed to live up to its promises in country Victoria because the budget is an unashamed pitch to the voters of the Melbourne suburbs and demonstrates that the government has failed country Victoria. Most of the promises that were made before the last election and over the past two budgets have still failed to eventuate, and we go on and on to see what we are going to get out of this budget.

I look at my electorate and, like the honourable member for Murray Valley stated before, I am not going to accept the rubbish that comes across from the other side of the house that the previous government did nothing for country Victoria. I will remember — —

**Ms Allen** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! Will the honourable member for Benalla remain silent!

**Mr KILGOUR** — The honourable member for Benalla would not have understood at the time. When we became the government in 1992 Victoria was billions of dollars in debt. We did not have the money to spend because the Cain–Kirner governments had turned this state into a rust-bucket state and it took us at least three years to turn the state around and to start to spend the money in the second term of the Kennett government.

I look at my electorate and what it received in the budget. The funny thing is that when I went to look at the budget papers to see what my electorate received I

could not find anything. The previous government listed each of the projects under education and health and you could see what you received from the budget. This time I had to look right through the papers — and still I could not find what each project was.

Let us have a look at school maintenance. When I became the member for Shepparton in 1991 we were 14 years and \$650 million behind in cyclic maintenance. We instituted a program that is commonly called the physical resources management system (PRMS). The schools knew exactly where they were with that PRMS budget. They knew in categories what had to be done first, whether it was carpets and painting or fixing rooms or the rotten downpipes that rusted under the Cain–Kirner governments. They knew exactly where they had to go. What do the teachers of today say about the current situation in regard to maintenance? I had five principals in my office the other day and they told me that a whole year of maintenance money has not been applied. It has been held up. Why? Because the government is having a review into school maintenance money — one of 700 or so reviews. Then there is the audit which delayed funding. It was designed to put the PRMS on hold because the money was not there to spend on maintenance of schools.

When we left government our schools were in a fabulous condition. Certainly some of them needed to have more work done on them, but all the schools in my electorate had a tremendous amount of work done, and we were proud to say that we were the government that looked after those schools. The principals said to me that it has been reduced to the point where it is ridiculous that they are not getting school funding, that they are going backwards, that they are not getting maintenance. There has been no funding for occupational health and safety. Some of the schools have issues with fume cupboards which have not been installed so there is an occupational health and safety issue. There was nothing in the budget that gave an opportunity to look to the future.

What happened in my electorate in the budget? I got very little for my electorate, and I could not find what was there anyway. We did not necessarily need the money in the budget for the new arts and technology centre at Wanganui Park High School, for the science and technology centre and for the Westside Performing Arts Centre, which had all been funded by the previous government. There is a brand new school at Dookie, a new hall at St Georges Road, and the Bouchier Street school, which is now in the midst of a building program, was funded at the end of our time in government. What about the new TAFE college food

technology centre which was opened recently by the Labor government but built by the previous government? All that happened in my electorate, particularly during the second Kennett government, yet people are prepared to say that we did nothing for country Victoria.

I turn to health. We spent \$4 million at the Goulburn Valley base hospital to provide a new ward and receival centre, a psychogeriatric centre and a psychiatric centre, as well as money for the Tatura hospital to ensure that that brilliant little hospital continued into the future. This was all done by the previous government and did not need to be done by this government.

So far as law and order is concerned, a brand new police station at Shepparton, which was opened by the current Minister for Police and Emergency Services, was supported and funded by the previous government; and a new police station at Tatura planned by us when in government is coming to completion.

I turn to aquaculture. The Institute of Sustainable Irrigated Agriculture, which was to be closed by the Cain–Kirner governments, now employs some 200 people. The former government spent \$7 million on that facility, and I compliment the current government on continuing that building program, which is currently taking place. Some \$2 million was spent on a new Dairy Week pavilion to ensure we get the biggest dairy show outside of the United States of America. I could go on and on. There was not a lot in the budget for my electorate because it had been looked after by the former Kennett government, of which I was proud to be a member. I am disappointed that Labor has dumped on country Victoria in the current budget.

**Mr KOTSIRAS** (Bulleen) — It is a pleasure to speak on the bill, but I do so with some sadness. As I said last year, there is nothing in the budget for my electorate of Bulleen.

The budget has done nothing for the multicultural community, for ordinary Victorians or for my electorate. It has failed the people of Victoria regardless of the spin the government attempts to put on it. It has achieved nothing for Victoria.

**Debate interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.**

## ADJOURNMENT

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! Under sessional orders the time for me to interrupt business has arrived.

## North Melbourne Institute of TAFE

**Mr HONEYWOOD** (Warrandyte) — I direct an issue to the attention of the Minister for Education and Training. In 1999 the North Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT) purchased the former Fairfield infectious diseases hospital site to develop it into a new campus. At the time, as tertiary education minister, I was proud to ensure that \$18 million was planned for and put aside for a total redevelopment of that old hospital site, with a proposed opening for this year.

In November 2000 vials of bacteria were found in the ceiling space above two laboratory buildings during decontamination works. In some cases the contents of the vials had been eaten by rats. Investigations carried out by an independent microbiologist expert recommended that there was no immediate public health risk so long as the site workers followed strict work safety guidelines and underwent hygiene awareness training. A thorough clean-up of the site and rodent eradication was recommended.

In September 2001 further vials were found and workers walked off the site, citing health and safety concerns. Worksafe banned work on the two hospital buildings pending results of further microbiological tests. In November 2001 a prohibition notice was put in place by Worksafe. Subsequently the government appointed a team of experts to test the site for contamination. Despite the fact that NMIT has since agreed to a memorandum of understanding with Worksafe and despite the fact that the Worksafe prohibition notice was lifted at the start of April 2002, workers are still refusing to return to the site.

NMIT has taken all the necessary precautions to ensure worker safety and has agreed to meet the recommendations made in the government's recently released report. We have had eight long months of inaction and NMIT is keen for work to start on the site. Students, particularly students in the Northcote area, are missing out on being able to study at state-of-the-art TAFE facilities. I would have thought the previous education minister, as the local member for Northcote, would have been lobbying to ensure young people will be able to access education in their local area. Instead they have to be transported to Collingwood and take classes in inadequate buildings on which not a dollar has been spent because of the proposed move to the Fairfield NMIT site.

I call upon the minister to ascertain what the government will do to resolve this union issue, because young people and mature age students continue to miss out after eight months of inaction. We need to ensure

the future of this campus development is resolved. I would hate to think this action is partly a try-on by certain radical unions to get additional site allowances, thereby depriving young people of an education.

### Schools: Geelong

**Mr TREZISE** (Geelong) — I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Education and Training. It relates to the refurbishment of four state primary schools in my electorate of Geelong. The schools in question are Tate Street, East Geelong, South Geelong and Chilwell. The budget has allocated each of the four primary schools an average \$1.5 million for a complete refurbishment of classrooms and other facilities within the schools.

The action I seek is to have the minister provide time lines when the schools will have their refurbishment commenced. I assure the house that those four inner-Geelong schools were celebrating the handing down of the third Bracks–Brumby budget, as did the wider Geelong community. The millions of dollars that will be spent on refurbishing the schools will breathe life back into the four state primary schools in the inner suburbs of my electorate because for the seven years of the Kennett government those schools were totally and absolutely ignored. The classrooms were allowed to run down, the facilities slowly deteriorated and their teachers and pupils were basically forgotten. However, they could be considered to be the lucky schools because a neighbouring school, Swanston Street Primary School, was closed down — it was simply shut.

As I said, the refurbishment of these four schools will be the renaissance of education in the inner suburb schools of Geelong. The inner suburbs of my electorate are growth areas at the present time. Many young couples are moving into period homes, refurbishing them and then having young families, hence the resurgence in children seeking enrolments at schools like Chilwell Primary School and Tate Street Primary School. In addition, in the Tate Street area we see the rebuilding of the Thomson housing estate thanks to the Bracks government. That will see growing enrolments at the state school.

I look forward to working with the four schools in question — Tate Street, Chilwell, East Geelong and South Geelong — over the coming months and years. As such, I seek the minister's action in providing commencement dates and time lines. Although the parents, students, teachers and the school community in general applaud the funding, what they are seeking is the commencement of building.

### South Gippsland: ground water

**Mr RYAN** (Leader of the National Party) — I raise an issue for the Minister for Environment and Conservation. It relates to matters pertaining to, firstly, the Yarram ground water supply, and secondly, to questions pertaining to subsidence along the South Gippsland coast. These matters arise from discussions in which I have recently been engaged with Mr Eric Greenaway and Mr Bill Bodman, both of whom live at Yarram. Both are mightily committed to the interests of this region.

In the first instance there is the question of the capacity for the implementation of a program to enable irrigators in the Yarram region who are currently accessing the aquifer in that area to be able to do so over the course of the next 20 to 30 years. That matter has been the subject of a Department of Natural Resources and Environment report to the minister over the last few months. I think the report was delivered to the minister in the latter part of last year. It contemplates an expenditure of some \$10 million, having regard to additional costs for power supply to enable that access to happen in what prospectively represents about 76 of the existing irrigation bores in the region.

The second issue for concern is the broader matter of subsidence along the coastline of South Gippsland. The worry there is that with the operation of the oilfields and the operation of the recovery of the coal from the fields in the Latrobe Valley, there has been a diminution of the impact of the aquifer upon the region and the capacity for that region to continue to supply water to the area. At the end of the day the worry is that, because of the operation of the oil industry and the electricity industry, there has been an aggravation of problems regarding water supply. That in turn has led to questions about the subsidence of the coastline of South Gippsland.

With regard to this second issue, Mr Bodman and Mr Greenaway want to know whether we can have proper monitoring of bores along the coastline, which would probably cost \$1 million. There is another issue with regard to the proper testing of the clays within the aquifer so as to establish the propensity for subsidence in the future. That is probably going to cost another \$5 million. There is an issue relating to the feasibility study which needs to be undertaken for the prospect of recharging of the aquifer in time to come. That is uncoded, although it is a fact that this sort of undertaking is presently being conducted by offshore rigs in Bass Strait. We need answers to these issues and I would be most grateful if the minister could provide them in the first instance to Messrs Bodman and

Greenaway, and then to the Yarram community and the South Gippsland community generally.

### **Horses: welfare**

**Ms GILLETT** (Werribee) — I raise for the attention of the Minister for Agriculture a matter relating to an issue raised with me by Marcia Abbott on Monday morning concerning the stallion Cambridge, residing at the Werribee Park Equestrian Centre. I ask the minister to investigate the circumstances of this animal, advise me of the result of these investigations and then take the action that I know he will to find an appropriate and humane outcome to this troubling situation.

I say at the outset that I have nothing but admiration for the Werribee Park Equestrian Centre. Not only is it a great facility but its management and staff are committed and dedicated and their love of animals and their animal husbandry is outstanding, but that is not at issue here. A series of events have occurred which, as honourable members would know, have been covered reasonably extensively in the press this week, including an article by Dr Hugh Wirth, whose suggested remedy was that he would go down and shoot Cambridge. I understand Dr Wirth's reasoning and I admire him, but I do not think that is an appropriate solution without first understanding all the circumstances involved. I also admire jockey Darren Gauci, who has also made a contribution to this issue.

I was touched not just by the plight of the horse itself but by the people in the equestrian community who have emailed me this week asking for support and for an appropriate and humane solution to the issues involved. I do not plan to go through all the detail of the issues. Suffice it to say that it is appropriate for the minister to investigate the situation and provide a humane solution to the awful circumstances that surround this horse.

I pay tribute to Ailsa Mason from Maiden Gully, who emailed me to express her concern; and also to Cheryl Sutton, who raised her concerns about this most awkward and awful circumstance for all involved. An appropriate and humane solution is needed as quickly as possible.

I also point out that it is very important in these circumstances to understand that a range of individuals are involved. I have learnt in my life that there are many sides to a story and that the truth often lies in between those many different stories. I know that this minister — as capable, understanding and sensitive as

he is — will find the appropriate and humane solution that this circumstance and this horse deserve.

### **Lysterfield Road, Lysterfield: safety**

**Mr LUPTON** (Knox) — I refer the attention of the Minister for Transport to Lysterfield Road in Lysterfield, which is a very narrow two-lane road that runs between Napoleon Road and Wellington Road and which carries heavy traffic. Unfortunately there have been a number of accidents on that road over the past five years.

From January 1997 until December 2001 there have been a total of 81 accidents, comprising 3 fatalities, 18 serious injuries and 60 other injuries. They are only the accidents that have been reported; that figure does not include the number of accidents in which cars just career through fences. According to police figures, from 1 May 2001 to 1 May 2002, 1 fatality, 13 serious injuries and 7 other injuries occurred on that road, and in the previous 12 months there were 1 fatality, 16 serious accidents and 13 other injuries.

This road carries an enormous amount of traffic. A request has been made for black spot funding for the road, and my belief is that the money has been provided. The City of Knox is under the impression that this black spot project has been funded for an amount in excess of \$2 million, yet to date no money has been forthcoming. It is getting to the stage where about three accidents are occurring a week on that road. Certainly a lot of those accidents are not serious, but this very narrow two-lane road is becoming extremely dangerous.

I call on the minister to announce the funding for this particular black spot as a matter of urgency, because it is only a matter of time before there is another fatal accident. Lysterfield Road is unfit to be called a road; it is a goat track and it is unsafe. As I have said, it is a main thoroughfare between Wellington Road and Napoleon Road, and the black spot funding for it needs to be approved and announced as soon as possible.

### **Trams: Knox extension**

**Mr STENSHOLT** (Burwood) — I ask the Minister for Transport to act to ensure the implementation of the Burwood tram extension, which was a very welcome announcement in the budget. I have been at the minister for some time to extend the tramline, and the people in Burwood and Vermont South are very happy to see the announcement in the budget.

In fact Vermont South has been a bit of a black hole when it comes to public transport and this will fill the

gap. It will link schools, universities, retail centres and businesses along the Burwood Highway corridor from Camberwell to Knox. I understand also that five new trams have already been ordered to help deliver the new extended service. The operating costs of the extension to the service will be about \$12 million over four years.

We will also get a new tram and bus interchange at Vermont South on the median strip of Burwood Highway. This will mean that a bus will meet every tram as it arrives and take the passengers on to Knox. I was very fascinated by the response of the local Liberal members to this announcement. A member for Koonung Province in the other place, Bruce Atkinson, told the state Parliament this project was not entirely supported by opposition members representing that area.

I understand it is thoroughly supported by the honourable member for Bennettswood who wanted it done almost immediately and would have said, 'Can we have it all, please, now, at once!'. But Mr Atkinson said, 'Oh, we don't want the tram. We want a north-south system'. He probably forgot about the \$445 million going into the Scoresby corridor and he would like an extra tram to go down Blackburn Road. He obviously forgot about the smart link bus system that is going to cost \$12 million. He wanted the tramline to go right down and to link up with a whole lot of other things, and he invited everyone to go and look at the whole area. I wonder if he has been down Blackburn Road lately himself.

We are putting \$445 million into the Scoresby corridor, including a whole range of transport initiatives, including the extension of the Burwood tramline. It is typical of the Liberals. They are divided and they stand for nothing whereas Labor is actually fixing up the mess. We are actually delivering here for our suburbs after so many years of false promises by the Liberal Party. Extending the Burwood tram to Knox is a high priority for the government — and the tram will be extended all the way to Knox.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

### **Athenaeum Theatre, Lilydale**

**Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn)** — My request for action is addressed to the Minister for the Arts. The Athenaeum Theatre in Lilydale is a wonderful 110-year-old theatre that started as a concert hall and has very strong links with Dame Nellie Melba, who performed there on many occasions. In fact one of Australia's first Red Cross branches was formed there during World

War I, with Dame Nellie as its president. Many other famous people have passed through the theatre's doors, including Diana Trask, Sir John Monash and Stanley Melbourne Bruce. It has a rich and colourful history, and because of this wonderful stories and tales of the past exist.

The Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre Trust has applied for funding through the local history grant program. Its application was unsuccessful for three successive years, yet out of the 257 grants awarded 30 organisations have received two separate grants each. Sixty-seven of the grants have gone to similar organisations, so the application from the Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre fits the criteria. There has been no explanation as to why they have been turned down for three successive years. Is it because the theatre is not in a Labor-held or Independent-held seat? Is it because my seat is not a marginal seat?

Looking at the list of those who have two grants one could be forgiven for thinking there was a bias. I ask the minister to take action to ensure that an explanation is given to the Lilydale Athenaeum Theatre as to why its grants applications have been unsuccessful for the past three years. I also ask the minister to ensure that its current application is treated on its merit and not with bias.

### **CELAS Youth Network**

**Mr MILDENHALL (Footscray)** — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Senior Victorians. I seek her active consideration of funding for the Spanish Latin-American Centre in Nicholson Street, Footscray.

**Mr Robinson** — Olé!

**Mr MILDENHALL** — Senor Robinson! I seek funding under the intergenerational mentoring project for the arts, the Impart program. This program is a joint initiative of the Office of Senior Victorians and the Office for Youth. It encourages older and more established artists in the community to work with young emerging artists on an art project with a focus on the mentoring relationship. This is a particularly good idea in our community, as many members of our recently arrived cultural groups such as the Spanish-speaking community have an incredibly rich and vibrant cultural tradition and many — particularly the older — members of the community feel a great commitment and need to impart those skills, traditions and talents to the younger generation.

This centre, which happens to be opposite my office, is extremely active. They have obviously been mentored themselves by my colleague, the honourable member

for Sunshine, who, obviously because of his cultural background, takes an active interest in the centre and assists it. The centre has submitted at least two applications for funding. One is to assist young Spanish-speaking students to explore painting techniques and another is for young singers. So I am hoping for some good news with these applications.

We have a fine tradition, particularly through the Footscray Community Arts Centre, of using experienced artists and arts practitioners to produce some creative and wonderful programs in our community. It is these relationships that add to the tapestry of our community life and make it an extremely vibrant and interesting community in which to live. I recommend the applications to the minister and hope for a successful outcome.

### Courts: rural and regional Victoria

**Mr THOMPSON** (Sandringham) — I ask the Attorney-General whether he could take action to advise the residents of Lorne, Winchelsea, Port Fairy, Warracknabeal, Cohuna, Kyabram, Rochester, Daylesford, Eaglehawk, Heathcote, Red Cliffs, Camperdown, Leongatha, Traralgon, Warragul, Yarram, Cowes, Nathalia, Rushworth, Tatura, Alexandra, Beechworth, Bright, Euroa, Numurkah, Rutherglen, Tallangatta, Yarrawonga, Yea and Kilmore — to name a few important Victorian towns — why the Labor administration between 1985 and 1990 decimated the rural court system in Victoria.

The closure of these courts meant a significant reduction in rural court services and that there were a range of other issues that people in rural communities had to contend with, both to travel to courts and to have access to justice.

The Victorian Parliament's Law Reform Committee has delivered 125 recommendations to the minister — to which it is awaiting a response that is overdue — in relation to improving access to law and legal services to rural Victorians. I ask in particular if the Attorney-General could advise the residents of Kyabram whether his department will examine in due course the possibility of reopening the Kyabram court.

Earlier today we heard in this chamber a range of remarks about the decimation of Victorian courts. I put it to the house that the decimation occurred not under the former coalition government but rather between 1985 and 1990. That is when, in the words of one rural registrar, 'There was a huge purge of Victorian country courts'. I ask the Attorney-General if he can offer some solace and some information to the members of these

rural communities, and the residents of Kyabram in particular, as to whether they will have access to legal services through their local courts.

### Blackshirts campaign

**Mr ROBINSON** (Mitcham) — I also raise a serious matter for the attention of the Attorney-General. It relates to a report yesterday, 29 May, in the *Herald Sun*. I seek an urgent investigation into the circumstances of this reported case with a view to examining the laws of the state, for which he is responsible, to see what are the rights of the individuals in the circumstances I am about to relate to the house.

As I said, the issue was reported in the *Herald Sun* yesterday in an article headed 'Hate letter scares mum'. Briefly, the background to this is that an Ashburton mother was reunited with a lost child just two months ago and is now living in fear after being the target of a hate campaign. I put to the house that I am not aware, beyond this article, of the circumstances of that particular family, but this case disturbs me greatly. I understand the details of the article do, with reasonable accuracy, portray the current state of affairs.

The article goes on to say that the woman in particular has been the target of a hate letter in her neighbourhood; that she has also been receiving phantom telephone calls and knocks on the door. I shall quote from the article:

This week her neighbours received a letter headed 'An open letter to the neighbourhood'.

The letter says, 'In this neighbourhood there is one person that especially concerns us'.

And then it reveals personal details about the woman's life and several damaging accusations. The letter ends by asking readers to write to an organisation known as Blackshirts if they want to know more about or join the organisation.

I would have thought in this day and age in what we call a reasonably civilised society the word 'Blackshirts' is the most obnoxious and repugnant expression you could find in trying to intimidate and bring fear into the lives of ordinary law-abiding citizens. It is a disgraceful use of terminology, and I doubt that it is just coincidental. The article goes on to say that:

... the *Herald Sun* contacted a spokesman for the Blackshirts, John Abbott, who said he had a copy of the letter in front of him but would not reveal who wrote it.

'I have my beliefs but I can't divulge them', he said. 'It (the letter) may instil shame — that would be its purpose'.

Then he went on to say he supported the letter, but he said:

... our strategy is not to instil fear but bring into the open that which we see is wrong.

So this character seems to think that it is okay to instil shame, but he draws the line at fear. In my book they are one and the same thing.

People in this community have the right to lobby for a change of the laws if they believe the laws are wrong, and that applies as much to family law as it applies to anything else. They do not have the right to assume the mantle of moral vigilantes and instil fear and intimidation into the lives of ordinary decent Victorians in the most repugnant manner.

### Serpells–Tuckers roads: safety

**Mr KOTSIRAS** (Bulleen) — I raise for the attention of the Minister for Transport the intersection of Serpells Road and Tuckers Road in my electorate. That intersection has been the scene of many accidents in the past. Residents have complained to me about high speeds, illegal U-turns and illegal parking. This is even more serious because these illegal acts occur near a school.

The Manningham City Council has applied for black spot funding for this project and I ask the minister to ask Vicroads to investigate ways to alleviate these problems to ensure that students are safe when they travel to and from school.

I hope the minister will respond to my request. In the past I have written to the minister on a number of other issues and the minister has taken months, if not years, to respond. I made a request on 11 December 2000. One and a half years later I am still waiting for a response from the minister, despite the fact that every single day my office attempts to ring his office to see when a response will be forthcoming. However, his advisers keep telling us that the letter is on the minister's desk ready for him to sign.

So I ask the minister to investigate the intersection of Serpells Road and Tuckers Road to ensure something is done so no more accidents occur at that intersection. A number of accidents have occurred there and I would like the minister to do something. As I said, I wrote to the minister on 11 December 2000, when I said:

A number of local residents have approached me seeking a meeting with Vicroads to outline their concerns about the level of traffic noise coming from Bulleen Road. Vicroads advised my office that I need to get the approval of the responsible minister before a meeting can be arranged.

So I needed to ask the minister's office for approval to speak to Vicroads. I did that on 11 December 2000. As I said, a year and a half later I have had no response from the Minister for Transport. This is not the first time. I have asked the minister about a number of other roads, such as Thompsons Road and Templestowe Road in my electorate. Despite months of waiting this minister has not responded. He finally sent a letter last week to tell me that he is too busy to meet with me and the residents. However the residents who rang his office told me that the minister will be in my electorate on 12 June at 12.00 p.m.

**Mr Wynne** — On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, rather than give this appalling and disgraceful performance by the honourable member for Bulleen any further credence, I would — —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! The honourable member for Richmond can take his seat. That is not a point of order. The time for raising matters has expired.

### Responses

**Mr HAMILTON** (Minister for Agriculture) — The honourable member for Werribee raised with me a case related to — —

*Honourable members interjecting.*

**Mr Wilson** — On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, the honourable member for Richmond has just called me a name which he knows — —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! The honourable member for Bennettswood knows the correct procedure, and that is not a point of order. If the honourable members for Bennettswood and Richmond wish to take the matter further they should leave the chamber. I ask the honourable member for Bennettswood to take his seat.

**Mr Hulls** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! The Attorney-General is not assisting.

**Mr Wynne** — If the honourable member for Bennettswood has taken offence, I absolutely withdraw.

**Mr HAMILTON** — The honourable member for Werribee raised with me a case involving an injured animal currently housed at the Werribee Park Equestrian Centre. This is a very difficult and complex situation which has not been made easier by the amount of media hype that has been generated by the tabloid

newspapers and the shock jocks on radio. It is also very disappointing that an honourable member in this house raised the matter this morning and did not have the courtesy to speak either with me or the Bureau of Animal Welfare which he well knew was the section of my department responsible for dealing with this problem.

Through the Bureau of Animal Welfare the government has been closely monitoring and acting to resolve this impasse for some time. Knocking down the stable doors, as some of the media commentators would have the government do, is not a satisfactory or a legally acceptable response. The horse in question has been housed for two years with two companions at the Werribee Park Equestrian Centre where the laminitis was first diagnosed. The stallion is undergoing treatment by a veterinary practitioner registered in Victoria as well as a Queensland veterinary practitioner who is Australia's leading expert in the treatment and research of equine laminitis.

Due to concern at the way the sick stallion was being housed and the length of time it has been treated, the government, through the Bureau of Animal Welfare, has sought to inspect these horses. An initial inspection was carried out two days ago on 28 May by two Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals inspectors and three experts, one capable in equine veterinary medicine, one in equine surgery and another in equine behaviour. The inspection has raised concerns that a full and independent inspection of the sick stallion is required. This will mean anaesthetising the horse, best done with the cooperation of the owners and in the presence of the owner's vets.

I will outline to the house the legal situation, as advised to me by the Bureau of Animal Welfare, which should have been sought by any responsible commentator or person interested in a serious and proper resolution of this very difficult problem. Section 6(e) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act states that the act does not apply to 'the treatment of any animal for the purpose of promoting its health or welfare by or in accordance with the instructions of a veterinary practitioner'. The operative phrase is 'the treatment'. The correct interpretation is that inspectors can perform their powers to the point where they are satisfied that they determine that veterinary treatment or other action is required.

If the treatment is the cause of the suffering or cruelty and that treatment is occurring on the instructions of a veterinary practitioner then prosecution cannot occur, nor can other actions such as seizure to care, destruction et cetera be undertaken. Inspectors have the full power

to enter and inspect the animal showing signs of pain and suffering. At that time they can determine the cause of the suffering and cruelty, with such assistance as they need.

**Mr McArthur** interjected.

**Mr HAMILTON** — If the honourable member opposite is such an important lawyer then he ought to practise law.

This is a very serious matter, as is cruelty to any animal, and let it be on the record that this minister would not tolerate or support cruelty under any circumstances. But there are proper processes. They have been proceeding for some time, and people who are ignorant of those processes ought at least to have the decency to seek the information correctly.

I am pleased to advise the house that there has been an agreement with the support of the owners that the inspection which is required following the first inspection has been agreed to. It will be carried out next week, and the proper processes are not only in place but have been in place since this matter was drawn to the attention of my officers.

It is insulting for anybody in the media or anywhere else to believe that the officers of the Bureau of Animal Welfare do not carry out their responsibilities conscientiously, expertly and, most importantly, in accordance with the law.

**Mr HULLS** (Attorney-General) — The honourable member for Mitcham raised a very important issue. I certainly became aware of the group of Victorian men known as the Blackshirts who are apparently anonymously harassing women in relation to Family Court matters. It appears these men have dangerously, stupidly and indeed possibly illegally chosen to declare their unhappiness with Family Court decisions by terrorising young children, women and innocent bystanders.

If these men think they can pump around in their Blackshirts uniform and carry out all sorts of ludicrous actions under the guise of protecting marriage, family and children, they need to think again; they have another think coming. Such acts are outrageous, unacceptable and, can I say, gutless; and these men should certainly be answerable to the full force of the law.

I read with horror of the trauma that Michelle Knight has been forced to endure through cowardly displays of behaviour. As the honourable member for Mitcham said, Michelle went through, I guess, every parent's

nightmare when her son went missing in January this year, apparently for 10 weeks. Michelle was torn apart, not knowing where her son was. It is now believed he was in the custody of men's groups during this time away from his mother.

Michelle's living nightmare, as the honourable member said, does not end there. She has become the victim of a hate campaign after the Blackshirts distributed an open letter to the neighbourhood claiming she had, as I understand it, corrupted her children. That letter reveals personal details about her life and I also understand makes some fairly damaging accusations.

From reading the article it appears that she has also had to cope with phantom phone calls and knocks on the door and has since taken her son out of school and is living as a prisoner in her own home for fear that her son will disappear again.

I am sure all honourable members would agree that no person should have to tolerate this abuse, and I am certainly shocked at the thought of anybody in our community being subjected to such harassment. The government's Key Directions in Women's Safety strategy certainly identifies a need to reform criminal law and procedure to ensure that women are able to obtain adequate protection from violence and to ensure that offenders are appropriately dealt with.

It certainly is ultimately a matter for the courts to determine. Such actions may come within the definition of stalking, as provided in the Crimes Act, and I will seek further advice from my department about that matter. However, at this stage, by acting anonymously, this group is making it very difficult for the police to target specific offenders. Further, any application for an intervention order under the Crimes (Family Violence) Act is being frustrated by the failure to identify a particular member of this Blackshirts brigade.

Mr John Abbott, who is mentioned in the newspaper article and who is a leader of this Blackshirts nonsense, is a coward. He has come out in support of the neighbourhood letter but he will not reveal who wrote it. What kind of organisation conducts secret campaigns to, in Abbott's words 'bring out in the open that which we see is wrong' and then turns around and runs from involvement? I strongly suggest that these angry men in Victoria stop harassing innocent citizens and instead attend the various men's support groups that have been established to deal legally and effectively with the hurt and pain of broken marriages.

The honourable member for Mitcham has requested that my office investigate provisions under relevant

legislation, such as the Crimes Act, in order to specifically identify the protections that Victorians should enjoy against such intimidatory and cowardly behaviour. That suggestion certainly deserves investigation and I will ensure that work is undertaken by my department forthwith.

The honourable member for Sandringham raised the Law Reform Committee's report on access to justice in rural and regional Victoria and spoke about access to justice. I find it extraordinary that access to justice issues should be raised by the honourable member for Sandringham when he was part of a government that did not understand access to justice, sacked judges, as he will recall, and wanted to close community legal centres and abolish compensation for pain and suffering.

I also remind the honourable member that I recall when this inquiry started I was contacted by him — honourable members should remember we are talking about a review into access to justice in rural and regional Victoria — and if my memory serves me correctly he wanted to travel to London, Paris, Antwerp, The Hague, Oslo, Helsinki, Bonn, Berlin, Prague and other such places to investigate access to services in rural and regional Victoria. So let's not stand up in this place and make — —

**Mr Thompson** — On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker — —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! Before the honourable member for Sandringham raises his point of order, I ask those honourable members sitting next to him to remain silent. It is almost impossible to hear the Attorney-General.

**Mr Wilson** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! The honourable member for Bennettswood is making a reflection on the Chair, and he will refrain from doing that.

**Mr Thompson** — I desist from being fully drawn in by General Custer's remarks — sorry, the honourable member for Niddrie's remarks. Suffice it to say that one element of the review related to comparative international best practice — —

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! Will the honourable member for Sandringham get to his point of order and not continue with a point in debate.

**Mr Thompson** — My point of order is that if one wishes to live in a narrow, isolated world without taking into account what is taking place in international terms and comparative best practice, then it may be possible to have a narrowly focused review.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! I will not ask the honourable member for Sandringham for his point of order again. If the honourable member for Sandringham cannot come to the point of order I will ask him to take his seat.

**Mr McArthur** — On the point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, on the issue of relevance, while the Attorney-General is talking about abuse of travel applications, and the honourable member for Sandringham might have applied, I point out that the Attorney-General ripped them off in his travel rorts as a federal member of Parliament. He ripped them off!

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! The honourable member for Monbulk will take his seat.

**Mr HULLS** — Obviously the honourable member for Sandringham was upset when his Women's Weekly World Discovery Tour was knocked off.

**Mr Wynne** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! The honourable member for Richmond is out of his place and is disorderly.

**Mr HULLS** — We are a government that is passionate about access to justice. That is why we have built new courts around the state and will continue to do so.

The honourable member for Mildura, who usually sits over there, would certainly know we are building a new court in Mildura. We are also building one in Warrnambool and one in the Latrobe Valley, and upgrading the courts in Preston and Heidelberg. He mentioned the Kyabram court.

**Mr Stensholt** interjected.

**Mr HULLS** — The honourable member for Burwood interjects to indicate that we are also establishing a Koori court in this state, and a drugs court as well. All this is about access to justice.

The Kyabram court, though, is the court he mentioned. The response to submissions on that will be released shortly, so he will be able to see what the response is.

I might remind him, however, that we have a court in Moonee Ponds that is used, I think, only one or two

days a week. We have to remember that these courts are community assets, and I take the view that they should be used as community assets. So at the Moonee Ponds court building, which is only being used a couple of days a week as a court, a trial program is about to be undertaken in which community groups can also use that building on non-court days. I expect that if that program is successful it could be mirrored right around the state with courts that are under-utilised.

I am sure the honourable member looks forward to the outcome of that particular proposal, but I simply warn him that if he is going to come in here and make spurious accusations about access to justice he needs to remember that he was part of a government that did not understand access to justice.

**Mr Thompson** — On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, if the Attorney-General wishes to make remarks like that I suggest he reads the text of my adjournment debate item with his contribution to the house at question time today.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order! The honourable member for Sandringham knows that that is not a point of order.

**Ms GARBUTT** (Minister for Environment and Conservation) — I respond to the Leader of the National Party who raised with me the issue of ground water at Yarram and the associated issue of potential subsidence along the Gippsland coast. He mentioned in his contribution that he was raising this issue on behalf of his constituents, Mr Eric Greenaway and Mr Bill Bodman.

The issues are, of course, related and there has been a lot of work done over recent years to understand exactly what is happening there. The relevant aquifer is in the Latrobe group, and that is obviously overdrawn. As the Leader of the National Party has identified, the probable cause is the oilfield, coalmining and associated de-watering. Those activities have seen ground water levels dropping by about 1 metre a year.

I will outline quickly some of the actions the government has taken in response to the decline in levels and the associated concerns about sustainability of the resource — and, of course, the issue of land subsidence. The government has placed a moratorium on the issuing of new ground water licences. I will come back to how we are managing that in a moment.

We have undertaken studies on the risk of land subsidence, reviewed the subsidence measuring methods to ensure they are as accurate as possible, and assessed the increased cost to irrigators as a result

largely of having to lower the pumps to a considerable depth. We have also initiated a process for declaring a water supply protection area — for ground water in this case — and for developing a ground water management plan that will review the access to the ground water.

Two reports on subsidence were released a little while back, and along with a report on the cost of the impact to the irrigators in the Yarram district they are now on the Department of Natural Resources and Environment web site — [www.nre.vic.gov.au](http://www.nre.vic.gov.au) — so they are accessible for all to have a look at.

The main impact of the declining levels of the ground water in the aquifer is that the pumps need to be lowered, and that has been a considerable cost to the irrigators, as the Leader of the National Party has indicated. Of course, irrigated agriculture is an important part of the regional economy in South Gippsland, and we recognise that considerable value to the regional economy and to Victoria.

The risk modelling of subsidence actually suggested that there is a lower risk of subsidence than was previously thought, and that is an important piece of information to have out in the community. With that understanding and information there is a need to review the moratorium on new ground water licences. That will be done as part of the development of the ground water management plan. I have recently initiated that process and advised the Southern Rural Water Authority — the irrigation water authority there — to advertise for public comment the intention to declare that water supply protection area for ground water in the Yarram area and to start the process of getting a committee together. That will have at least 50 per cent local irrigators on it, and the consultative committee developing a draft plan, which will involve public comment.

The oil and gas industries have paid millions of dollars over the last 30-odd years to the commonwealth government, which extracts the largest volumes from the aquifer. Both the Minister for Energy and Resources in another house and I have written to the commonwealth government suggesting that, as it has been the recipient of royalties and excise from those products, it should share in the irrigators' cost of lowering the bores and any costs in monitoring for subsidence.

So we have both written to Senator Minchin, and the Minister for Energy and Resources has also written to the commonwealth Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources, the Honourable Ian Macfarlane. He responded a little while back, declining to share any of

those costs and saying that he wanted clear evidence that the problem was being caused by oil and gas production. It is hard to prove that sort of cause and effect, but we will endeavour to take that up with the federal government, and if the Leader of the National Party can make representations to his federal colleagues and get some undertaking from them I would be very happy to have a look at that and see what we can do. There is a responsibility there for him to take that issue up with his colleagues.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment has allocated, in the forthcoming budget, \$200 000 in funding to undertake, as a precautionary measure only, further accurate monitoring of the ground elevations in the region to see if there is any potential subsidence and catch that an early stage. But I would repeat, as a reassurance, that the modelling did show that there was a lower risk of any subsidence than we had previously thought.

**Ms CAMPBELL** (Minister for Senior Victorians) — On the matter raised by the honourable member for Footscray, I am very impressed with a program that has been organised by the CELAS Youth Network — it is a very impressive organisation. In relation to the particular project that the honourable member referred to, the intergenerational mentoring project for the arts — Impart — that project is a joint initiative developed by the Office of Senior Victorians and the Office for Youth. It arose from two key 2001 initiatives — the International Year of Volunteers and the centenary of Federation. It was to encourage mentoring between seniors and young people who would benefit from participation in the arts and community.

The Impart project encourages older established artists in the community to work with younger, emerging artists on an art project, with the focus on the mentoring relationship. I am pleased to inform the honourable member for Footscray that the CELAS Youth Network has been successful in two of its applications.

**Mr Mildenhall** — Two? Fantastic!

**Ms CAMPBELL** — Yes, the honourable member for Footscray will be like Santa at CELAS tomorrow. The first of the funded projects is the project that links artist and teacher Vicki Clarke with a young student from a Spanish-speaking background to explore painting techniques under the auspice of the Spanish Latin-American Centre Youth Network. Ms Clarke would be well known to the honourable member and, given his strong interest in the arts, I am sure he understands the regard in which she is held. Ms Clarke

has over 30 years experience as a painter and teacher at Victorian certificate of education level, and the \$3092 grant provides 12 months collaboration and pays for studio and equipment costs for work with her particular talents. The second grant will link singer and teacher Renzo Bonicelli with four young singers of Spanish-speaking background to learn vocal techniques and explore Latin-American music cultures with a view to performing for the Latin-American and wider communities. That grant is for \$4072. I am sure the honourable member will be looking forward to getting to his electorate tomorrow to pass on that good news.

The honourable member for Warrandyte raised a matter for the Minister for Education and Training regarding the North Melbourne Institute of TAFE's resolution of work bans, and I will pass that on to her.

The honourable member for Geelong raised a matter for the Minister for Education and Training in relation to building projects within his electorate. Four schools have been funded through the budget for complete refurbishment, Tate Street, East Geelong, South Geelong and Chilwell. I will ask the minister to provide a time line for when building will commence.

The honourable member for Knox raised a matter for the Minister for Transport regarding Lysterfield Road, and I will convey that to the minister.

The honourable member for Burwood raised a matter for the Minister for Transport about the implementation of the Burwood tram extension, and I will refer that to the minister.

The honourable member for Kilsyth raised a matter for the Minister for the Arts in relation to providing an explanation about the Athenaeum Theatre in Kilsyth and giving some advice in relation to how that application was treated. I will refer that to the minister.

**Mrs Fyffe** — On a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker, so that the record is correct, I am the honourable member for Evelyn, and it is the Athenaeum Theatre in Lilydale. The minister said Kilsyth.

**Ms CAMPBELL** — Thank you. The honourable member for Bulleen raised a matter for the Minister for Transport in relation to Serpells Road and Tuckers Road, and I will convey that to the minister also.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Savage)** — Order!  
The house stands adjourned.

**House adjourned 10.59 p.m.**



**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

*Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.  
Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Assembly.  
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, 28 May 2002**

**Manufacturing industry: ministerial officers pecuniary interests**

**433(r). MR KOTSIRAS** — To ask the Minister for Manufacturing Industry whether all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister have signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (a) was the declaration signed; and (b) did the employee commence employment .

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

**Racing: ministerial officers pecuniary interests**

**433(s). MR KOTSIRAS** — To ask the Minister for Racing whether all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister have signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (a) was the declaration signed; and (b) did the employee commence employment .

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

**Premier: office staff**

**438. MR KOTSIRAS** — To ask the Honourable the Premier what is the — (a) role; (b) job description; and (c) responsibility of the following staff in the Office of the Premier — (i) departmental liaison officer; (ii) assistant ministerial adviser; (iii) adviser; (iv) senior policy adviser; (v) chief of staff; (vi) reps coordinator; (vii) infrastructure adviser; (viii) Premier's personal assistant; (ix) administration and resources officer; (x) administration assistant — correspondence; (xi) executive assistant to the chief of staff; (xii) adviser — speechwriter; (xiii) adviser — Department of State and Regional Development; (xiv) adviser — social policy; (xv) adviser — Department of Justice; (xvi) director policy; (xvii) director Parliament; (xviii) director social policy; (xix) director economic policy; (xx) director strategy; (xxi) director administration; (xxii) director media; (xxiii) media adviser; (xxiv) Premier's media adviser; (xxv) departmental media director; (xxvi) media administration assistant; and (xxvii) media assistant.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The roles, job descriptions and responsibilities of staff in my Office change from time to time.

The member may wish to refer to the Ministerial Staff Collective Agreement 2000 for details on classifications and responsibilities of Ministerial staff members.

### **Transport: Scoresby freeway**

**469. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what are the details of any discussions held between the Federal Opposition and the State Government in regard to the Scoresby Freeway funding.

#### **ANSWER:**

The Victorian Government has undertaken a concerted campaign to secure Commonwealth funding for an integrated transport package for the Scoresby Transport Corridor.

During the period leading up to the November 2001 Federal election, the State Government sought commitments from both major parties to jointly fund the Scoresby Integrated Transport Corridor Project.

As part of this process, the Government met with the (then) Federal Minister for Transport and also with representatives of the Shadow Minister for Transport to put the case for Commonwealth funding.

This process led to both parties making offers to contribute to the construction of the Scoresby Freeway and, in the case of the Labor Party, to also contribute to the much needed public transport component of the overall integrated transport project.

The outcome of this process has been the securing of a Commonwealth Government Commitment to the joint 50:50 funding of the Scoresby Freeway. However the Commonwealth has refused to fund a share of the public transport component of the Scoresby Integrated Transport Corridor Project. Nevertheless the Government is committed to an integrated road and public transport outcome.

### **Planning: Stonehaven power station**

**485(a). MR PATERSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Planning why did the Government exempt the proposed Stonehaven Power Station from an Environment Effects Statement (EES) given the Premier's commitment that all new energy projects would be subject to an EES.

#### **ANSWER:**

The potential impacts of the Stonehaven power station mainly related to air and noise emissions which could be adequately assessed through routine Planning Permit and EPA Works Approval processes under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the *Environment Protection Act 1970* respectively, as well as through third party appeal to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

At the opening of the Codrington wind farm in July 2001, the Premier stated that like any industry, renewable energy developments are subject to environmental assessment processes and community consultation.

### **Premier: Macedonian (Slavonic)**

**495. MR KOTSIRAS** — To ask the Honourable the Premier whether the Government or people acting on its behalf had discussions or negotiations with Mr Chris Sidoti, Human Rights Commissioner of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission between 25 May 2000 and 8 September 2000 on whether the Government should withdraw the term 'Macedonian (Slavonic)', issuing an apology and paying costs; if so, when did the Premier become aware of these discussions or negotiations.

#### **ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

Inquiries have been made with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the office of the Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs. I am advised that these inquiries indicate that no person was authorised to contact the Human Rights Commissioner and that no person within the Department or the Minister's office did so.

**Tourism: Eltham–Yarra Glen Road, Watsons Creek**

**503. MR PERTON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Tourism with reference to Vicroads' proposed redevelopment of Eltham–Yarra Glen Road at Watsons Creek, between Cemetery Road and Alma Road — has the Minister considered the request of local residents that the Road be classified as a 'Scenic Tourist Route'.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Honourable Member's question falls outside my portfolio responsibilities. The Honourable Member should direct his question to the Honourable the Minister for Transport.

**Transport: department staffing levels**

**509. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what is the itemised monthly breakdown, since October 1999, of the staffing levels at the — (a) Department of Infrastructure; and (b) Rail Projects Group, and costs of employing these staff.

**ANSWER:**

Staffing numbers are compiled by the Department of Infrastructure on a quarterly basis. The following table shows the details requested from 30 September 1999 to 30 September 2001.

Period Ending	All DOI (inc RPG)	Rail Projects Group	Salary Costs for DOI (inc RPG)	Salary Costs for RPG
30/9/1999	580		10,454,502.59	
31/12/1999	609		9,927,854.98	
31/03/2000	629		8,095,236.30	
30/06/2000	637		10,403,842.52	
30/09/2000	617		9,761,136.40	
31/12/2000	656	14	11,118,757.79	221,075.92
31/03/2001	684	26	9,503,349.95	389,227.62
30/06/2001	715	35	11,840,055.67	634,103.12
30/09/2001	719	35	10,778,986.33	647,454.38

**Transport: Scoresby freeway**

**521. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to the Scoresby Freeway — (a) what commitments has the Government received from the Federal Opposition regarding the Scoresby Freeway; and (b) has the Government a commitment from the Federal Government to abide by the \$445 million funding package as announced on 9 October 2001.

**ANSWER:**

- (a) Prior to the November 2001 Federal election, the Federal Opposition announced that, if elected to Government, it would meet 50 per cent of the cost of the Scoresby Freeway. It also undertook to provide \$55 million to fund the public transport component of the Scoresby Integrated Transport Corridor Project.
- (b) The Government has, via a jointly signed Memorandum of Understanding, a commitment by the Federal Government to fund 50% of the cost of the Scoresby Freeway (excluding land acquisition expenditure prior to the date of the Memorandum).

**Transport: Vicroads appointment**

**535. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to the employment of the Hon. Mal Sandon at Vicroads —

1. What are the details of the nature of his employment for two periods totalling 28 days.
2. What was he employed to do.
3. What responsibilities did he have.
4. Whether an assessment was made at the conclusion of employment that the task had been completed.
5. What was the selection process for his position.
6. Who was his direct supervisor.
7. Who was responsible for his selection.

**ANSWER:**

VicRoads employed Mr Sandon as a contractor within the Road Safety Department, at \$320 a day, to carry out specified tasks.

Mr Sandon was employed to:

- assist with the development of a communications strategy and material for the launch of the Victorian Road Safety Strategy;
- liaise with key stakeholders including Government agencies to facilitate the launch;
- assist with identification of major initiatives to be recommended for announcement at the launch;
- facilitate a process of public consultation on the proposal to introduce alcohol ignition interlocks.

It is standard practice during provision of services of this nature to hold regular discussions with the contractor to review progress. This process was applied in this instance.

Mr Sandon was approached by VicRoads who discussed the proposed assignment with him and sought his services on the basis of his extensive experience in the area.

His direct supervisor was VicRoads' General Manager — Road Safety.

VicRoads' General Manager Road Safety in consultation with the then Chief Executive, VicRoads was responsible for his selection.

**Tourism: 2000–01 statistics**

**539. MS ASHER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Major Projects and Tourism what was the actual outcome for 2000–2001 for the tourism output groups — (a) visitor nights (Domestic); (b) visitor nights

(International); (c) number of visitors (International); and (d) awareness of advertising on Victoria for — (i) New South Wales; (ii) South Australia; (iii) Queensland; and (iv) Victoria.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The information requested by the Honourable Member is published in the appendices to the Department of State and Regional Development's Annual Report for 2000–2001.

**Treasurer: car fleet**

**581. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Treasurer with reference to pages 35 and 37 of the Department of Treasury and Finance's 2000–2001 annual report —

1. What steps have been taken to address the concerns expressed by Chief Financial Officers regarding — (a) increased leasing costs; and (b) the timeliness and accuracy of car fleet information.
2. How much is being expended in 2001–2002 to improve the timeliness and accuracy of car fleet information.
3. Whether tenders, contracts or consultancies have been called for any initiatives aimed at managing the car fleet and reducing its cost to taxpayers; if so, for each initiative — (a) on what date was the tender, contract or consultancy awarded; (b) to whom was it awarded; and (c) the amount of the tender, contract or consultancy.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

This question does not fall within my Portfolio responsibilities and should more appropriately be referred to the Minister for Finance.

**Premier: Victorian Multicultural Commission**

**585. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Premier with reference to pages 39 and 130 of the Department of Premier and Cabinet's 2000–2001 annual report —

1. Why did 'community satisfaction' with the Victorian Multicultural Commission's process of consultations and forums with community groups fail to reach the target level of 70 per cent.
2. Why was such a low target level set.
3. Which ethnic groups or communities were — (a) satisfied; and (b) dissatisfied with the community consultation process in 2000–2001.
4. Will a copy of the report of the qualitative market research conducted that arrived at the figures in the report be made available.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The satisfaction level was set at 70 per cent as the VMC's community consultations sought feedback on services and programs that reflected a range of views on needs and issues. In this context, a 70 per cent satisfaction level with the outcomes was considered realistic.

The question as to which ethnic groups or communities were satisfied or dissatisfied assumes that they are of a homogenous nature. The reality is that there are elements of satisfaction and dissatisfaction within each ethnic group and community. The Government is committed to addressing the identified and expressed needs in a considered manner to achieve the best outcomes for all Victorians.

No qualitative research report on this matter was prepared.

**Arts: COMPASS**

**586. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Arts with reference to page 45 of the Department of Premier and Cabinet's 2000–2001 annual report —

1. How much did Arts Victoria spend on the development of COMPASS in 2000–2001.
2. How much will be spent in 2001–2002.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that/as follows:

Arts Victoria has paid \$32,755 in 2000 – 2001 for the development of COMPASS.

Expenditure in 2001 – 2002 will depend on the rate of development.

**Arts: agency visitors**

**587. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Arts with reference to — (a) Cinemedia; (b) Geelong Performing Arts Centre; (c) Museum Victoria (Melbourne Museum); (d) Museum Victoria (Scienceworks); (e) Museum Victoria (Immigration Museum); (f) National Gallery of Victoria; (g) Public Record Office Victoria; (h) State Library of Victoria; and (i) Victorian Arts Centre, mentioned on pages 45 and 132 of the Department of Premier and Cabinet's 2000–2001 annual report —

1. What is the target number for visitors to each agency in 2000–2001.
2. What were the applicable targets in 2000–2001 for each agency.
3. Why did visitor numbers for all these agencies fall more than one million below the total target set in 2000–2001.
4. How many visitors had each agency received between 1 July 2001 and 31 October 2001 and what target had been set by each agency for this period.
5. How does each agency define a 'visitor'.
6. For those agencies charging an admission fee — (a) what was the average revenue per visitor — (i) in 2000–2001; (ii) between 1 July 2001 and 31 October 2001; and (b) what is the amount budgeted overall in 2001–2002.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that/as follows:

I refer the Honourable Member to the tabled annual reports for each Agency.

**Tourism: Emerald Tourist Railway Board**

**600. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Major Projects and Tourism with reference to the qualified audit opinion of the Auditor-General in the 2000–2001 annual report of the Emerald Tourist Railway Board —

1. Whether the Board is arranging for a revaluation of its land assets as required by the Financial Management Act 1994.
2. How much is a revaluation of its land assets expected to cost the Board.
3. Whether the Government provides any specific financial assistance to smaller organisations like the Board to enable them to comply with the statutory obligation to revalue their land assets.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

Following passage of the Financial Management Act in 1994, the Board (“the Board”) of the Emerald Tourist Railway (“the Railway”) determined that vested land, and land over which the Board acts as a Committee of Management, should be valued at “municipal unit site value” using the method set out in the “Asset Accounting Manual” issued by the then Office of Local Government. The municipal unit site value method involves applying the average rateable property valuation for the applicable municipality (in the case of the Railway, the Shires of Yarra Ranges and Cardinia) to the area of land vested or managed by the Board in each Shire.

This method of land valuation, undertaken by the Board, was acceptable to the Auditor-General and enabled the reports of the Board to be accepted by the Auditor General for the years from 1995 to 2000 without qualification. Advice from the Office of the Auditor-General to the Board is that this land valuation method continues to be acceptable.

The Financial Management Act requires that valuations be kept up to date, and the Board has adopted a policy of revaluing all property, plant and equipment on a progressive basis over a three year period. Locomotives and rolling stock were revalued at 30 June 1999, and buildings structures and improvements were revalued at 30 June 2001.

Land was also due to be revalued at 30 June 2001, and the two relevant Councils were approached to provide updated rateable value data on which to base a revaluation. Correct information was not able to be obtained from both Councils in order to undertake the revaluation.

Accordingly, the Board has written to the Councils seeking updated information on the average value of rateable property in the municipalities. It is expected that both will be in a position to provide this information following conclusion of the 2002 review of municipal valuations currently under way.

As a consequence of the provision of the basis of the valuation by the two municipalities, it is not anticipated that the cost to the Railway of a land revaluation will be substantial.

No specific financial assistance for asset revaluation is provided by the Government to organisations such as the Railway, as the cost of undertaking such required asset revaluations is only one of many costs incurred by these organisations in the course of their operations. The Government expects that all operating costs will be taken into account by the management and governing bodies of the organisations concerned in the development of business plans and annual budgets.

**Energy and resources: pier and jetty services**

**604(b). MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation for the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources with reference to the Department of Natural Resources

and Environment's Pier and Jetty services, discussed on page 37 of the Department's 2000–2001 annual report —

1. What were the five most common reasons suggested by users as to why they were only 52 per cent satisfied overall with the Department's services compared with the target of 60 to 65 per cent.
2. What types of users, and how many, were surveyed.
3. What areas of Victoria were users selected from to participate in any satisfaction surveys.
4. What were any expenses over \$500,000 that were reclassified from the 'Asset Investment Program' to 'Outputs' that led to the budgeted expenditure of \$13.9 million increasing to the actual expenditure of \$25.2 million in 2000–2001.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment's pier and jetty services do not fall within my portfolio responsibility and the question should more appropriately be addressed to the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

**Transport: Victrack advertising revenue**

**605. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to page 36 of Victrack's 2000–2001 annual report —

1. Why did advertising revenue decline from \$1,641,000 in 1999–2000 to \$964,000 in 2000–2001.
2. What steps have been taken to increase advertising revenue in 2001–2002.

**ANSWER:**

1. Advertising revenue in 1999/2000 reflects revenue from all static outdoor advertising across the entire public transport network. Advertising revenue in 2000/2001 only relates to advertising panels retained by VicTrack, the other advertising panels having been allocated to the franchisees as part of privatisation, hence the reduction
2. VicTrack is currently undertaking a review of its outdoor advertising portfolio, which may provide an estimated increase in revenue when implemented. It is anticipated that the review will be completed during the 2002–2003 financial year.

**Major projects: Office of Major Projects transfer**

**608. MS ASHER** — To ask the Honourable the Major Projects and Tourism with reference to 2000–2001 Financial Report for the State of Victoria, page 126, — what is the itemised breakdown of the \$1.217 million allocated to the transfer of responsibility of the Office of Major Projects to the Department of State and Regional Development.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that the 2000–2001 State Budget provided that transfer of Departmental responsibility for the Budget of the then Office of Major Projects from the Department of Infrastructure to the Department of State and Regional Development would take place from 1 January 2001. An immediate transfer from the commencement of the financial year was not possible as an amendment was needed to the Project Development and Construction Management Act to establish the Secretary to the Department of State and Regional Development as a body corporate before that Department could take Budget responsibility for the Office of Major Projects.

The required amendments to the Act came into effect from 17 October 2001, however consequential asset allocations and the transfer of Budget responsibility did not come into effect until 1 April 2001.

Accordingly, for the period from 1 January 2001 to 31 March 2001, expenditure by the Office of Major Projects was formally recorded against the Department of Infrastructure, when the Budget allocation relating to that period was held by the Department of State and Regional Development. Consultation between the Departments of Infrastructure, State and Regional Development and Treasury and Finance led to a request by the Department of Infrastructure for reimbursement to it of its unfunded expenditure through a Treasurer's Advance.

**Premier: Macedonian Teachers Association of Victoria**

**610. MR KOTSIRAS** — To ask the Honourable the Premier why all or parts of the agreement that was reached between the Macedonian Teachers Association and the Government that provided that — (a) the Premier will formally withdraw the directive made by the former Premier on 21 July 1994; (b) the State of Victoria will not oppose a determination by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission that the 1994 directive contravened section 9(1) of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth); (c) following the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission determination the State will make a public announcement; and (d) the State will pay the sum of \$5,000 towards the Macedonian Teachers Association legal costs incurred in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissions hearings in 1997 — was not adhered to.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

When this Government took Office, a legal action by the Macedonian Teachers' Association of Victoria (MTAV) against the State of Victoria was unresolved. The Government undertook to have the matter resolved via the legal process. As part of this process various suggestions were made about how the issue might be resolved. No agreement for an apology or a contribution towards the MTAV costs of proceedings was made.

The State of Victoria sought leave to appeal to the High Court. The High Court dismissed this application in May 2000. As is usual, it also made an order about costs. In this case, the costs order was made against the State in favour of the MTAV. Those costs were paid.

On 8 September 2000, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) determined that the language directive was indeed unlawful. Following the HREOC decision, the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet wrote to all Departments advising that the Premier's directive dated 21 July 1994 was withdrawn. Subsequently, legal costs of the MTAV on these proceedings were settled. There was no agreement made otherwise with the Macedonian Teacher's Association of Victoria during the term of this Government.

**Employment: youth employment scheme**

**615. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment with reference to the Youth Employment Scheme mentioned on page 96 of the Department of Education, Employment and Training's 2000–2001 annual report —

1. How many individuals have commenced in the scheme in the — (a) government sector; and (b) private sector subsections in each month from July 2000 to October 2001 from the areas and postcodes — (i) across Victoria; (ii) in the inner eastern Melbourne labour force region; (iii) in the outer eastern Melbourne labour force region; (iv) 3125; (e) 3128; (v) 3130; (vi) 3149; (vii) 3150; and (viii) 3151.
2. What percentage of individuals from the Schemes for the — (a) government sector; and (b) private sector for each month from July 2000 to June 2001 from the (i) areas — (A) across Victoria; (B) in the inner eastern Melbourne labour force region; (C) in the outer eastern Melbourne labour force region; and — (ii) the postcodes — (A) 3125; (B) 3128; (C) 3130; (D) 3149; (E) 3150; and (F) 3151 have — (i) completed the scheme; (ii) moved to further study within three months of completing the scheme; (iii) moved to further full-time employment within three months of completing the scheme; (iv) moved

to further part-time employment within three months of completing the scheme; and (v) moved to further casual employment within three months of completing the scheme.

**ANSWER:**

As a result of recent Ministerial portfolio changes, this question has been referred to me as Minister for Employment. I am informed as follows:

Government Sector – Youth Employment Scheme Commencements July 2000 to October 2001

All apprentices/trainees who commenced the Youth Employment Scheme.

**1(a)(i) across Victoria**

818

**1(a)(ii) in the Inner Eastern Melbourne labour force region**

61

**1(a)(iii) in the Outer Eastern Melbourne labour force region**

7

**1(a)(iv) Postcode 3125**

1

**1(a)(e) Postcode 3128**

2

**1(a)(v) Postcode 3130**

5

**1(a)(vi) Postcode 3149**

1

**1(a)(vii) Postcode 3150**

6

**1(a)(viii) Postcode 3151**

7

**Government Sector – Youth Employment Scheme Completions July 2000 to June 2001**

There were no completions through the Youth Employment Scheme for the financial year July 00 to June 01. The minimum duration of a placement is 12 months and the first placements from the scheme were made in August 2000.

**Private Sector**

The Government Youth Employment Scheme provides apprenticeship and traineeship placements within the Victorian Public Sector only. There are no positions available in the private sector via this scheme

**Tourism: new tourism strategy**

**616. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Major Projects and Tourism with reference to page 3 of Tourism Victoria's 2000–2001 annual report — (a) when will the new tourism strategy for Victoria be released; and (b) will the “jigsaw” advertisements that form part of the existing tourism strategy be abandoned.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (a) the tourism strategy for Victoria will be released in the first half of this year; and
- (b) that there are no plans to abandon Tourism Victoria's jigsaw strategy. The campaign continues to enjoy the support of the tourism industry as well as consumers.

**Manufacturing industry: finance industry consultative committee**

**619. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Manufacturing Industry with reference to Finance Industry Consultative Committee — (a) on what dates has the committee met between 1 July 2001 and 20 November 2001; and (b) what topics were discussed at each committee meeting.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that the Honourable Member's question falls outside my portfolio responsibilities. The Honourable Member should direct his question to the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development.

**State and regional development: business migrants**

**620. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development with reference to the Business Skills Migration Program, mentioned on page 21 of the Department of State and Regional Development's 2000–2001 annual report —

1. Why was Victoria's share of the new 2000–2001 business migrants under the program lower than Victoria's proportion of Australia's population.
2. How many 2000–2001 business migrants to Victoria emigrated from — (a) Israel; (b) the United States of America; (c) the United Kingdom; (d) New Zealand; (e) Canada; (f) South Africa; (g) China; (h) Hong Kong Special Autonomous Region; (I) Taiwan; and (j) Singapore.
3. What steps is the Government taking to ensure that Victoria attracts at least 25 per cent of new business migrants.
4. What is the estimated typical value of assets that a new business migrant brings from overseas.
5. What is the estimated number of staff that a business migrant typically employs twelve months after arrival.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

1. During the financial year of 2000/2001 Victoria successfully attracted 152 business migrants, which represented 20% of that year's total intake. This compares with 17% in each of 1999/2000 and 1998/1999; 15% in 1997/1998 and 12% in 1996/1997.

2. In 2000/2001, business migrants from the following specified countries listed Victoria as their intended State of residence:

– Israel	0	– USA	2
– UK	2	– NZ	0
– Canada	2	– South Africa	14
– China (PR)	43	– HKSAR of PRC	13
– Taiwan	41	– Singapore	15

3. The promotion of Victoria as a favoured destination for business establishment and settlement is supported across a range of international program activities undertaken by the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD) including the Victorian Government Business Offices.

The Department of Education Employment and Training has responsibility for Skilled Migration attraction, and DIIRD works closely with their staff on overseas promotional activities.

4. The latest available survey figures from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs show that after three years settlement each Business Migrant has on average introduced an amount of AUD \$677,000.
5. The Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs' latest survey data shows that after three years settlement each business employs an average of 4.3 persons.

### **Manufacturing industry: Manufacturing Industry Consultative Committee**

- 621. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Manufacturing Industry with reference to the Manufacturing Industry Consultative Committee —

1. On what dates has the committee met between 1 July 2001 and 20 November 2001.
2. Whether the committee has discussed the Feltex dispute.
3. What effect does the committee believe the Feltex dispute will have on investor confidence in Victoria.

### **ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

1. Between 1 July 2001 and 20 November 2001, the Manufacturing Industry Consultative Committee sat on the following dates:
  - 8 August 2001
  - 26 September 2001
  - 25 October 2001
  - 13 November 2001
2. The Committee has not discussed the Feltex dispute.
3. The matter was not discussed.

### **State and regional development: strategic audits**

- 622. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development with reference to page 14 of the Department of State and Regional Development's 2000–2001 annual report, when will the strategic audits be completed for — (a) environmental management and renewable energy; (b) transport,

distribution and logic; (c) metal fabrication; (d) precision engineering; (e) information and communications; (f) professional and technical services; (g) financial services; and (h) sports and recreation sectors.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

With reference to page 14 of the Department of State and Regional Development's 2000–2001 annual report:

- the strategic audit of the Environmental Management and Renewable Energy sector was publicly released in November 2001;
- the strategic audit for the Transport, Distribution and Logistics sector was publicly released in September 2001;
- the strategic audit of the Metal Fabrication sector is close to finalisation;
- the strategic audit of the Precision Engineering sector is close to finalisation;
- the Information and Communications Technology Sector plan, “Growing Tomorrow’s Industries Today — The Victorian Government’s 2010 Information and Communications Technology Industry Plan,” was publicly released in November 2001;
- the strategic audit for the Professional and Technical Services sector was publicly released in January 2002;
- consultation is occurring for the Financial Services sector audit, and the audit will be completed this financial year; and
- two discussion papers relating to the Sports and Recreation sector audit have been released and the audit will be completed this financial year.

**Transport: tram route 109 project**

**624. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to the response to question 470 that several payments will be made to Yarra Trams to facilitate tram ‘Superstops’ projects — (a) how much will be provided to Yarra Trams for ‘Superstops’; (b) how much will be provided to Yarra Trams’ Route 109 Project; (c) will a similar amount be made available to other private public transport operators; and (d) what is the legal requirement as part of the franchise agreement for the private operators in terms of providing money for ‘Superstops’.

**ANSWER:**

- (a) Yarra Trams is required to construct 15 Superstops and enhance 200 tram stops across the tram network as part of its franchise agreement with the Government. The Government’s contribution for these Superstops and tram stop enhancement works under the franchise agreement is \$4.8M.
- (b) The Yarra Trams franchise commitment to construct Superstops and enhance tram stops is on a network wide basis and not specific to the 109 route.
- (c) The construction of Superstops and associated Government contribution are commitments under the Yarra Trams franchise agreement. Other franchisees are not committed within their franchise agreements to construct or be paid for Superstops.
- (d) Refer to (c) above.

**Transport: demand management**

**638. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport —

1. What is the Government doing in to introduce 'demand management' measures to Victorian and Melbourne transport systems as described in the Infrastructure Planning Council Interim Report.
2. What are the demand management measures.
3. How will the Government implement the demand management measure proposals.
4. Whether the Government is setting an example by offering greater flexibility in working hours to public servants.

**ANSWER:**

1. The Infrastructure Planning Council released its Interim Report in October 2001, to give Victorians an opportunity to take part in a public discussion about the State's long term infrastructure needs.

The Interim Report builds on the Government's \$3 billion of infrastructure projects already under way or in the pipeline. It highlights some common themes in each of the four areas of infrastructure, transport, water, energy and telecommunications, and presents the Council's preliminary findings and proposals for public feedback.

The Council will provide its final report for consideration by the Government during 2002. The Government will then provide its response taking into account the views expressed as part of the community consultation process.

2. The Metropolitan Strategy has considered a range of travel demand management techniques in Australia and overseas, directed at: optimal use of infrastructure, reduction in total transport resources, reduction in emissions arising from the transport task, and progress towards more sustainable communities.
3. The TravelSmart (Victorian travel behaviour change program) is in its first stage of implementation.
  - Travel behaviour change programs have had considerable success in Australia and overseas and move beyond awareness raising to delivery of sustainable change in an individual's travel behaviour.
  - Through the provision of information and advice, participants gain an increased understanding about, and experience of, sustainable transport alternatives, as well as advice on how to use their car smarter in a manner that does not compromise their mobility needs.
  - Change in behaviour is achieved in the short term, and sustained over time, through working with the participants over an extended period and focusing on specific benefits, and through providing practical and realistic help and using feedback to raise awareness of current travel behaviour and its impacts (greenhouse gases, cost, time, etc).
  - More sustainable travel can be achieved through smarter use of the car and better trip planning: through encouraging use of local activities, shops, and services, and doing more things at the one location; and increased use of sustainable modes (walking, cycling, public transport and ride-sharing).

The Metropolitan Strategy (underpinned by sustainability principles) will provide the guiding framework for the management and development for the urban form and transport systems. It will provide policies, action plans, and management tools to support a sustainable modern city.

4. The Department of Infrastructure's employment policies provide for flexible working conditions including a system of flexible working hours, flexible working options (including part time) and working from home. These policies allow employees to better balance their personal life with their job. It has the added benefit of changing travel times to off peak periods, or reducing the number of vehicle kilometres travelled if working from home.

**Transport: consultancies**

**639. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to Department of Infrastructure and Vicroads Consultancies — what are the details of the total amount and cost of consultancies employed by Vicroads and the Department of Infrastructure for — (a) 1996–1997; (b) 1997–1998; (c) 1998–1999; (d) 1999–2000; and (e) 2000–2001.

**ANSWER:**

**VICROADS**

With respect to VicRoads consultancies, the details of the total amount and cost of consultancies employed by the Roads Corporation, as reported in the VicRoads annual report for each of the previous five years are:

Year	VicRoads Annual Report
1996/1997	\$9,141,000
1997/1998	\$9,668,000
1998/1999	\$7,335,000
1999/2000	\$4,684,000
2000/2001	\$2,516,000

**DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

With respect to the Department of Infrastructure consultancies, the details of the total amount and cost of consultancies employed by the Department of Infrastructure as reported in the Department of Infrastructure annual report for each of the previous five years are:

Year	Department of Infrastructure Annual Report
1996/1997	\$ 3,275,726.00
1997/1998	\$ 3,216,925.50
1998/1999	\$ 7,263,031.00
1999/2000	\$13,833,877.00
2000/2001	\$ 4,823,407.00

**Transport: environmental cost**

**646. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what is the Government doing to introduce an ‘environmental cost’ to Victorian and Melbourne transport users as described in the Infrastructure Planning Council Interim Report.

**ANSWER:**

The Infrastructure Planning Council released its Interim Report in October 2001, to give Victorians an opportunity to take part in a public discussion about the State’s long term infrastructure needs.

The Interim Report builds on the Government’s \$3 billion of infrastructure projects already under way or in the pipeline. It highlights some common themes in each of the four areas of infrastructure, transport, water, energy and telecommunications, and presents the Council’s preliminary findings and proposals for public feedback.

The Council will provide its final report for consideration by the Government during 2002. The Government will then provide its response taking into account the views expressed as part of the community consultation process.

The Government is committed to pursuing a holistic and integrated decision-making process for the development and management of the State's infrastructure. The Growing Victoria Together Policy provides the framework to balance economic, social and environmental ("Triple Bottom Line") goals and actions.

The State Planning Agenda highlights the need to implement the principles underlying sustainable urban and rural environments. Establishing high levels of liveability, safety and sustainability is regarded as a priority for Victoria's towns and cities. There is a recognised need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy and protecting ecosystems and habitats.

There are a range of Government actions and commitments supporting the Government's "Triple Bottom Line" objectives. These include:

- Upgrading public transport to deliver environmentally sustainable outcomes and reduce car dependency by providing attractive alternative travel choices to the car, with the aim of increasing travel in Melbourne taken on public transport from its current share of 9 per cent to 20 per cent by the year 2020.
- Upgrading Victoria's economic infrastructure – to provide efficient freight links for industry to Victoria's ports, the interstate road and rail system, and the national and global economies. This outcome will make a major contribution towards achieving an aim of increasing the level of rail traffic into and from our ports from the current average of 10 percent mode share to as much as 30 percent.
- Integrating land use planning, transport infrastructure and the delivery of high-quality, local government services, thereby reducing the need to travel by car to jobs, services and other opportunities.
- The Metropolitan Strategy, when completed, will provide the guiding framework for the management and development of the urban form and transport systems. It will provide policies, action plans, and management tools to support a sustainable modern city.
- The Victorian TravelSmart Program is aimed at reducing the negative impacts of car travel through a reduction in vehicle trips and kilometres travelled, achieved through voluntary changes by individuals, households and organisations towards more sustainable travel choices. More sustainable travel can be achieved through: smarter use of the car; lessening the need for travel by encouraging use of local activities, shops, and services, and doing more things in the one location; and encouraging walking, cycling, use of public transport and ride-sharing.
- The Victorian Government is developing a Victorian Greenhouse Strategy which will provide the framework across government to develop strategies and actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage renewable energy, and better manage existing energy use.
- The Environmental Protection Authority of Victoria is developing an Air Quality Improvement Plan for the Port Phillip Region. This Plan is based on using integrated transport planning; better public transport; industry control; vehicle performance, testing and monitoring improvements; and community education mechanisms to achieve cleaner air.

### **Transport: incentive structure**

**648. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport —

1. What is the Government doing to introduce an 'incentive structure' to Victorian and Melbourne transport users as described in the Infrastructure Planning Council Interim Report.
2. What 'price signals' is the Government implementing to address the incentive systems in transport in Victoria.

### **ANSWER:**

I refer Mr Leigh to the Premier's media release of Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2001, "Building on the Bricks Government's Vision for Infrastructure", which can be found on the [www.vic.gov.au](http://www.vic.gov.au) web site.

**Transport: major rail projects**

**655. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to \$14.2 million spend resourcing major rail infrastructure projects in 2000–2001, as described in the 2001–2002 Financial Report for the State of Victoria — (a) what is the itemised breakdown of where the money has been spent; (b) whether the defined objectives of the State have been achieved; and (c) what is the criteria for these objectives.

**ANSWER:**

As part of the Department of infrastructure, the Rail Projects Group was formed in September 2000 to manage the delivery of three major rail projects within the State Government’s Linking Victoria program. These three major projects are:

- Regional Fast Rail Project
- Melbourne Airport Transit Link
- Spencer Street Station Redevelopment

Initial funding was provided by Government during the 2000–2001 year to undertake the initial stages of these projects.

The seed funding was used for:

	<b>\$M</b>
Salary and salary related costs	3.0
Contractors (Financial, commercial, engineering and legal advisers)	7.3
Legal and audit	0.6
Marketing / communications	0.3
Systems / procedures development	0.2
General administration	1.0
Office Fitout	1.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14.2</b>

Objectives for each of the three projects were met, as follows:

**Regional Fast Rail Project**

Planning and other work during the year culminated in the invitation on 31 May 2001 for expressions of interest from the private sector to develop and deliver the projects.

**Melbourne Airport Transit link**

Two heavy rail operations in the Broadmeadows and Albion rail corridors were reviewed in the 2000/01 Financial Year. Detailed studies on environmental and social effects were completed, and the proposals exhibited for public comment. An independent planning panel was established in April 2001 to consider public submissions on the route for the link. The panel reported to Government recently.

**Spencer Street Station Redevelopment**

The business case for the project was approved during the year, leading to the invitation for expressions of interest from the private sector in July 2001.

**Transport: metropolitan rail freight**

**656. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what is the Government doing to reduce road freight and increase the rail freight in metropolitan Melbourne as described in the Infrastructure Planning Council Interim Report.

**ANSWER:**

The Bracks Government established the Infrastructure Planning Council as an independent body, in May 2000, to advise the Government on Victoria's future infrastructure needs over the next 20 years. The Council brings together a diverse range of experiences and expertise covering engineering, business and finance, and rural, regional and urban issues.

The work of the Council is focused on four areas of infrastructure: transport, water, energy, and telecommunications. Its Interim Report, released in October 2001, gives Victorians an opportunity to take part in a public discussion about the State's long term infrastructure needs.

The Council will provide its final report for consideration by the Government during 2002. The Government will then provide its response taking into account the views expressed as part of the community consultation process.

Improving the State's transport infrastructure is one of the Government's key priorities. Its *Linking Victoria Strategy* provides a commitment to upgrade and enhance the State's rail network and accessibility to ports. The Bracks Government has reinforced its commitment to improving the efficiency, accessibility and safety of Victoria's transport network with more than \$1 billion allocated over five years for transport initiatives in the 2001–2002 Budget: Some key initiatives being undertaken by the Department of Infrastructure to provide efficient freight links for industry to Victoria's ports, the interstate rail system, and the national and global economies include:

- Developing a rail gauge standardisation program which will undertake high priority rail standardisation projects across the Victorian rail network focused on critical links to ports and where investment will return high net benefits in terms of reduced freight costs, increased efficiency, reduced road costs and greater inter-port competition. This program is necessary because of the failure of the Kennett Government to adequately invest in regional Victoria and the intrastate rail network.

DoI also supports the conclusions of an assessment and detailed audit of the national network undertaken by Australian rail Track Corporation (ARTC), which shows that significant investment in the interstate network will bring net benefits of \$1.5 billion to the nation through the faster and more reliable carriage of freight. This identifies \$507 million investment across the nation will result in a shift of some 2 million tonnes from road to rail, saving 128,000 truck trips a year and removing more than 800 trucks from the truck fleet. An investment of \$66 million in the Victorian sections of the national network will ensure the realisation of these benefits. At this stage, the Commonwealth Government has refused to commit to funding the investment in the national rail network recommended by the ARTC.

- Evaluation of strategic metropolitan and regional locations for intermodal container terminals, to provide a more efficient freight and logistics chain.

**Transport: rail projects group**

**658. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to the nine vacant executive positions within the Rail Projects Group as described in the Department of Infrastructure's 2000–2001 annual report —

1. What are the positions.
2. What is the remuneration range of these executive positions.
3. When will these positions be filled.

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

4. What will the responsibility of these positions.
5. Why haven't these positions been filled.
6. How many executives are needed to administer the Rail Projects Group.
7. What is the executive to staff ratio of the Rail Projects Group, on a month by month basis since the Group's establishment.
8. How many non-executive staff does the Government need to administer the Rail Projects Group.
9. Since the establishment of the Rail Projects Group what is the breakdown of staffing levels in each of the various divisions within the Group.

**ANSWER:**

1. The Government approved eighteen executive positions as part of the establishment of the Rail Projects Group. Nine of these positions were filled, and nine remain unfilled.
2. In the original approval the nine unfilled positions comprised seven Executive Officer 3 positions (\$92,996–\$140,157) and two Executive Officer 2 positions (\$125, 650–\$200,196).
3. The Rail Projects Group is not proceeding to fill these positions.
4. The unfilled positions were to be used to recruit: Project Directors, Business Development Managers and Commercial Managers for the Spencer Street Station Redevelopment Project and the Airport Transit Link Project; Commercial/Legal Assistant Directors for the Rail Projects Group; and Project Manager Commercial Analysis for the Regional Fast Rail Project.
5. In some cases it was not possible to recruit managers with the experience and expertise required, and contractors were engaged to support the projects. In other cases it was judged more cost-effective to access contractor services as required.
6. The Rail Projects Group has nine executive officers.
7. Executive to staff ratio

<b>RAIL PROJECTS GROUP — STAFFING PROFILE SINCE INCEPTION.</b>			
<b>Month Ended</b>	<b>Exec</b>	<b>Non-Exec</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
October, 2000	1	7	14.3%
November, 2000	2	11	18.2%
December, 2000	2	11	18.2%
January, 2001	5	13	38.5%
February, 2001	7	15	46.7%
March, 2001	7	19	36.8%
April, 2001	6	19	31.6%
May, 2001	8	24	33.3%
June, 2001	9	26	34.6%
July, 2001	9	26	34.6%
August, 2001	9	26	34.6%
September, 2001	9	26	34.6%
October, 2001	9	27	33.3%
November, 2001	9	25	36.0%
December, 2001	9	25	36.0%

8. At the end of December 2001 the Rail Projects Group had 25 public servants who were not executive officers and five supporting contractors.
9. Breakdown of staffing levels

**Quarter Ended ...**

Section Name	31/12/00	31/03/01	30/06/01	30/09/01	31/12/01
Commercial		3	4	2	2
Strategic Relations		4	12	12	14
Spencer St Station	3	3	3	3	2
Fast Rail Projects	8	13	13	14	12
Airport Transit Link	1	1	1	1	1
Rail Projects Directorate	1	2	2	3	3
	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>

**Transport: social cost**

**661. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what is the Government doing to introduce a “social cost” to Victorian and Melbourne transport users as described in the Infrastructure Planning Council Interim Report.

**ANSWER:**

The Infrastructure Planning Council released its Interim Report in October 2001, to give Victorians an opportunity to take part in a public discussion about the State’s long term infrastructure needs.

The Interim Report builds on the Government’s \$3 billion of infrastructure projects already under way or in the pipeline. It highlights some common themes in each of the four areas of infrastructure, transport, water, energy and telecommunications, and presents the Council’s preliminary findings and proposals for public feedback.

The Council will provide its final report for consideration by the Government during 2002. The Government will then provide its response taking into account the views expressed as part of the community consultation process.

The Government is committed to pursuing a holistic and integrated decision-making process for the development and management of the State’s infrastructure. The Growing Victoria Together Policy provides the framework to balance economic, social and environmental (“Triple Bottom Line”) goals and actions.

The State Planning Agenda highlights the need to implement the principles underlying sustainable urban and rural environments. Establishing high levels of liveability, safety and sustainability is regarded as a priority for Victoria’s towns and cities. There is a recognised need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy and protecting ecosystems and habitats.

There are a range of Government actions and commitments supporting the Government’s “Triple Bottom Line” objectives. These include:

- Upgrading public transport to deliver environmentally sustainable outcomes and reduce car dependency by providing attractive alternative travel choices to the car, with the aim of increasing travel in Melbourne taken on public transport from its current share of 9 per cent to 20 per cent by the year 2020.
- Upgrading Victoria’s economic infrastructure – to provide efficient freight links for industry to Victoria’s ports, the interstate road and rail system, and the national and global economies. This outcome will make a major contribution towards achieving an aim of increasing the level of rail traffic into and from our ports from the current average of 10 per cent mode share to as much as 30 per cent.

- Integrating land use planning, transport infrastructure and the delivery of high-quality, local government services, thereby reducing the need to travel by car to jobs, services and other opportunities.
- The Metropolitan Strategy, when completed, will provide the guiding framework for the management and development of the urban form and transport systems. It will provide policies, action plans, and management tools to support a sustainable modern city.
- The Victorian TravelSmart Program is aimed at reducing the negative impacts of car travel through a reduction in vehicle trips and kilometres travelled, achieved through voluntary changes by individuals, households and organisations towards more sustainable travel choices. More sustainable travel can be achieved through: smarter use of the car; lessening the need for travel by encouraging use of local activities, shops, and services, and doing more things in the one location; and encouraging walking, cycling, use of public transport and ride-sharing.
- The Victorian Government is developing a Victorian Greenhouse Strategy which will provide the framework across government to develop strategies and actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage renewable energy, and better manage existing energy use.
- The Environmental Protection Authority of Victoria is developing an Air Quality Improvement Plan for the Port Phillip Region. This Plan is based on using integrated transport planning; better public transport; industry control; vehicle performance, testing and monitoring improvements; and community education mechanisms to achieve cleaner air.

**Transport: choice sustainability**

**665. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to sustainability in transport choices —

1. What is the Government doing to introduce ‘sustainability’ measures to Victorian and Melbourne transport choices as described in the Infrastructure Planning Council Interim Report.
2. What are these ‘sustainability’ measures.
3. How will the Government implement these ‘sustainability’ measure proposals.

**ANSWER:**

1. The Infrastructure Planning Council released its Interim Report in October 2001, to give Victorians an opportunity to take part in a public discussion about the State’s long term infrastructure needs.

The Interim Report builds on the Government’s \$3 billion of infrastructure projects already under way or in the pipeline. It highlights some common themes in each of the four areas of infrastructure, transport, water, energy and telecommunications, and presents the Council’s preliminary findings and proposals for public feedback.

The Council will provide its final report for consideration by the Government during 2002. The Government will then provide its response taking into account the views expressed as part of the community consultation process.

2. The Government is committed to pursuing a holistic and integrated decision-making process for the development and management of the State’s infrastructure. The Growing Victoria Together Policy provides the framework to balance economic, social and environmental (“Triple Bottom Line”) goals and actions.

The State Planning Agenda highlights the need to implement the principles underlying sustainable urban and rural environments. Establishing high levels of liveability, safety and sustainability is regarded as a priority for Victoria’s towns and cities. There is a recognised need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy and protecting ecosystems and habitats.

3. There are a range of Government actions and commitments supporting the Government's "Triple Bottom Line" objectives. These include:
- Upgrading public transport to deliver environmentally sustainable outcomes and reduce car dependency by providing attractive alternative travel choices to the car, with the aim of increasing travel in Melbourne taken on public transport from its current share of 9 per cent to 20 per cent by the year 2020.
  - Upgrading Victoria's economic infrastructure – to provide efficient freight links for industry to Victoria's ports, the interstate road and rail system, and the national and global economies. This outcome will make a major contribution towards achieving an aim of increasing the level of rail traffic into and from our ports from the current average of 10 percent mode share to as much as 30 percent.
  - Integrating land use planning, transport infrastructure and the delivery of high-quality, local government services, thereby reducing the need to travel by car to jobs, services and other opportunities.
  - The Metropolitan Strategy, when completed, will provide the guiding framework for the management and development of the urban form and transport systems. It will provide policies, action plans, and management tools to support a sustainable modern city.
  - The Victorian TravelSmart Program is aimed at reducing the negative impacts of car travel through a reduction in vehicle trips and kilometres travelled, achieved through voluntary changes by individuals, households and organisations towards more sustainable travel choices. More sustainable travel can be achieved through: smarter use of the car; lessening the need for travel by encouraging use of local activities, shops, and services, and doing more things in the one location; and encouraging walking, cycling, use of public transport and ride-sharing.
  - The Victorian Government is developing a Victorian Greenhouse Strategy which will provide the framework across government to develop strategies and actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, encourage renewable energy, and better manage existing energy use.
  - The Environmental Protection Authority of Victoria is developing an Air Quality Improvement Plan for the Port Phillip Region. This Plan is based on using integrated transport planning; better public transport; industry control; vehicle performance, testing and monitoring improvements; and community education mechanisms to achieve cleaner air.

### **Transport: Scoresby integrated transport corridor**

**666. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to three letters sent to persons registering their interest in the Scoresby Corridor project by signing up on the web site [www.doi.vic.gov.au](http://www.doi.vic.gov.au) —

1. What Government funds have been spent on the — (a) development; (b) printing; (c) materials; and (d) distribution of each of the three letters and their attached press releases dated 4 October 2001, 10 October 2001 and 31 October 2001 and signed by the Minister.
2. How many people have responded to the web site registering their interest in the Scoresby Corridor project.
3. What are the statistics on where respondents to the web site are in geographic direction of Melbourne and Victoria.

**ANSWER:**

1. The letters were sent by email or by post depending on the preferences of those who registered interest in the project. Costs were as follows:

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Tuesday, 28 May 2002

ASSEMBLY

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– Development of the letter	–	\$225.00
– Printing of letters	–	Less than \$20.00
– Materials	–	Less than \$20.00
– Distribution of letters (approx. 80)	–	\$200.00

2. As at 27 February 2002, a total of 398 people had registered their interest in the Scoresby Integrated Transport Corridor Project by adding their names on the project mailing list.
3. Within the constraints of privacy requirements which prevent detailed disclosure of respondents' locations, the following summary is provided:

Scoresby Corridor	–	136
Western Melbourne	–	3
Central Melbourne	–	32
Inner eastern suburbs	–	50
Northern suburbs	–	11
Outer eastern suburbs	–	15
Outer south east suburbs	–	6
Rural & regional Victoria	–	5
Interstate	–	19
Location not specified	–	121
<b>Total</b>		<b>398</b>

**Transport: Scoresby integrated transport corridor**

**667. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to a letter dated 11 September 2001 and signed by the Premier and Minister, delivered to residents in the Scoresby corridor —

1. What Government funds were spent on the — (a) development; (b) printing; and (c) distribution of the letter.
2. Why was an amended version of the Scoresby Declaration attached, and not recognised as such.
3. Where was this letter distributed.

**ANSWER:**

1.
 

(a) Development		\$ 400.00
(b) Printing of 320,000 letters		\$14,170.20
(c) Distribution of 320,000 letters		\$32,514.47
2. Printed on the back of the letter was a copy of a Mayoral Call for commitment to funding of the project, which was initiated and signed by ten mayors in the Scoresby corridor, and called for signatures from both the State and Federal Governments to the Declaration of Commitment. Demonstrating the Victorian Government's support for the Scoresby Integrated Transport Corridor, the Premier and I added our signatures to the Declaration. The location for the Prime Minister's signature was highlighted on the declaration as the Commonwealth Government had not committed to 50% funding of the Scoresby Freeway as a Road of National Importance. This failure meant that Victorian taxpayers faced a \$225 million shortfall which consequently put the project at risk of not proceeding.
3. The letter was distributed to 320,000 households in the eastern and south-eastern suburbs, from Ringwood to Dandenong to Frankston.

The letter was distributed in the following suburbs, all of which stand to benefit from the Scoresby project:

Blackburn, Blackburn South, Blackburn North, Vermont, Vermont South, Ringwood, Ringwood North, Warranwood, Syndal, Glen Waverley, Wheelers Hill, Burwood East, Wantirna, Wantirna South, Studfield, Bayswater, Bayswater North, Boronia, Ferntree Gully, Upper Ferntree Gully, Knoxfield, Clayfield, Notting Hill, Clayton, Mulgrave, Springvale, Keysborough, Noble Park, Dandenong North, Dandenong, Dandenong West, Rowville, Scoresby, Knoxfield, Chelsea, Chelsea Heights, Edithvale, Bonbeach, Carrum, Patterson Lakes, Seaford, Frankston, Karingal, Baxter, Frankston North, Carrum Downs, Narre Warren, Narre Warren South, Hampton Park, Mitcham, Ringwood East, Heathmont, Croydon, Croydon North, Mount Waverley, The Basin, Clarinda, Clayton South, Westall, Dingley, Springvale South, Parkdale, Mordialloc, Aspendale, Endeavour Hills, Langwarrin, Cranbourne.

**Transport: future transport needs**

**668. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what is the Government doing to cater for the future transport needs of metropolitan Melbourne as described in the Infrastructure Planning Council Interim Report.

**ANSWER:**

The Bracks Government established the Infrastructure Planning Council as an independent body, in May 2000, to advise the Government on Victoria’s future infrastructure needs over the next 20 years. The Council brings together a diverse range of experiences and expertise covering engineering, business and finance, and rural, regional and urban issues.

The work of the Council is focused on four areas of infrastructure: transport, water, energy, and telecommunications. Its Interim Report, released in October 2001, gives Victorians an opportunity to take part in a public discussion about the State’s long term infrastructure needs.

The Interim Report builds on the Government’s \$3 billion of infrastructure projects already under way or in the pipeline. It highlights some common themes in each of the four areas of infrastructure and presents the Council’s preliminary findings and proposals for public feedback.

The Council will provide its final report for consideration by the Government during 2002. The Government will then provide its response taking into account the views expressed as part of the community consultation process.

Improving the State’s transport infrastructure is one of the Government’s key priorities. Its *Linking Victoria Strategy* provides a commitment to upgrade and enhance the State’s rail, road and ports system in partnership with the private sector. The Bracks Government has reinforced its commitment to improving the efficiency, accessibility and safety of Victoria’s transport network with more than \$1 billion allocated over five years for transport initiatives in the 2001–2002 Budget, including:

- Upgrading public transport to deliver environmentally sustainable outcomes and reduce car dependency.
- upgrading Victoria’s economic infrastructure – to provide efficient freight links for industry to Victoria’s ports, the interstate road and rail system, and the national and global economies.
- An integrated approach to land use planning, transport infrastructure and the delivery of high-quality, local government services.

Linking Victoria projects include:

– Accident Blackspot Program	– Geelong Freeway upgrade	– Reintroduction of country rail passenger services
– Calder Highway upgrade to Bendigo	– Hallam Bypass	– Rural School bus safety program
	– Metropolitan train and tram extensions	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Connecting Transport Intermodal Program</li> <li>– Craigieburn Bypass</li> <li>– Eastern Freeway Extension to Ringwood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Regional Fast Rail</li> <li>– Rail Gauge Standardisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Scoresby Integrated Transport Corridor</li> <li>– Spencer Street Station Redevelopment</li> </ul>
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**Transport: Infrastructure/Vicroads executive officers**

**670. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what are the salary costs and number of executive officers for the Department of Infrastructure and Vicroads for — (a) 1997; (b) 1998; (c) 1999; (d) 2000; and (e) 2001 to date.

**ANSWER:**

Figures for years 1996 to 2001 have been taken from respective Annual Reports.

Executive Officer numbers are the cumulative number of staff paid as Executive Officers throughout the financial year – and therefore includes Executive Officers who left during the period.

**DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

YEAR	NO. of EO'S	TOTAL SALARY	COMMENTS
1996/1997	66	\$5,938,147	Includes Office of Major Projects.
1997/1998	64	\$7,640,194	Includes Office of Major Projects.
1998/1999	62	\$7,303,964	Includes Office of Major Projects.
1999/2000	63	\$8,995,851	Includes Office of Major Projects.
2000/2001	66	\$7,403,904	Includes Office of Major Projects.
2001/2002	58	\$3,973,929	For period 01/07/01 to 30/11/01.

**VICROADS**

Salary Costs and Number of Executive Officers at VicRoads:

YEAR	NO. OF EO'S	TOTAL SALARY
1996/1997	62	\$6,303,577
1997/1998	64	\$6,958,713
1998/1999	63	\$9,831,802
1999/2000	64	\$8,306,906
2000/2001	63	\$8,371,324
2001/2002*	64	\$4,279,901

\* Note: Total Remuneration to 30 November 2001.

**Transport: Infrastructure/Vicroads staff costs**

**671. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to the Department of Infrastructure and Vicroads — what are the — (a) salaries; (b) allowances; (c) salary on-costs; and (d) departure packages for — (i) 1997; (ii) 1998; (iii) 1999; (iv) 2000; and (v) 2001 to date.

**ANSWER:**

**DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

	1996/97 \$	1997/98 \$	1998/99 \$	1999/00 \$	2000/01 \$	2001/02 (to 31/10/01) \$
Salaries	36,202,315	37,293,768.12	35,310,159.23	36,281,974.54	39,836,045.30	14,635,585.92
Allowances	164,685	239,231.88	222,840.77	225,025.46	284,954.70	98,891.40
Salary On-costs	8,690,000	9,276,000.00	8,518,000.00	9,921,000.00	9,358,000.00	3,302,188.99
Departure Packages	2,153,000	2,227,000.00	2,183,000.00	204,000.00	33,000.00	203,903.00

**VICROADS**

	1996/97 \$,000	1997/98 \$,000	1998/99 \$,000	1999/00 \$,000	2000/01 \$,000	2001/02 \$,000
Salaries	108,937	98,519	103,213	100,812	102,268	44,459
Allowances	5,721	5,061	5,751	4,536	4,417	3,996
Salary On-Costs	49,439	47,381	47,222	52,877	51,267	18,913
Departure Packages	5,597	14	1,040	1,669	-	-

The figures reported are actual payments to employees. These vary from those in VicRoads' Annual Report, which include some "non cash" adjustments to reflect unfunded superannuation liabilities and adjustment of long service leave liabilities to the present value of expected future payments.

**Transport: Scoresby freeway**

**699. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport how will the Government fund their \$550 million share of the construction costs for the Scoresby freeway project.

**ANSWER:**

Under this Government's *Partnership's Victoria* initiative a comprehensive review of options for private or public funding is required to be carried out for major projects such as the Scoresby Freeway and this is currently under way.

**Health: secondary school nursing program**

**711. MR PLOWMAN** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health with reference to the program evaluation by Professor Gay Edgecombe —

- (1) When will the evaluation be completed.
- (2) When does the Government intend to implement the recommendations of the evaluation.

**ANSWER:**

The project that Gay Edgecombe is working on is not an evaluation, it is an action research project funded by the Nurses Board of Victoria. The first report from the action research project is expected to be completed in September.

The project will focus on the implementation of the secondary school nursing program, not on outcomes to date. Until such time as the program is aware whether recommendations will be made, it is beyond the scope of the program to identify a time line for implementation.

**Health: allocation of school nurses**

**712. MR PLOWMAN** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health —

- (1) What are the components of the formula determining the educational, health and social needs of school communities, other than the Special Learning Needs Index.
- (2) Why did those secondary schools in the electorate of Benambra exhibiting the greatest education, health and social needs not qualify, if all components were considered.

**ANSWER:**

1. The Special Learning Needs Index which provides each Victorian Secondary School an overall rating based on student information including:
  - Occupation of parents – 5 categories from unemployed to high professional
  - Family status – eg single parent, two parent, homeless etc
  - Aboriginality
  - Language other than English spoken at home
  - Number of students receiving Education Maintenance Allowance
  - Mobility – number of students enrolled other than standard enrolment time.
2. Health factors based on the Burden of Disease data pertaining to morbidity and mortality and the Centre for Adolescent Health, *Improving the Lives of Young Victorians in Our Community* research into risk and protective factors, and
3. Rurality.
  - This method results in nurses being equally distributed between rural and metropolitan Victoria.

The electorate of Benambra falls within the Hume Region of Victoria. Of the 8 secondary schools that are located in this electorate, 5 have a secondary school nurse. Schools with a SLN higher than 0.7 are eligible for inclusion in the program, the three schools in the Benambra electorate that did not receive a nurse had SLN's that ranged between 0.5964 – 0.6399, indicating the relative advantage status of parents, and were therefore ineligible under the formula used for all electorates across the state.

**Education and training: old Torquay Primary School site**

**713. MR PATERSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Education to clarify the Government's future intentions for the site.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

Following the construction of the new Torquay Primary School I am seeking advice from the Department of Education and Training as to whether the old Primary School site is required for educational purposes.

The remaining buildings on the site are being removed for safety and security reasons.

**Education and training: Torquay Primary School**

**715. MR PATERSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Education to confirm whether the Government supports the addition of post-primary years at Torquay Primary School.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

Demographic studies of the Torquay area, commissioned by both this Government and the previous Government, were carried out in 1996, 1997 and 1999.

The Department will continue to monitor education provision across Barwon–South Western Region.

**Community services: chroming in Geelong**

**718. MR PATERSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Community Services to clarify whether the Government is aware of any chroming activity at any of the state-funded agencies in the Geelong region.

**ANSWER:**

- Agencies in the Geelong area advise the Department of Human Services that there is a low level of chroming in the Barwon Sub-Region.
- Agencies that are providing residential services in the Barwon South–Western Region are required to have a policy that clearly indicates that chroming, and the use of any illegal substance, is not allowed on the premises and that all young people who are found to be chroming or using illegal substances are referred to the appropriate agency for support.
- The incident reports from agencies providing residential care indicate that appropriate referrals are being made.
- The Region provides a specialist residential withdrawal service for adolescents.

**Health: Royal Dental Hospital waiting lists**

**720. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health how many Victorians from the postcode 3150 were on the waiting list for treatment at the end of each month from September 1999 to January 2002 inclusive.

**ANSWER:**

The number of Victorians from the postcode area on the waiting list for treatment at the Royal Dental Hospital at the end of each month from September 1999 to January 2002 inclusive in the postcode 3150 is as follows:

As at:	Number:
<b>30/09/1999</b>	175
<b>31/10/1999</b>	175
<b>30/11/1999</b>	177
<b>31/12/1999</b>	182
<b>31/01/2000</b>	186
<b>29/02/2000</b>	186
<b>31/03/2000</b>	172
<b>30/04/2000</b>	171
<b>31/05/2000</b>	161

As at:	Number:
30/06/2000	164
31/07/2000	173
31/08/2000	180
30/09/2000	193
31/10/2000	198
30/11/2000	199
31/12/2000	206
31/01/2001	213
28/02/2001	199
31/03/2001	190
30/04/2001	186
31/05/2001	175
30/06/2001	164
31/07/2001	163
31/08/2001	165
30/09/2001	172
31/10/2001	174
30/11/2001	181
31/12/2001	186
1/01/2002	182

**Health: Royal Dental Hospital waiting lists**

721. **MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health how many Victorians from each of the postcodes 3125, 3128, 3130, 3149 and 3151 were on the waiting list for treatment at the end of each month from November 2001 to January 2002 inclusive.

**ANSWER:**

The number of Victorians from the postcode areas on the waiting list for treatment at the Royal Dental Hospital at the end of each month from November 2001 to January 2002 inclusive in the postcodes — (a) 3125; (b) 3128; (c) 3130; (d) 3149; and (e) 3151 is as follows:

The number of Victorians on the RDHM waiting list for Postcodes 3125, 3128, 3130, 3149 and 3151 as at:		
30/11/2001	31/12/2001	31/01/2002
601	602	604

**Planning: body corporate regulations**

722. **MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Planning why has the Government not implemented the thrust of reform recommended by the Departmental advisory committee on the body corporate regulations and the submissions made in response to the Regulatory Impact Statement process.

**ANSWER:**

The Subdivision (Body Corporate) Regulations came into effect on 17 April 2001. They were made following the publishing of a Regulatory Impact Statement and consideration of the 250 submissions received.

**Transport: crimes on public transport**

**732(a). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport how many incidents have been reported to police regarding crime on public transport for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: crimes on public transport**

**732(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General how many incidents have been reported to police regarding crime on public transport for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Transport: crimes on public transport**

**733(a). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport of the reported incidents regarding crime on public transport how many have resulted in fines or other penalties for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: crimes on public transport**

**733(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General of the reported incidents regarding crime on public transport how many have resulted in fines or other penalties for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Transport: crimes on public transport**

**734(a). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive, of the reported incidents regarding crime on public transport, which have resulted in fines or other penalties, and what is the total penalty issued (both financial and non-financial).

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: crimes on public transport**

**734(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive, of the reported incidents regarding crime on public transport, which have resulted in fines or other penalties, and what is the total penalty issued (both financial and non-financial).

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Transport: crimes on public transport**

**735(a). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what are the top 10 railway stations with the highest crime rates in metropolitan Melbourne for each year between 1994 and 2001 inclusive, and for each of these years —

- (1) What were the reported crimes at each station identified.
- (2) How many crimes were committed at each station identified.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: crimes on public transport**

**735(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General what are the top 10 railway stations with the highest crime rates in metropolitan Melbourne for each year between 1994 and 2001 inclusive, and for each of these years —

- (1) What were the reported crimes at each station identified.
- (2) How many crimes were committed at each station identified.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Transport: graffiti offences on the public transport system**

**736(a). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many people have been arrested and charged.
- (2) What was the total financial penalty enforced.
- (3) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (4) What has been the financial cost of rectifying offences.
- (5) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: graffiti offences on the public transport system**

**736(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many people have been arrested and charged.
- (2) What was the total financial penalty enforced.
- (3) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (4) What has been the financial cost of rectifying offences.
- (5) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: offences involving burnouts in cars on public roads**

**739(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the undermentioned Ministers for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many people have been arrested and charged.
- (2) What was the total financial penalty enforced.
- (3) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (4) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: offences involving street racing on public roads**

**740(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many people have been arrested and charged.
- (2) What was the total financial penalty enforced.
- (3) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (4) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: offences involving operating modified cars**

**741(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many people have been arrested and charged.
- (2) What was the total financial penalty enforced.
- (3) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (4) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Transport: illegal rubbish dumping on public transport property offences**

**742(a). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many people have been arrested and charged.
- (2) What was the total financial penalty enforced.
- (3) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (4) What has been the financial cost of rectifying the dumping.
- (5) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: illegal rubbish dumping on public transport property offences**

**742(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many people have been arrested and charged.
- (2) What was the total financial penalty enforced.
- (3) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (4) What has been the financial cost of rectifying the dumping.
- (5) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: revenue collected through fines**

**743(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General how much revenue was collected annually between 1985 and 2001 inclusive by each of the Victoria Police and non-police agencies, for each of speeding fines, drink driving fines, parking infringement fines, unlicensed driving fines, unregistered vehicle driving offences and unroadworthy vehicle driving offences.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: traffic infringement notices**

**744(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1996 and 2001 inclusive, how many infringement notices have been issued for speeding offences on the Albert Park racetrack (Lakeside Drive, Albert Park Drive, Aughtie Drive and Ross Gregory Drive), and what revenue has been raised.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Transport: complaints about tow trucks**

**747. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport how many complaints were reported to the Victorian Tow Truck Directorate, for each year between 1994 and 2001 inclusive, regarding each of illegal drivers, rude behaviour, poor clean up standards, slow service, overcharging and the tow truck industry generally.

**ANSWER:**

Year	Total
1996	157
1997	115
1998	111

Year	Total
1999	116
2000	104
2001	103

**NOTE:**

- A reliable complaints register was not in place before the 1995/6 financial year.
- Categorisation of complaints into the categories requested for each year is a manual task and would require considerable clerical effort to extract from the database. However, for 2001, the following analysis is provided:

Illegal tow truck drivers	34
Tow Truck Driver behaviour/conduct	19
Slow service	5
Assault	2
Overcharging	30
Fail to correctly complete documentation	3
Breach condition of tow truck licence	2
Refuse to tow	3
General complaints *	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103</b>

\* General includes complaints regarding a range of matters other than those above; e.g. tow to other than specified, driving offences, one truck — two tows, offer consideration for work (spotter's fees)

**Transport: penalties issued by the Victorian Tow Truck Directorate**

**748. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to penalties issued by the Directorate for each year between 1994 and 2001 inclusive regarding each of illegal drivers, rude behaviour, poor clean up standards, slow service, overcharging and the tow truck industry generally —

- (1) What was the total number of penalties issued in each category for each year.
- (2) What was the total financial or other penalties (eg suspension of licence) in each category for each year.

**ANSWER:**

The total number and financial amount of the penalties issued by the Victorian Tow Truck Directorate (VTD) relating to the tow truck industry is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

The penalties listed in the attachment are those that were levied by the VTD. In addition further penalties arising through court proceedings occur but these are not included in the table. VTD would not necessarily become aware of each of these instances.

Data relating to tow truck industry penalties was not collected prior to November 1995.

**What was the total number of penalties issued and financial or other penalties  
(eg suspension of licence) issued in each category for each year  
From 1996–2001 inclusive**

Offence Code	Description	Penalty amount \$	1996 Penalties	1996 \$ Total	1997 Penalties	1997 \$ Total	1998 Penalties	1998 \$ Total	1999 Penalties	1999 \$ Total	2000 Penalties	2000 \$ Total	2001 Penalties	2001 \$ Total
0525	Causing undue obstruction	60		0	0	1	60			0		0		0
0530	Leave vehicle on footpath	60	1	60	0		0			0		0		0
0538	Within 9 metres of intersection	100		0	0		0		1	100		0		0
0550	Contrary to signs associated with area	60		0	0	4	240			0		0		0
0714	Stopped in a no parking area	20		0	0		0		1	20		0		0
1908	Use unsafe large vehicle – does not comply with Standards	325		0	0		0			0	1	325		0
2001	Exceeding Speed Limit (15–30km)	165		0	3	495	1	165		0		0		0
2002	Exceeding Speed Limit (0–15km)	105		0		0	2	210	1	105		0		0
S 2005	Exceeding Speed Limit (40km)	300		0		0		0	1	300		0		0
S 2007	Exceeding Speed Limit (50km)	360		0		0		0		0		0	1	360
2024	Fail to stop/remain stationary at level crossing	165		0		0	1	165		0		0		0
2038	Fail to stay within lane markings	105		0	1	105		0		0		0		0
2039	Diverge when unsafe	135	1	135		0		0		0		0		0
2078	Use hand held communication equipment while driving	135	3	405	3	405	1	135	4	540		0		0
2091	Driver – fail to wear seat belt	135	1	135	3	405		0		0		0		0
2092	Passenger – fail to wear seat belt	135		0		0		0		0	1	135		0
2101	Fail to obey traffic control signal	165		0	1	165	2	330	1	165		0		0
2106	Unlicensed driving – fail to renew	250		0		0		0	1	250	1	250		0

**What was the total number of penalties issued and financial or other penalties  
(eg suspension of licence) issued in each category for each year  
From 1996–2001 inclusive**

Offence Code	Description	Penalty amount \$	1996 Penalties	1996 \$ Total	1997 Penalties	1997 \$ Total	1998 Penalties	1998 \$ Total	1999 Penalties	1999 \$ Total	2000 Penalties	2000 \$ Total	2001 Penalties	2001 \$ Total
2107	Unlicensed driving (use in circumstances other than those referred to in 2105 & 2106)	500		0		0		0	2	1,000	2	1,000		0
2108	Fail to produce licence, learner permit or DC	50	1	50		0		0		0		0		0
2113	Unlicensed driving	110		0	1	110		0		0		0		0
2118	Number plate penalty	110	1	110		0	1	110		0		0		0
2119	Registration label not fixed	50	1	50		0		0	1	50	2	100		0
2120	Fail to return number plates	50		0	1	50		0		0		0		0
2124	Own or use unregistered motor cycle or trailer	110		0		0	1	110		0		0		0
2125	Own or use unregistered motor vehicle with 2 axles	500		0		0	2	1,000		0	1	500	2	1,000
2141	Driving unlawfully in bus/transit/bicycle/truck lane	75		0	1	75		0		0		0		0
2142	Use/permit/cause use of motor vehicle when prohibited by notice	135		0	1	135		0		0		0		0
2143	Use vehicle that does not comply	165	4	660	13	2,145	11	1,815	27	4,455	15	2,475	5	825
2145	Remove unroadworthy label without authority	165		0	1	165		0		0		0		0
2408	Absent from taxi-cab	50		0		0	1	50		0		0		0
2409	Fail to wear uniform	50		0		0	1	50		0		0		0
2412	Smoke in taxi-cab	200		0		0	3	600		0		0		0
2501	Fail to obey turn prohibition or requirement sign	105		0		0	1	105	1	105		0		0
2502	Fail to obey one way or do not enter sign	165		0		0	1	165		0		0		0
4400	Tow truck operate flashing light other than at breakdown or accident scene	165	4	660	3	495	3	495	3	495		0		0

**What was the total number of penalties issued and financial or other penalties  
(eg suspension of licence) issued in each category for each year  
From 1996–2001 inclusive**

Offence Code	Description	Penalty amount \$	1996 Penalties	1996 \$ Total	1997 Penalties	1997 \$ Total	1998 Penalties	1998 \$ Total	1999 Penalties	1999 \$ Total	2000 Penalties	2000 \$ Total	2001 Penalties	2001 \$ Total
4401	Fail to notify licensing authority of change of address	105		0	3	315		0		0		0		0
4402	Authority to Tow book not carried	165	12	1,980	2	330	2	330		0	2	330		0
4403	Fail to enter all particulars on Authority to Tow form	165	34	5,610	27	4,455	14	2,310	14	2,310	5	825	2	330
4404	Fail to hand completed Authority to tow duplicate to signatory	165	8	1,320		0	4	660	3	495	1	165		0
4405	Tow truck not fitted with a flashing or rotating light or lights	165	5	825	1	165		0		0		0		0
4406	Tow truck not fitted with broom , shovel or rubbish receptacle	165	12	1,980	5	825	1	165	2	330		0		0
4407	Tow truck not equipped with fire extinguisher	165	6	990	7	1,155	2	330	3	495		0		0
4409	Fail to keep Authority to Tow forms	165		0		0		0	1	165		0	1	165
4410	Fail to maintain a record of tow trucks drivers	165	4	660	1	165		0	1	165		0		0
4411	Fail to attend accident within 30 minutes	165	7	1,155	6	990	12	1,980	14	2,310	3	495		0
4412	Tow Truck driver at accident scene unlawfully attending, towing or attempting to tow damaged motor vehicle	2,000	18	36,000	4	8,000	5	10,000	6	12,000	2	4,000	4	8,000
4413	Owner of tow truck whose driver at accident scene unlawfully attends, tows or attempts to tow damaged motor vehicle	700	6	4,200	8	5,600	5	3,500	6	4,200	4	2,800	2	1,400

**What was the total number of penalties issued and financial or other penalties  
(eg suspension of licence) issued in each category for each year  
From 1996–2001 inclusive**

Offence Code	Description	Penalty amount \$	1996 Penalties	1996 \$ Total	1997 Penalties	1997 \$ Total	1998 Penalties	1998 \$ Total	1999 Penalties	1999 \$ Total	2000 Penalties	2000 \$ Total	2001 Penalties	2001 \$ Total
4414	Touting or Soliciting	2,000	11	22,000	4	8,000	2	4,000	2	4,000	1	2,000	1	2,000
4415	Fail to produce records on demand	165	4	660	1	165	2	330	6	990	2	330		0
4416	Drive or travel in tow truck not being the holder of Driver Authority	2,000	5	10,000		0	4	8,000	2	4,000	1	2,000	2	4,000
4417	Fail to carry or produce Driver Authority on demand	500	11	5,500	6	3,000	5	2,500	9	4,500		0		0
4418	Permit person to drive or travel in tow truck not being an Authority holder	2,000	13	26,000	4	8,000	7	14,000	2	4,000	1	2,000	2	4,000
4419	Unlicensed tow truck	2,000	2	4,000		0		0	3	6,000		0	3	6,000
4421	Name & address, tare & gross or depot number not displayed on tow truck	165	39	6,435	11	1,815	5	825	4	660		0		0
4422	Fail to tow damaged motor vehicle on request	500		0	3	1,500		0	1	500		0		0
4423	Tow motor vehicle to place other than specified in Authority to Tow form	300	2	600		0		0	2	600	1	300	1	300
4424	Tow truck driver failing to clean roadway	165	8	1,320	10	1,650	3	495	1	165		0		0
4425	Attend accident scene outside controlled area without authorisation	300	1	300		0		0		0		0		0
4426	Fail to produce tow truck for inspection	165	5	825	1	165	1	165		0		0		0
4428	Fail to operate tow truck from authorised depot	500	3	1,500	1	500		0	1	500		0		0
<b>TOTAL \$ AMOUNT FOR EACH YEAR FROM 1996–2001</b>			233	136,125	137	51,545	111	55,395	127	55,970	46	20,030	26	28,380

S Suspensions

**Attorney-General: staffing levels of transit police**

**750(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) What was the staffing level under its various guises.
- (2) What was the total financial subsidy.
- (3) How many arrests have been made.
- (4) How many financial fines have been imposed.
- (5) How many non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Transport: drunken behaviour on public transport**

**751(a). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many incidents of drunken behaviour have been reported to police.
- (2) Of those incidents, how many have resulted in fines or other penalties.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: drunken behaviour on public transport**

**751(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many incidents of drunken behaviour have been reported to police.
- (2) Of those incidents, how many have resulted in fines or other penalties.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Transport: vandalism on public transport**

**752(a). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many incidents of vandalism have been reported to police.
- (2) Of those incidents, how many have resulted in fines or other penalties.
- (3) How many people have been arrested and charged.
- (4) What was the total financial penalty enforced.
- (5) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (6) What has been the financial cost of rectifying vandalism.
- (7) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: vandalism on public transport**

**752(c). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1985 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many incidents of vandalism have been reported to police.
- (2) Of those incidents, how many have resulted in fines or other penalties.
- (3) How many people have been arrested and charged.
- (4) What was the total financial penalty enforced.
- (5) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (6) What has been the financial cost of rectifying vandalism.
- (7) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Transport: fast rail links**

**754. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what was the total cost of the ‘Fast Rail Links to Regional Centres Feasibility Studies: Final Report’ which was published in September 2000.

**ANSWER:**

The total payments to contractors for preparation of the report on the feasibility of fast rail links to regional centres was \$268,123 comprised as follows:

Connell Wagner	\$122,300
Booz Allen & Hamilton	\$69,335
Essential Economics	\$76,488

**Transport: staff in rail projects group**

**761. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport since the appointment of the Bracks Government, how many staff in the Rail Projects Group are formerly KPMG staff, and what percentage do these staff make up of the Group.

**ANSWER:**

There are three former KPMG staff currently working in the Rail Projects Group on contract.

These three contractors constitute 7.5 per cent of the Rail Projects Group.

**Treasurer: land tax in the City of Kingston**

**763(b). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Treasurer what is the annual land tax collected for each year between 1996 and 2001 inclusive for —

- (1) Residential property.
- (2) Commercial property.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

Land tax is calculated on the aggregated value of an owners total non-exempt land holdings. Whether the land is used for residential, commercial or industrial purposes does not affect the calculation of land tax. Consequently the SRO does not record land use data and it is therefore not able to provide a breakdown of the proportion of the land tax attributable to Residential and Commercial property.

**Transport: level crossing upgrades**

**768. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport how much has been spent on upgrades for each year between 1980 and 2001 inclusive.

**ANSWER:**

VicRoads advised that the following amounts have been spent on level crossing upgrades in the years:

1994/95	\$0.526M
1995/96	\$0.900M

1996/97	\$0.587M
1997/98	\$3.347M
1998/99	\$2.999M
1999/00	\$2.654M
2000/01	\$3.414M
2001/02	\$3.605M (forecast)

The information for the years prior to 1994/95 is not readily available, and will require a substantial amount of time and expense to access.

### Education and training: schools in the City of Kingston

**773. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Education and Training for each year between 1995 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How much has been spent.
- (2) How many students have graduated from VCE in state schools.
- (3) How many students have failed to complete their VCE in state schools.
- (4) What was the average class size in state primary schools.
- (5) What was the average class size in state secondary schools.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The information requested is not readily available and the time and resources necessary to obtain and process the information cannot be justified. The Member is invited to submit a more specific question.

### Transport: Nightrider bus patronage

**774. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to Nightrider Bus Services for the each of the routes of Bayswater, Belgrave, Craigieburn, Croydon, Dandenong, Eltham, Epping, Frankston, Lilydale, Melton, St Albans, Sunbury and Werribee, for each year between 1995 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) What were the average daily patronage figures on each route.
- (2) What was the average daily revenue collected.
- (3) What was the annual subsidy provided.

**ANSWER:**

The Nightrider network of bus services is comprises 9 bus routes which operate to Bayswater, Croydon, Craigieburn, Dandenong, Eltham, Epping, Frankston, St Albans and Werribee. Various extensions have been added to some of these routes since 1993 when Nightrider commenced notably services to Belgrave and Rowville on the Bayswater route, a service to Lilydale on the Croydon route, a service to Mornington on the Frankston route and services to Melton and Sunbury on the St Albans route.

Patronage is only reported on a regular basis against the main route. Total patronage by route between 1995 and 2001 is provided in the attachment.

**NIGHTRIDER PATRONAGE BY ROUTE 1995–2001**

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Bayswater	7589	8704	8384	8532	8596	10739	10676
Craigieburn	3485	4116	3905	4163	3676	4258	3417
Croydon	9573	10613	10065	10229	9456	11153	12619
Dandenong	12082	13557	11775	12413	10978	12446	14284
Eltham	5867	6694	7245	6643	6660	7660	7284
Epping	3878	4016	4482	4809	5476	6048	5557
Frankston	10470	12438	12184	12697	11615	13059	12453
St Albans	7924	8969	9082	9405	7215	7450	5971
Werribee	6639	7458	6970	7265	5324	4896	3962
<b>Total Patronage</b>	<b>67507</b>	<b>76565</b>	<b>74092</b>	<b>76156</b>	<b>68996</b>	<b>77709</b>	<b>76223</b>

**Transport: revenue collected in public transport zones**

775. **MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what was the revenue collected for each year between 1996 and 2001 inclusive in each of Zone 1, Zone 2, and Zone 3.

**ANSWER:**

	1999	2000	2001
	29/08/99–31/12/99	1/1/2000–31/12/2000	1/1/2001–31/12/2001
<b>Zone 1</b>	\$ 44,407,348.89	\$ 141,718,625.15	\$ 154,891,076.60
<b>Zone 2</b>	\$ 5,846,743.44	\$ 17,796,958.68	\$ 19,313,895.42
<b>Zone 3</b>	\$ 3,493,841.41	\$ 10,359,354.14	\$ 11,231,988.71
<b>Other</b>	\$ 34,060,458.43	\$ 120,311,070.65	\$ 129,859,005.76
<b>Total:</b>	\$ 87,808,392.17	\$ 290,186,008.62	\$ 315,295,966.49

The revenue allocated to each Zone has been calculated according to the ticket Zone. Where tickets are valid in more than one Zone, the revenue has been allocated to the “Other” category.

Information regarding revenue collected by Zone prior to franchising is not available.

**Transport: revenue collected on taxi services**

776. **MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what was the revenue collected for each year between 1996 and 2001 on Melbourne metropolitan taxi services.

**ANSWER:**

The Victorian Taxi Directorate has the responsibility for regulating the taxi industry however the VTD does not collect or hold information concerning revenue collected on Melbourne metropolitan taxi services.

**Transport: passenger numbers on taxi services**

777. **MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport what were the passenger numbers for each year between 1996 and 2001 inclusive on each of Melbourne metropolitan taxi services and rural taxi services.

**ANSWER:**

The Victorian Taxi Directorate has the responsibility for regulating the taxi industry however the VTD does not collect or hold information concerning the total number of passengers using Melbourne metropolitan and rural taxi services.

**Transport: Public Transport Corporation**

**778. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport when will the Public Transport Corporation be wound up.

**ANSWER:**

The Public Transport Corporation (PTC) is currently being wound down and will be abolished by June 30, 2003, in accordance with an amendment to the Transport Act 1983.

**Transport: car registrations**

**780. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport to provide annual data on how many car registrations have been made since 1985.

**ANSWER:**

The Member for Mordialloc was a member of Parliament during the period (1985–1989) that this information was included in the VicRoads annual report, and would therefore be aware of this practice.

Data from the financial year 1985/86 through to 2000/01 is presented in the table below. Please note that as fees relating to vehicles registered under the Federal Interstate Registration Scheme are collected on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, information relating to those vehicles participating in the scheme has not been included.

<b>FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	<b>REGISTRATION VOLUMES Motor vehicles, cycles and trailers</b>
85/86	2,899,409
86/87	2,997,501
87/88	3,053,573*
88/89	3,190,066*
89/90	3,198,017
90/91	3,237,392
91/92	3,272,684
92/93	3,308,914
93/94	3,376,564
94/95	3,433,081
95/96	3,481,722
96/97	3,533,714
97/98	3,696,379
98/99	3,815,449
99/00	3,877,098
00/01	3,957,234

\* Denotes trailers excluded

Sources: 85/86 to 88/89 RTA/VicRoads Annual Reports  
89/90 to 00/01 VicRoads' Central Payment Management Database

**Transport: revenue from car registrations**

**781. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport how much money has been raised from car registrations annually since 1985.

**ANSWER:**

Data from the financial year 1985/86 through to 2000/01 is presented in the table below. Please note that as fees relating to vehicles registered under the Federal Interstate Registration Scheme are collected on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, information relating to those vehicles participating in the scheme has not been included.

<b>FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	<b>GROSS REGISTRATION REVENUE Motor vehicles cycles and trailers (Exclusive of refunds)</b>
85/86	\$190,545,000
86/87	\$202,582,000
87/88	\$194,429,000
88/89	\$142,115,000
89/90	\$103,480,849
90/91	\$105,482,035
91/92	\$213,991,687
92/93	\$293,596,852
93/94	\$358,201,807
94/95	\$372,414,557
95/96	\$376,166,621
96/97	\$388,552,434
97/98	\$410,236,387
98/99	\$425,267,679
99/00	\$437,104,551
00/01	\$453,758,304

Sources: 85/86 to 88/89 RTA/VicRoads Annual Reports  
89/90 to 00/01 VicRoads' Central Payment Management Database

**Police and emergency services: crimes in the City of Kingston**

**783. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for each year between 1995 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) How many burglaries have been reported to police.
- (2) How many assaults have been reported to police.
- (3) How many cases of murder and manslaughter have been reported to police.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that the information you have requested is publicly available and accessible by all members of the community by simply contacting the Statistical Services Branch at the Victoria Police Centre and making a specific request. If you require general crime statistics relevant to your own Local Government Area you could visit the Victoria Police web site on [www.police.vic.gov.au](http://www.police.vic.gov.au).

**Attorney-General: excessive car sound system offences**

**784. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1995 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (2) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Attorney-General: excessive car engine noise offences**

**785. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Attorney-General for each year between 1995 and 2001 inclusive —

- (1) What was the total court ordered jail terms.
- (2) What other non-financial penalties have been issued.

**ANSWER:**

The Honourable Member has placed a large number of questions on notice that relate to public transport and traffic offences. Most of the questions are unclear as to the specific information they are requesting and all require reconciliation of data held by separate agencies to prepare a reply. To answer the questions would represent an unreasonable diversion of time and resources.

If the Honourable Member focuses his question more closely I would be happy to reconsider it.

**Treasurer: land tax in the City of Kingston**

**786. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Treasurer what is the annual land tax collected for each year between 1996 and 2001 inclusive for industrial property.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

Land tax is calculated on the aggregated value of an owners total non-exempt land holdings. Whether the land is used for residential, commercial or industrial purposes does not affect the calculation of land tax. Consequently the SRO does not record land use data and it is therefore not able to provide a breakdown of the proportion of the land tax attributable to Industrial property.

**Health: aged care direct service delivery**

**798(a). MRS SHARDEY** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Health with reference to the implementation of the 2001–2002 Budget — what is the detailed financial breakdown of the aged care direct service delivery in the following aged care program streams —

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- (1) Geriatric care in total and for each of inpatient geriatric evaluation and management, inpatient geriatric respite, continence clinic, and cognitive, dementia and memory clinics.
- (2) Aged care rehabilitation in total, and for each of inpatient rehabilitation and community rehabilitation centres.
- (3) Palliative care in total and for each of inpatient hospice care and community palliative care.
- (4) Aged care assessment services and home and community care assessments.
- (5) Independent living in total and for each of VICPAC (personal alarms), delivered meals through home and community care, personal care, property maintenance and flexible service response.
- (6) Social support in total and for day centres and social support services that come under the home and community care program.
- (7) Aged care respite delivered under the home and community care program and aged care respite delivered under the carers program.
- (8) Complex community care in total and for each of the linkages package and acquired brain injury program.
- (9) Nursing and allied health in total, and for home and community care (HACC) and non-HACC allied health and nursing including low cost eye scheme.
- (10) Prevention and promotion in total and for each of the areas of falls prevention, seniors card, seniors week, community grants and any other promotional and preventative initiatives.
- (11) Aged care training, research and development program, individually itemised.

**ANSWER:**

(1)	Geriatric Care (total)	97,421.0
	– inpatient geriatric evaluation and management	92,175.0
	– inpatient geriatric respite	N/A
	– continence clinic	2,734.0
	– cognitive dementia and memory clinics	2,512.0
(2)	Aged Care Rehabilitation (total)	131,587.0
	– inpatient rehabilitation	103,787.0
	– community rehabilitation centres	27,800.0
(3)	Palliative Care (total)	45,967.1
	– inpatient hospice care	27,444.1
	– community palliative care	15,608.2
(4)	Aged Care assessment services	16,709.9
	Home and community care assessments	5,963.6
(5)	Independent living (total)	45,258.2
	– VICPAC	389.2
	– delivered meals (HACC)	4,866.0
	– personal care	21,083.5
	– property maintenance	6,578.6
	– flexible service response	12,340.9

(6)	Social support (total)	61,254.1
	– day centres	29,301.9
	– social support services (HACC)	31,952.2
(7)	Aged care respite (HACC)	16,443.2
	Aged care respite (Carers)	8,863.1
(8)	Complex community care (total)	40,211.2
	– linkages packages	33,111.2
	– acquired brain injury	7,100.0
(9)	Nursing and allied health (total)	89,752.1
	– HACC allied health and nursing	77,616.8
	– non HACC allied health and nursing inc low cost eye scheme	12,135.3
(10)	Prevention and Promotion (total)	5,423.0
	– falls prevention	1,500.0
	– seniors card	680.0
	– seniors week	1,000.0
	– community grants	1,493.0
	– any other promotional and preventative initiatives	750.0
(11)	Aged care training, research and development program individually itemised	
	Carer and Family Involvement in Residential Aged Care project	99.7
	Victorian Association of Health and Extended Care – Workforce Forum	16.0
	National Analysis for Nursing Home Regulation	9.9
	National Ageing Research Institute	516.9

**Senior Victorians: aged care direct service delivery**

**798(b). MRS SHARDEY** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Senior Victorians with reference to the implementation of the 2001–2002 Budget — what is the detailed financial breakdown of the aged care direct service delivery in the following aged care program streams —

- (1) Geriatric care in total and for each of inpatient geriatric evaluation and management, inpatient geriatric respite, continence clinic, and cognitive, dementia and memory clinics.
- (2) Aged care rehabilitation in total, and for each of inpatient rehabilitation and community rehabilitation centres.
- (3) Palliative care in total and for each of inpatient hospice care and community palliative care.
- (4) Aged care assessment services and home and community care assessments.
- (5) Independent living in total and for each of VICPAC (personal alarms), delivered meals through home and community care, personal care, property maintenance and flexible service response.
- (6) Social support in total and for day centres and social support services that come under the home and community care program.
- (7) Aged care respite delivered under the home and community care program and aged care respite delivered under the carers program.

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- (8) Complex community care in total and for each of the linkages package and acquired brain injury program.
- (9) Nursing and allied health in total, and for home and community care (HACC) and non-HACC allied health and nursing including low cost eye scheme.
- (10) Prevention and promotion in total and for each of the areas of falls prevention, seniors card, seniors week, community grants and any other promotional and preventative initiatives.
- (11) Aged care training, research and development program, individually itemised.

**ANSWER:**

(1)	Geriatric Care (total)	97,421.0
	– inpatient geriatric evaluation and management	92,175.0
	– inpatient geriatric respite	N/A
	– continence clinic	2,734.0
	– cognitive dementia and memory clinics	2,512.0
(2)	Aged Care Rehabilitation (total)	131,587.0
	– inpatient rehabilitation	103,787.0
	– community rehabilitation centres	27,800.0
(3)	Palliative Care (total)	45,967.1
	– inpatient hospice care	27,444.1
	– community palliative care	15,608.2
(4)	Aged Care assessment services	16,709.9
	Home and community care assessments	5,963.6
(5)	Independent living (total)	45,258.2
	– VICPAC	389.2
	– delivered meals (HACC)	4,866.0
	– personal care	21,083.5
	– property maintenance	6,578.6
	– flexible service response	12,340.9
(6)	Social support (total)	61,254.1
	– day centres	29,301.9
	– social support services (HACC)	31,952.2
(7)	Aged care respite (HACC)	16,443.2
	Aged care respite (Carers)	8,863.1
(8)	Complex community care (total)	40,211.2
	– linkages packages	33,111.2
	– acquired brain injury	7,100.0
(9)	Nursing and allied health (total)	89,752.1
	– HACC allied health and nursing	77,616.8
	– non HACC allied health and nursing inc low cost eye scheme	12,135.3
(10)	Prevention and Promotion (total)	5,423.0
	– falls prevention	1,500.0

	– seniors card	680.0
	– seniors week	1,000.0
	– community grants	1,493.0
	– any other promotional and preventative initiatives	750.0
(11)	Aged care training, research and development program individually itemised	
	Carer and Family Involvement in Residential Aged Care project	99.7
	Victorian Association of Health and Extended Care – Workforce Forum	16.0
	National Analysis for Nursing Home Regulation	9.9
	National Ageing Research Institute	516.9

**Police and emergency services: 50 km/h speed limit in built-up areas**

**802. MR WELLS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services how many drivers have received traffic infringement penalty notices for breaching the limit since its introduction on 22 January 2001.

**ANSWER:**

The 50 km/h default speed limit in built up areas was implemented to enhance safety in residential streets and not as a revenue raiser.

**Police and emergency services: resources for speed detection**

**805. MR WELLS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services what resources are allocated to detecting breaches of the 50 km/h speed limit.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

Locations of speed detection devices is determined by Police according to a number of factors including accident rates.

There is no disaggregated data available on the total time spent on enforcement in a 50 km/h zone by hand-held speed measuring devices or mobile intercepts.

**Police and emergency services: speed cameras in 50 km/h speed limit zones**

**806. MR WELLS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services of the total number of hours of operation, how many hours, in actual number and percentage terms, have been expended in the monitoring of the limit by speed cameras since its introduction on 22 January 2001.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

The time spent monitoring particular locations is not determined by a particular apportionment of time to particular speed limit zones, but rather according to risk factors.

**Police and emergency services: effect of 50 km/h speed limit on road trauma**

**807. MR WELLS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services what measures are in place to monitor and assess the performance of the limit in terms of actual impact on road trauma in Victoria.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised that:

The Monash University Accident Research Centre has been commissioned to evaluate the performance of the 50 km/h speed limit in terms of the impact on road trauma. An interim evaluation will be finalised shortly.

**State and regional development: Food and Hotel Asia 2002**

**821. MS ASHER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development what are the details of the process undertaken to choose the companies listed on the media release ‘Victorian Companies Converge on Asia’ (Sunday 31 March 2002) to represent Victoria at Food and Hotel Asia 2002 in Singapore.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed as follows:

The process used to choose the companies to attend Food and Hotel Asia 2002 in Singapore was as follows:

1. The Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development advertised regionally, and its officers also directly contacted companies known to them to be interested in export. A series of ‘export-ready’ seminars was held in seven regional areas throughout the State to promote and educate food producers and processors about the Trade Fairs and Missions planned for 2001/2002.
2. All interested and eligible businesses were accommodated in their request for participation, but to qualify they had to:
  - Achieve a threshold level of ‘export readiness’, and be prepared to explore their potential in the export markets of Asia.
  - Attend preparation/training sessions on export marketing run by the Department.
  - Pass a standard financial merit check by the Department.

**Police and emergency services: speeding during Easter 2002**

**828(a). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services with reference to speeding offences over the Easter 2002 holidays booked at the San Remo bridge near Phillip Island and on Warrigal Road in the Oakleigh South area —

- (1) How many motorists were booked for speeding by speed cameras at each location.
- (2) How much revenue was raised at each location.
- (3) What were the speeds at which motorists were booked.

**ANSWER:**

I am advised as follows:

No speed cameras operated at the San Remo bridge near Phillip Island or on Warrigal Road in the Oakleigh South area during the Easter 2002 holidays (29 March to 1 April 2002 inclusive).

**Police and emergency services: road safety advertising campaigns**

**835(a). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services how much money has been spent on campaigns by VicRoads and/or the Transport Accident Commission annually since 1992.

**ANSWER:**

The question relates to matters falling outside of my portfolio responsibilities. The question should be directed to Minister for Transport, the Hon. Peter Batchelor, in relation to VicRoads and the Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport Regarding Roads, the Hon. Bob Cameron, in relation to the Transport Accident Commission.

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

*Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.  
 Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Assembly.  
 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.*

**Wednesday 29 May 2002**

**Environment and conservation: Natural Resources and Environment purchases**

**223. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation —

1. What percentage of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment's (DNRE) purchases for December 1999 and 1 January to 30 June 2000 were from — (a) Melbourne; (b) regional Victoria; (c) interstate; and (d) overseas vendors.
2. What were the top 20 Purchasing Information System (PURIST) products or services and the dollar value of each purchased by DNRE for December 1999 and 1 January to 30 June 2000.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

1. Based on regional definitions used by Australia Post, during the period of December 1999, the percentage of NRE purchases from (a) Melbourne was 61%, (b) Regional Victoria was 24%, (c) interstate 15% and (d) overseas vendors was 0%. From 1 January to 30 June 2000, the percentage of NRE purchases from (a) Melbourne was 53%, (b) Regional Victoria was 29%, (c) interstate was 18% and (d) overseas vendors was 0%. The figures are based on the postcode of the vendor's billing address and to the extent that some rural suppliers may use metropolitan billing addresses, the Melbourne expenditure may be overstated and regional expenditure may be an understatement of purchasing conducted locally.
2. The two tables below show the aggregated amounts paid for the top 20 PURIST products or services in each of the periods specified in the question.

It is important to note that the Department's expenditure throughout the year is heavily influenced by seasonal conditions. The monthly expenditure can therefore be highly variable, and the expenditure in December (a short working month) cannot be used to project expenditure for the balance of the year.

Ranking by Value of Expenditure	Purist Code	Description	Expenditure for December 1999
1	8691	Professional, engineering & technical services (excluding legal, disbursements & expenses, accounting, auditing, bookkeeping, taxation, market research & public opinion polling, inspection & testing [architectural, engineering & other technical services] )	\$4,367,675
2	8791	Business services of a non consulting nature (excluding advertising, marketing & promotion, meetings & conferences, placement & supply of personnel, security, building cleaning, printing & utilities costs)	\$2,957,483
3	8814	Forestry and Logging Services	\$1,988,956
4	7122	Land Transport Services (excluding rail passenger, rail freight, non-aircraft passenger, towing services, freight vehicle hire, furniture removals and fleet management services)	\$1,727,113
5	A219	Tools, Hardware & Building Supplies (excluding Power & Hand Tools, Plumbing & Electrical Supplies and Builders Hardware & Supplies)	\$1,551,045
6	8721	Placement & supply services of personnel	\$962,648
7	8319	Rental Services (excluding motor vehicle, computer equipment, photocopiers and telephone lines)	\$939,093

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8	8912	Real estate property rental fees and charges	\$905,459
9	8911	Financial assets & liabilities (e.g. motor vehicle registration, tax, duties)	\$649,045
10	8312	Long term lease of motor vehicles	\$614,445
11	8434	Outsourced information technology services	\$535,735
12	7523	General Telecommunication Services and Call Charges	\$532,495
13	3891	Goods (excluding furniture, musical instruments, sports goods, games & toys and prefabricated buildings)	\$437,585
14	A119	Office Consumables & Supplies (excluding printed forms, stationery, copying paper, computer stationery, computing and typewriter consumables)	\$408,667
15	6411	Accommodation & associated expenses (related to hotel & restaurant services)	\$312,472
16	8752	Printing, reprographic and bindery services	\$306,375
17	4721	Radio and Television Transmitters	\$303,208
18	B619	Scientific & technical services (excluding legal, health industry, education sector & environmental advice, internal audit, engineering, architectural & drafting services)	\$280,763
19	8224	Real Estate Services – Property Valuations	\$245,889
20	8611	Legal Services	\$190,523
<b>Ranking by Value of Expenditure</b>			
<b>Ranking by Value of Expenditure</b>	<b>Purist Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Expenditure for 1 January to 30 June 2000</b>
1	8791	Business services of a non consulting nature (excluding advertising, marketing & promotion, meetings & conferences, placement & supply of personnel, security, building cleaning, printing & utilities costs)	\$29,413,426
2	8691	Professional, engineering & technical services (excluding legal, disbursements & expenses, accounting, auditing, bookkeeping, taxation, market research & public opinion polling, inspection & testing [architectural, engineering & other technical services] )	\$29,273,745
3	A219	Tools, Hardware & Building Supplies (excluding Power & Hand Tools, Plumbing & Electrical Supplies and Builders Hardware & Supplies)	\$11,999,065
4	8814	Forestry and Logging Services	\$9,395,397
5	8721	Placement and supply services of personnel	\$7,327,125
6	7122	Land Transport Services (excluding rail passenger, rail freight, non-aircraft passenger, towing services, freight vehicle hire, furniture removals and fleet management services)	\$7,273,778
7	7391	Air Transport Services (excluding passenger transport)	\$6,855,842
8	8312	Long term lease of motor vehicles	\$6,838,583
9	8911	Financial assets & liabilities (e.g. motor vehicle registration, tax, duties)	\$6,348,421
10	8912	Real estate property rental fees and charges	\$5,373,040
11	8434	Outsourced information technology services	\$4,083,128
12	8319	Rental Services (excluding motor vehicle, computer equipment, photocopiers and telephone lines)	\$3,943,178
13	4721	Radio and Television Transmitters	\$3,351,179
14	7523	General Telecommunication Services and Call Charges	\$3,224,906
15	A119	Office Consumables & Supplies (excluding printed forms, stationery, copying paper, computer stationery, computing and typewriter consumables)	\$2,896,026
16	4491	Machinery (excluding agricultural or forest, machine tools, machinery for mining, quarrying & construction, weapons, ammunition and domestic appliances)	\$2,812,508
17	8921	Computer Software and Operating Systems	\$2,427,779
18	8712	Marketing and Promotion Services (except advertising and consulting services)	\$2,281,650
19	8224	Real Estate Services – Property Valuations	\$2,218,911

Ranking by Value of Expenditure	Purist Code	Description	Expenditure for 1 January to 30 June 2000
20	B619	Scientific & technical services (excluding legal, health industry, education sector & environmental advice, internal audit, engineering, architectural & drafting services)	\$1,898,646

**Environment and conservation: dispute mediation**

**232. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to dispute mediation — (a) what disputes has the Minister or the Department endeavoured to settle through mediation since coming to office; (b) who were the mediators appointed; (c) what has been the cost to the Department of each mediation; and (d) what have been the outcomes of the mediations.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Bracks Government is committed to working with communities to ensure that they are involved in government decision making. Mediation and conciliation provides an opportunity to resolve issues before expensive legal costs are incurred.

Since coming to office until 3 October 1999 when this question was asked, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment has sought to settle the following disputes through mediation:

The first case was a dispute between the Seal Rocks Centre and NRE. Mediation is a compulsory step and outlined in the contract between the two parties signed by the previous Government. The mediator appointed when this condition was exercised was Dr Pannam QC. The cost of the mediation was approximately \$30,000 including legal costs. The matter was not resolved.

The second case involved a dispute between NRE staff over work processes. The mediator was Mr Robert Vial. The cost of the mediation was \$1,200. The matter was settled by agreement.

The third case involved a dispute regarding the integrity of the Porepunkah waste water treatment ponds and the proposed location of a winter storage pond involving North East Water. A small part of the Porepunkah community has been concerned at the process put in place by North East Water Authority to resolve this issue. Mr Bob Smith – Senior Associate at the Centre for Public Policy at the University of Melbourne was the mediator. The cost of the mediation at the date of this question was just under \$40,000.

The fourth case concerned the Otway forests. Mr Ian Petty and Heather Leslie were appointed through the Victorian Dispute Mediation Centre to hold discussions with the Otway Mediation Group, which comprised industry and environment groups, to seek a way to prevent confrontation in the Otway area. The cost of the mediation was \$24,420. As a result of the discussions, NRE scheduled logging in non-contentious coupes for most of that harvesting season.

**Environment and conservation: Willung South lookout tower**

**447. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to the Willung South Lookout Tower in Gippsland — (a) who is the responsible agency; and (b) what is the annual budget for — (i) the maintenance of the Tower; (ii) the maintenance of the area framing the Tower car park and surrounds; and (iii) the collection and removal of rubbish in the precinct of the Tower.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

Neither the Department of Natural Resources and Environment nor any of its portfolio agencies are responsible for the Willung South Lookout Tower.

**Environment and conservation: water tanks**

**448. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to the importance of water conservation and the merit of on-site water collection through the use of domestic water tanks —

1. What metropolitan councils currently promote domestic water collection and storage on-site.
2. How many metropolitan and country households currently use water tanks for domestic water usage.
3. What domestic water tank permits, as applicable, have been issued for — (a) 1998; (b) 1999; (c) 2000; and (d) 2001 to date.
4. What is the policy of the Government to increase the level of on-site water storage.
5. What action has the Government taken to increase the number of households installing on-site water storage.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

1. The majority of metropolitan councils are supportive of the installation of rainwater tanks and a few councils are actively encouraging rainwater tanks for “green field” subdivisions.
2. The latest figures provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in their 1998 *Environmental Issues: Peoples Views and Practices Survey* indicated that 13.9% of Victorians used rainwater tanks as a source of their water.
3. As most of the rainwater tanks being installed do not require a permit, records of installations are limited. In September 2001, the Victorian Government announced that rainwater tanks (up to 4.5 kL) could be installed without the need of a planning permit from Councils.
4. & 5. A Water Resources Strategy for the Melbourne Area is currently being developed to provide a framework for the next 50 years. The Strategy will ensure that Melbourne’s water resources are managed in a way that is cost effective, sustainable and responsive to community needs.

The Strategy will document the current status of Melbourne’s water resources and security of the current supply arrangements. It will plan for the continuation of safe and reliable supplies of water at an acceptable cost, and ensure that environmental sustainability is achieved in balancing water resources and demand over the longer term.

The Strategy will also examine in detail, options for alternative sources of supply. This will include using rainwater tanks and stormwater, recycling and reuse, and how water consumption can be managed. The Government will wait until the completion of the Water Resources Strategy for the Melbourne Area before considering any proposal to change the current situation governing rainwater tank installations.

Consultation on this process commenced with the release of a Discussion Starter in June 2001 and the “21st Century Melbourne: a WaterSmart City – Strategy Directions Report” is due to be released shortly followed by a second round of consultation.

**Environment and conservation: paint disposal**

**449. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to Environment Protection Authority (EPA) recommendations regarding paint disposal and washing of paint brushes — (a) what is the level of compliance; (b) how many prosecutions have been instigated over the last two financial years for non-compliance; and (c) what plans do the Government and EPA have to increase the level of compliance.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (a) It is not possible to determine the exact level of compliance with recommendations regarding paint disposal and washing of paint brushes
- (b) Over the last two financial years one prosecution has been initiated by EPA Victoria for matters relating in part to the inappropriate disposal of paint. In addition, a number of Infringement Notices have been issued under the Litter Act 1987 for inappropriate disposal of paint and washing of paintbrushes. Determining the exact number of Infringement Notices issued under the Litter Act would involve a review of each of the 13,871 Infringement Notices issued over the past two financial years, and would thus be an unreasonable diversion of resources.
- (c) The Victorian Government and EPA Victoria are committed to increasing the level of compliance in this area. EPA circulates material produced by the Australian Paint Manufacturers Federation relating to the appropriate disposal of old paint and the appropriate cleaning of brushes and rollers. EPA Victoria will continue to investigate complaints made in relation to inappropriate disposal of paint and washing of paintbrushes and penalties for illegal dumping have increased substantially over the last two years.

**Environment and conservation: water-permeable paving**

**451. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to the extensive use and success of water-permeable paving at the Sydney Olympic site to reduce outflows of stormwater — what steps are being undertaken to encourage the use of permeable surfaces in — (a) State Government projects; (b) local government projects; and (c) private development and building projects.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The following steps have or are being undertaken to encourage widespread use of ‘water sensitive urban design’ measures (including water-permeable surfaces) in private, local and State Government projects:

- The Victorian Government’s Victorian Stormwater Action Program (VSAP) adopted the *Urban Stormwater Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines*, published by CSIRO for EPA Victoria and Melbourne Water in 1999.
- These guidelines include various measures that can reduce peak stormwater flows and improve stormwater quality (by increasing stormwater infiltration).
- In May 2001 EPA funded a project through the VSAP that will establish ‘water sensitive urban design’ requirements for councils to include in their local planning policy framework. All private and public developments at the lot, precinct and regional scale will have to meet these planning standards, by using ‘best practice’ measures such as water-permeable surfaces.
- EPA will also be leading the development of a design manual for ‘water sensitive urban design’ through VSAP’s 2001–02 Strategic Program.

- (a) A process has been set up to review environmental issues and options for the 2006 Commonwealth Games. This will include 'best practice' measures that reduce peak stormwater flows and improve stormwater quality for this State Government project.
- (b) Victoria's local governments are implementing these and other 'best practice' approaches through their stormwater management plans. Each local government is required to develop a plan under the Government's stormwater program (VSAP) to ensure they have a framework for implementing 'best practice'. Consequently a great variety of measures for reducing peak stormwater flows and improving the quality of urban stormwater run-off are being adopted by local governments, developers and builders.
- (c) 'Water sensitive urban design' measures are also being promoted and implemented by other government agencies, including Melbourne Water, EPA Victoria, the Urban and Regional Land Corporation and the Department of Infrastructure. So now certain private developments, such as Lynbrook Estate in Melbourne's outer east, are leading showpieces in Australia.

**Environment and conservation: Central Park development**

**453. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to the Government's announcement of the proposed \$2 billion Melbourne Central Park development announced in *The Age* on 22 August 2001 —

1. What forms of lighting will be used throughout the public areas which utilise sustainable energy.
2. Will the Minister be directing members of the consortium who wish to develop Central Park adhere to the Energy Smart Housing Program.
3. What benchmarks are in place to ensure accommodation achieves the highest energy star rating.
4. What energy star rating will the Minister stipulate for the development.
5. What non-polluting sources of energy will be employed in the housing and commercial structures.
6. What percentage of electricity will be drawn from renewable sources.
7. Will the finished development qualify to be an accredited Energy Smart Estate.
8. Will the Minister direct that the development adhere to the First Rate Energy Efficiency Package.
9. What disposal or recycling measures will be employed for the handling of solid waste.
10. What type of water-quality filtering system will be employed to ensure Port Phillip Bay is protected for polluted run-off.
11. Assuming the development will adhere to the world's best practice, how will rainwater be collected for the development of — (a) each individual dwelling; and (b) a whole of development approach.
12. What measures will the Minister stipulate be taken with regard to the reduction of greenhouse emissions from the development.
13. What measures will be put in train to ensure the environmentally sound disposal and recycling of waste water.
14. Will the landscaping contain indigenous plantings to encourage native fauna to return to the area.
15. What percentage of the 500,000 square metres will be set aside for open space and will this open space incorporate a complete ecosystem.

16. What key initiatives will the Minister employ regarding sustainable living for the proposed 40 per cent of development devoted to social housing.
17. Will the Minister proscribe inappropriate building materials for the commercial or residential sections of the development.
18. Which ecological consultants have been, or will be, engaged to oversee environmental compliance.
19. What qualifications are ecological consultants to the project required to have.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that the Melbourne Central Park development does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities and should more appropriately be asked of the Minister for Commonwealth Games.

**Environment and conservation: Vicroads weed control**

- 458. MR PERTON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation — what protocols exist between the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Vicroads to ensure weed infestation is controlled in areas within the responsibility of Vicroads.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

Regional Weed Action Plans have been developed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and each of the Catchment Management Authorities throughout the State. Wide community consultation occurred over the last two years in developing these 10 plans. The plans identify the important weeds in each region and the agreed priorities for action by the community. As the 'land owner' VicRoads is responsible for weed control on the 'declared road network' which includes freeways, highways, main roads, tourist roads and forest roads.

At the regional level, officers of the Department have been working with VicRoads officers to identify the priority infestations of weeds on the declared road network that require attention, to support community action. Weed control projects have been developed to be conducted by or on behalf of VicRoads.

**Environment and conservation: miners' rights**

- 476. MR PERTON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to the exercise of miners' rights on public land —
1. In what land that is a national park, wilderness park or State park is such exercise permitted.
  2. What breaches of the prohibition of the — (a) use of explosives; (b) use of any equipment for excavation other than non-mechanical hand tools; (c) removal of or damage to any tree or shrub; and (d) disturbance of any Aboriginal place or object have there been since October 1999 and what prosecutions have there been for each.
  3. What working definition of 'non-mechanical' hand tool is used by Department of Natural Resources and Environment officers in determining the legality of prospecting on public land.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

1. Under the Mineral Resources Development Act 1990 prospecting is not permitted within a national park, wilderness park or State Park. However, the *National Parks Act 1975* permits the holders of a miners right to prospect in limited areas in the following Parks:

Beechworth Historic Park	Enfield State Park
Kamarooka State Park	Kara Kara State Park
Kooyoora State Park	Paddys Ranges State Park
Steiglitz Historic Park	Whipstick State Park
Warrandyte State Park	

Additionally, fossicking for gemstones is permitted in the following Parks:

Cape Liptrap Coastal Park	Cape Shank Coastal Park
Mornington Peninsula National Park	Otway National Park

2. In relation to the exercise of miners' rights on public land no prosecutions were recorded for the categories outlined in the question although a number of complaints concerning illegal mining have been investigated. Only one of these resulted in a person being found to be operating without a miners right and this person was instructed to immediately cease prospecting.
3. "Non-mechanical" hand tool means a hand tool that is not operated by mechanical means, for example a shovel. This definition applies to any excavation of materials being undertaken under a miners right.

**Environment and conservation: Clean Up Your Beach Day**

**492. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to the launch by the State Government together with the Environment Protection Authority of 'Clean Up Your Beach Day' on 4 February 2001, and reported in the *Herald Sun* on 5 February 2001 — (a) what are the litter reduction targets for Victoria's beaches; (b) what was the cost of the launch; (c) how many people were involved in the clean up of the Carrum Beach; and (d) what volume of rubbish was collected.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (a) There are no specific litter reduction targets set for Victorian beaches. EPA Victoria works with councils using regulatory tools and education programs to reduce littering in the State.
- (b) The cost of the launch was approximately \$800.
- (c) Nearly 30 volunteers were involved despite the inclement weather.
- (d) Approximately 45 garbage bags of rubbish were collected.

**Environment and conservation: Mount Buangor — waterfalls walk**

**565. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation what are the plans of Parks Victoria for the repair or replacement of the picnic shelter roof at the beginning of the Waterfalls Nature Walk at the Mt Buangor State Park.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that this picnic shelter is old, beyond repair and is to be removed. A review will be undertaken at this site to ascertain the level of service that is sustainable in the area prior to determining if the facility is to be replaced.

**Environment and conservation: 'Discovering Mallacoota'**

**571. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to the publication by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment entitled 'Discovering Mallacoota' —

1. Where is this publication available.
2. If it is not available, what plans are there for it to be reprinted.
3. If there are no plans for it to be reprinted, what is the rationale for this.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

1. The brochure 'Discovering Mallacoota' is now out of date and is no longer printed.
2. Parks Victoria does not plan to reprint that particular brochure as the business sector in Mallacoota provides brochures on accommodation and tourism opportunities in the area.
3. Parks Victoria have, over time, expanded and improved the range of brochures available. The current brochures (provided free to the public by Parks Victoria) promote a wider range of visitor facilities and the natural values in Parks in the Mallacoota area than the 'Discovering Mallacoota' brochure.

**Environment and conservation: Mallacoota information centre**

**572. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to the Parks Victoria Information Centre at Mallacoota — (a) what are the current hours of operation; (b) what variation has there been for public access to the office for information over the past two years; and (c) what plans are there to expand the hours of operation for the office.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Parks Victoria office at Mallacoota is a work centre for local operations and is not a general tourism Information Centre. The office provides information on areas managed by Parks Victoria and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

- (a) The current hours of operation are 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday, with the office being open to the public from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.
- (b) There has been no variation to public access over the past two years.
- (c) There are no plans to expand the hours of operation for the office.

**Environment and conservation: beach renourishment works**

**573. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to page 37 of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2001 Annual Report — (a) where is the beach location which features the photo of the truck engaged in beach renourishment works; (b) what was the total cost of that particular project; and (c) in which financial year was the work undertaken.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (a) The beach renourishment works identified in the photo on page 37 of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment's 2001 Annual Report occurred at Middle Park Beach, adjacent to the Middle Park Life Saving Club;
- (b) The total cost of the project was approximately \$150,000 of which \$50,000 was funded by the City of Port Phillip.
- (c) The works were undertaken in the 2000/2001 financial year.

**Environment and conservation: Natural Resources and Environment Workcover premiums**

**611. MR WELLS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation —

- 1. What were the Department of Natural Resources and Environment's Workcover premiums relating to departmental employees involved in any fire fighting responsibilities, in actual dollar terms, for the financial years ended — (a) 30 June 2000; and (b) 30 June 2001.
- 2. What was the percentage change, compared to budget, in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment's Workcover premiums relating to the departmental employees involved in any fire fighting responsibilities, for the financial years ended — (a) 30 June 2000; and (b) 30 June 2001.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- 1. Workcover premiums in dollar terms, relating to employees involved in fire fighting were:

(a)	<b>1999/2000</b>	
	Budget	\$273,000
	Actual	\$296,000
(b)	<b>2000/2001</b>	
	Budget	\$460,000
	Actual	\$427,000

- 2. Compared to budget the percentage change in the Department's Workcover premiums relating to fire fighters was:

(a)	<b>1999/2000</b>	
	An 8% increase in premiums was experienced due to an increased remuneration base for fire fighters for the period.	
(b)	<b>2000/2001</b>	
	A decrease of 7.7% was experienced due to less hours being worked by firefighters because of seasonal conditions.	

**Environment and conservation: serrated tussock in the vicinity of Lake Bolac**

**808. MR PERTON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation —

- (1) When did the Department and Parks Victoria each become aware that serrated tussock was in the vicinity of Lake Bolac.
- (2) What did each agency do on becoming aware of the problem.
- (3) Did either agency notify any neighbouring properties of the problem; if so, when.

- (4) Did either agency, or any other government agency, notify any other federal, state or local government agency of the problem; if so, when.
- (5) Is the Minister aware of any other state or local government agency action taken in respect of the problem.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) The Department of Natural Resources and Environment conducted an inspection in the vicinity of Lake Bolac in December 2000 and became aware of the serrated tussock infestation. The Department notified Parks Victoria of the serrated tussock following the inspection.
- (2) The Department inspected, assessed and mapped the Lake Bolac foreshore infestation and also inspected the adjoining freehold land to determine the extent of any further infestations.

The Department provided Parks Victoria with advice by on how best to manage the problem in association with protection of natural values and water quality and requested that Parks Victoria undertake a control program. Parks Victoria commenced an initial control program in mid-November 2001.

A Property Management Plan was developed for Lake Bolac in December 2001 involving Parks Victoria, the Department and the Lake Bolac Committee of Management (Rural City of Ararat). Department employees inspected the foreshore reserve and adjoining freehold land again in December 2001 and provided extension material in the Lake Bolac township on identification and control of serrated tussock.

No further infestations have been recorded in the Lake Bolac location since the initial inspection.

- (3) The Department notified adjoining land-holders of the presence of serrated tussock as part of the follow-up inspection and assessment in December 2001. Parks Victoria did not notify any neighbouring properties of the presence of serrated tussock on the understanding that this would be undertaken by the Department.
- (4) The Department, Parks Victoria and Lake Bolac Committee of Management are the agencies concerned with the control of the infestation and as weed control is a State responsibility no Federal agency has been notified.
- (5) No other state or local government agency, apart from the Lake Bolac Committee of Management, has taken action in respect of the infestation.

**Environment and conservation: bike path around Port Phillip Bay**

**811. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to the partial completion of the bike path —

- (1) How many kilometres of the path in each municipality around the Bay have been completed.
- (2) How many kilometres in each municipality remain to be completed.
- (3) What is the dollar value of works completed and works outstanding in each municipality.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) The following distances of Bay Trail have been completed within each municipality:

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	11 km
Frankston City Council	10 km
Kingston City Council	12.5 km

Bayside City Council	14 km
Port Phillip City Council	10.3 km
Melbourne City Council	3 km
Hobsons Bay City Council	17.5 km
Wyndham City Council	7 km
City of Greater Geelong	60 km
VicRoads (Princes Fwy)	26 km
Borough of Queenscliff	4.5 km

(2) The following distances remain to be completed for the Bay Trail:

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	53 km
Frankston City Council	8 km
Kingston City Council	0.5 km
Bayside City Council	3 km
Port Phillip City Council	0.7 km
Melbourne City Council	0 km
Hobsons Bay City Council	1.5 km
Wyndham City Council	25 km
City of Greater Geelong	0 km
VicRoads (Princes Fwy)	0 km
Borough of Queenscliff	0 km

(3) Since 1997, the following amounts have been spent on the Bay Trail through the Parks Victoria Grants Program:

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	\$500,300.00
Frankston City Council	\$3,176,000.00
Bayside City Council	\$1,935,875.00
Hobsons Bay City Council	\$1,876,000.00
Wyndham City Council	\$200,000.00
City of Greater Geelong	\$858,500.00

Dollar values for the outstanding sections of Bay Trail cannot be estimated as detailed planning has not been completed for all alignments. Cost estimates can vary markedly depending on the terrain, construction technique and other issues that are dealt with during the detailed planning stage.

**Environment and conservation: fisheries and abalone regulations enforcement**

**887. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to activities by departmental officers enforcing regulations as they relate to fisheries and abalone in East Gippsland —

- (1) How many hours have been spent on regulatory enforcement on weekends and after normal working hours by way of overtime for each of 1999–2000, 2000–2001 and 2001–2002 to date.
- (2) How many staff have been engaged in enforcement activities for these periods.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The enforcement of regulations as they relate to fisheries and abalone does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities and should more appropriately be asked of the Minister for Energy and Resources.

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

*Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.  
 Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Assembly.  
 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.*

**Thursday, 30 May 2002**

**Premier: staff calendar**

**371. MR KOTSIRAS** — To ask the Honourable the Premier whether a calendar has been produced and provided to the Premier’s private office staff since January 2000; and if so what are — (a) the reasons for printing the calendar; (b) the total number produced; and (c) the total costs for the production of the calendar, including — (i) design; (ii) layout; and (iii) printing costs.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Member may wish to refer to the information released to an Opposition MP on 27 December 2001 pursuant to a Freedom of Information application by the Opposition MP on the same subject matter as this Question.

I am informed by my Department that the Opposition MP inspected a Calendar of Major Projects for 2000/01 which lists major sporting, business and arts/entertainment events, and that the Opposition MP took the matter no further.

**Aged care: residential facilities**

**415. MRS SHARDEY** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Aged Care with reference to the \$25 million allocated in the 2001–02 Budget to redevelop the eight residential aged care facilities — what is the breakdown of funding to be allocated to each facility.

**ANSWER:**

Agency	Estimated Allocation \$ m
Maryborough District Health Service (Avoca & Dunolly)	3.8
Ballarat Health Service Stage 2	4.0
Rural Northwest Health (Hopetoun)	2.0
Beechworth Hospital Stage 1	6.5
West Wimmera Health Service (Rainbow)	3.7
Wonthaggi & District Hospital	3.0
Omeo District Hospital	1.3
Certification Works (various sites)	0.7
Total	25

**Premier: taxi cabs and hire cars**

**437. MR KOTSIRAS** — To ask the Honourable the Premier what are the total expenses per month incurred for taxi cab and hire car use by the Premier’s advisers, including media advisers, since January 2000.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed by my Department that a request under the Freedom of Information Act was made by an Opposition MP on the same subject matter as this Question in October 2000. This request was refused on the grounds that it would unreasonably divert the resources of the Department.

The Opposition MP then amended the request in December 2000 so as to confine it to the Premier's media advisers. This request was again refused on the same grounds.

Following the lodgment of a complaint by the Opposition MP, the Ombudsman reviewed this refusal and in September 2001 determined that he agreed with my Department that the request was too voluminous and would unreasonably divert the resources of the Department.

On this basis, the resources cannot be justified to answer the Honourable Member's question.

**Environment and conservation: Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act advisory committee**

**450. MR THOMPSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation with reference to the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* — (a) how many recommendations by the Scientific Advisory Committee and its predecessors have been made to the Minister since the introduction of the Act; (b) what have been the recommendations; and (c) on what occasions has the Minister of the day not followed the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee and for what reasons.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (a) The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) has made 506 final recommendations in regard to nominations for listing or delisting under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1998* which have been formally conveyed to the Minister of the day.
- (b) 461 of these final recommendations were supporting the nomination (458 to list and 3 to repeal) and 43 were rejecting the nomination.
- (c) The Minister of the day has followed the advice of the SAC in all but one case, that of the Grey-headed Flying-fox. In this case, the Minister's reasons for not accepting the SAC recommendations were:
  - as the Grey-headed Flying-fox is a highly migratory species with a distribution up the east coast of Australia, it is more prudent to examine its vulnerability from a national perspective rather than just a Victorian one;
  - the species is far more abundant throughout New South Wales and Queensland than in Victoria, so looking at the species solely in a Victorian context could misrepresent its true status.

**Environment and conservation: parks — fire retardants**

**481. MR PERTON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation what fire retardants are used and permitted in — (a) State; and (b) National Parks.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (a) & (b) There are many different fire retardants that are available internationally. Not all of these have been subject to rigorous environmental and health studies.

Within Victoria, in our State and National Parks, the only fire retardants permitted are those that have been subject to lengthy testing and approval by the United States Department of Agriculture.

**Transport: Victrack advertising revenue**

**605. MR WILSON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport with reference to page 36 of Victrack's 2000–2001 annual report —

1. Why did advertising revenue decline from \$1,641,000 in 1999–2000 to \$964,000 in 2000–2001.
2. What steps have been taken to increase advertising revenue in 2001–2002.

**ANSWER:**

1. Advertising revenue in 1999/2000 reflects revenue from all static outdoor advertising across the entire public transport network. Advertising revenue in 2000/2001 only relates to advertising panels retained by VicTrack, the other advertising panels having been allocated to the franchisees as part of privatisation, hence the reduction
2. VicTrack is currently undertaking a review of its outdoor advertising portfolio, which may provide an estimated increase in revenue when implemented. It is anticipated that the review will be completed during the 2002–2003 financial year.

**Police and emergency services: number of operational sworn police staff**

**727. MR WELLS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services what was the number of operational full-time equivalent sworn police staff, as per the national data dictionary definition, as provided to the Productivity Commission by Victoria Police and/or or the Department of Justice for use in the Commission's annual report on Government services, at each of 30 June 1999, 20 October 1999, 31 December 1999, 30 June 2000, 31 December 2000, 30 June 2001 and 31 December 2001.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that, generally, the figures used by the Productivity Commission are subject to standardised definitions, statistical averaging and discounting for various classifications of Police.

The figures they use do not represent actual Police Full Time Equivalent numbers in Victoria Police at any specific point in time. They are an average spanning 12 months, including the further reductions to police numbers that occurred between 1 July 1999 and this Government's election to office. As such they further demonstrate the Liberal's cut to Police numbers.

I am pleased to advise that the graduation of 54 new recruits on Friday April 12 brought the number of additional Full Time Equivalent sworn police since the election of the Bracks Government to over 800. These figures have been certified by Victoria Police.

This Government's commitment to 800 additional police during its first four year term has been achieved by any measure — and 18 months ahead of time.

**Transport: bus routes**

**771. MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Transport —

- (1) What are the 10 most heavily patronised bus routes in metropolitan Melbourne.
- (2) Of those routes, what are their average daily validation figures and the annual government subsidy for each service, for each year between 1996 and 2001 inclusive.
- (3) What are the 10 least patronised bus routes in metropolitan Melbourne.

- (4) Of those routes, what are their average daily validation figures and the government subsidy for each service, for each year between 1996 and 2001 inclusive.
- (5) What was the government subsidy of metropolitan buses for each year between 1996 and 2001 inclusive.
- (6) What was the government subsidy of rural and regional buses for each year between 1996 and 2001 inclusive.
- (7) What was the government subsidy of school buses for each year between 1996 and 2001 inclusive.

**ANSWER:**

- (1) & (2) The 10 most heavily patronised bus routes in metropolitan Melbourne based on daily validation figures for the month of February 2002 are listed below.

<b>10 Highest Patronised Routes per weekday</b>		<i>Ave Daily Validation</i>
700	Box Hill to Mordialloc	<b>5,622</b>
220	Sunshine RS to Gardenvale	<b>5,077</b>
246	Elsternwick–La Trobe Uni via Clifton Hill	<b>4,587</b>
703	Middle Brighton–Blackburn	<b>4,413</b>
513	Eltham–Glenroy (via Greensborough)	<b>3,026</b>
733	Oakleigh to Box Hill	<b>2,938</b>
665	Ringwood–Dandenong	<b>2,808</b>
737	Croydon to Monash University	<b>2,790</b>
250	Garden City–La Trobe University	<b>2,780</b>
527	Northland–Gowrie	<b>2,596</b>

**Notes:**

- Contracts are not subsidised on a route by route basis.
- Validation data for all routes in the Metropolitan network with the exception of those operated by the National Bus Company (NBC) was progressively recorded from 1996 to February 2002. Validations for NBC operated routes were only recorded from February 2002. In view of the above, validation data up to February 2002 is incomplete.
- The OneLink validation data is progressively archived and its recovery would require OneLink to allocate significant time and resource to retrieve.

- (3)&(4) The 10 least patronised bus routes in Metropolitan Melbourne based on daily validation figures for the month of February are listed below.

<b>10 Lowest Patronised Routes per weekday</b>		<b>Ave Daily Validation</b>
784	Mornington–Osborne–Mornington	<b>43</b>
795	Cranbourne–Tooradin via Cannons Creek/Warneet/Devon Meadows	<b>27</b>
479	Moonee Ponds–Sunbury	<b>22</b>
699	Belgrave–Upwey	<b>19</b>
797	Cranbourne Town Service	<b>17</b>
525	Coburg–West Reservoir	<b>16</b>
839	Fountain Gate SC/Oatlands Estate	<b>14</b>

<b>10 Lowest Patronised Routes per weekday</b>		<b>Ave Daily Validation</b>
687	Healesville to Chum Creek	<b>8</b>
796	Cranbourne–Clyde via Five Ways	<b>6</b>
609	Kew to Royal Talbot Hospital	<b>3</b>

**Notes:**

- Contracts are not subsidised on a route by route basis.
- It should be noted that the 10 least patronised routes represent services that are operated in isolated areas providing only a few trips per day, operated as a community obligation or in the case of Route 609 to service a sheltered workshop for intellectually handicapped people.
- Validation data for all routes in the Metropolitan network with the exception of those operated by the National Bus Company (NBC) was progressively recorded from 1996 to February 2002. Validations for NBC operated routes were only recorded from February 2002. In view of the above, validation data up to February 2002 is incomplete.
- The OneLink validation data is progressively archived and its recovery would require OneLink to allocate significant time and resource to retrieve.

(5) The annual government subsidy for metropolitan buses for each year since 1996 is as follows:

<b>Metropolitan Buses Years</b>	<b>Subsidy \$m</b>
1994/95	153.4
1995/96	169.6
1996/97	165.8
1997/98	170.9
1998/99	187.2
1999/00	193.9
2000/01	208.3

**Notes:**

- Metropolitan bus services were managed by the Public Transport Corporation and its predecessors prior to 1994/95.
- Information regarding subsidies prior to 1994/95 is not readily available and considerable resources would be required to search for archived material to be able to provide this information.

(6) The annual government subsidy of rural and regional buses since 1996 is as follows:

<b>Rural &amp; Region Bus Years</b>	<b>Subsidy \$m</b>
1996/97	19.6
1997/98	17.9
1998/99	18.0
1999/00	23.5
2000/01	24.4

(7) The annual government subsidy for school buses since 1996 is as follows:

School Bus Services Years	Subsidy \$m
1996/97	92.57
1997/98	95.03
1998/99	101.40
1999/00	106.50
2000/01	116.20

**Notes:**

School bus services were managed by the Public Transport Corporation and Department of Education prior to 1994/95. Considerable resources would be required to search for archived material to be able to provide information prior to 1994/95.

**Environment and conservation: Sustainable Energy Authority**

**796. MR PERTON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation —

- (1) How much energy, in kWh electricity and MJ gas, has been saved in residential, commercial and industrial sectors under the programs of the Authority.
- (2) What percentage of energy conservation measures recommended to clients during the energy auditing of the sites by the Panel of Selected Energy Consultants was actually followed or implemented by clients.
- (3) Is there any database or monitor of energy conservation milestones, from audit to implementation, for clients of the Authority.
- (4) What percentage of the Authority's employees are migrants and are their foreign qualifications utilised.
- (5) What is the relevant experience and qualifications of the Authority's staff involved in coordinating energy management and auditing projects with clients.
- (6) What are the maximum and minimum hourly rates and consulting fees that the Authority's selected consulting panel charges the Authority's clients.
- (7) What criteria were used in the selection of the consulting panel in November 2000.
- (8) What is the purpose and need for the consulting panel.
- (9) Were applicants for the consulting panel who were unsuccessful advised as to why they were not successful.
- (10) After the selection procedure was completed in November 2000, was any new consulting firm added to the consultants panel; if so, was the addition done without selection interview and completion of tender procedures.
- (11) When will the next round of consulting panel selection be finalised and in what media will it be advertised.
- (12) Does the Authority's project coordinators advise clients that there will be Australian Greenhouse Office incentives if they choose to appoint one of the consultants from the Authority's selected panel and let the Authority coordinate their projects.

- (13) Are small to medium sized energy consultants, not on the consulting panel, unfairly disadvantaged in their competition with larger consulting firms on the consulting panel.
- (14) Are the operations of the Authority compatible with National Competition Policy.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

The Sustainable Energy Authority Victoria does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities and should more appropriately be asked of the Minister for Energy and Resources.

**Housing: redevelopment of public housing**

**797. MRS SHARDEY** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Housing —

- (1) To provide an itemised list of the estates earmarked for redevelopment including a progress report on each public housing site.

Whether the redevelopment of these estates involves contributions from the not-for-profit sector and/or private developers, including details of the type of contribution made towards these projects by the sectors.

To provide details of public estates where the Government has already undertaken or proposes to undertake subdivision to sell the land for private sector development.

- (4) To provide details of the type of contractual arrangement the Government proposes to negotiate with private developers to encourage a mix of private and public housing developments on Government-owned sites.
- (5) To provide details of private investors who have submitted a joint venture proposal for the redevelopment of public housing estates.

**ANSWER:**

1. Eleven public housing estates are currently earmarked for redevelopment: Victory Boulevard, Ashburton; Long Gully, Bendigo; Rathdowne Street, Carlton; Peace Court, Doveton; Thomson Estate, Geelong East; Kensington Estate, Kensington; Maidstone/Braybrook Estate; Raglan/Ingles Sts, Port Melbourne; Elizabeth Street, Richmond; Parkside Estate, Shepparton and Mark/Rundle Estate, Wodonga

Each of these redevelopment projects is subject to a variety of factors, including but not limited to, planning processes, tender processes, tenant relocation processes, construction processes and community consultation mechanisms.

In addition to these redevelopments, public housing estates in Wendouree West and the Latrobe Valley (East Morwell, Churchill, Moe and Traralgon) have been designated as neighbourhood renewal projects.

2. None of the redevelopments to date involve contributions in kind from private developers.
3. The Government has not undertaken subdivision on any of the presently-planned redevelopments of public housing estates, but the following subdivisions are proposed: Ashburton, Kensington, Port Melbourne and Wodonga.
4. Any types of contractual arrangements proposed to be used by the Government to encourage a mix of public and private housing on Government-owned sites will accord with the Government's existing guidelines and policies, such as those for the purchase and sale of land, the Code of practice for the Building and Construction Industry, the Partnerships Victoria policy and the relevant rules governing such contracts, such as the Directions under the Project Development and Construction Management Act.

5. No joint venture proposals have been submitted by private sector investors for the redevelopment of public housing estates.

**Environment and conservation: helmeted honeyeater recovery program**

**815. MR PERTON** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation —

- (1) What State Government funds were budgeted for this program in the financial years ending 30 June 2000, 30 June 2001 and to date in the year to 30 June 2002.
- (2) What State Government funds were spent on this program in the financial years ending 30 June 2000, 30 June 2001 and to date in the year to 30 June 2002.
- (3) What Federal Government grants/funds were received or spent to support this program in the financial years ending 30 June 2000, 30 June 2001 and to date in the year to 30 June 2002.
- (4) What other grants/funds were received or spent to support this program in the financial years ending 30 June 2000, 30 June 2001 and to date in the year to 30 June 2002.
- (5) What officers were employed on the program in the financial years ending 30 June 2000; 30 June 2001 and to date in the year to 30 June 2002.
- (6) What officers are employed on this program now and where are they working.
- (7) How many helmeted honeyeaters were known to exist in the wild at each of 30 June 2000, 30 June 2001, today and any other dates on which assessments were made since 1980.
- (8) How many helmeted honeyeaters were kept at Healesville Sanctuary at each of 30 June 2000, 30 June 2001, today and any other dates on which assessments were made since 1980.
- (9) How many helmeted honeyeaters were kept at any other institution at each of 30 June 2000, 30 June 2001, today and any other dates on which assessments were made since 1980.
- (10) On what dates and at what places were releases of helmeted honeyeaters made since 1 January 2000.
- (11) On each of those releases, how many helmeted honeyeaters were released.
- (12) How many of the released helmeted honeyeaters remain alive.
- (13) What is the known cause of death of the released helmeted honeyeaters which have died.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- (1) The following are the State Government funds budgeted during the requested periods for the Helmeted Honeyeater program. These figures are combined totals for the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Parks Victoria and Zoos Victoria.

1999/2000 – \$163,000

2000/2001 – \$171,900

2001/2002 – \$172,560

- (2) Funds spent on the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Program during the requested periods are as follows:

1999/2000 – \$172,600

2000/2001 – \$178,500

2001/2002 – to April 2002 estimated \$152,400

- (3) Grants received from the Federal Government's Natural Heritage Trust to support the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Program in the requested years are detailed below. The National Heritage Trust does not operate on a financial year cycle, instead grants are given for the 12-month period between 1 October and 30 September. All grants were fully expended in each year.

1999–2000 – \$100 000

2000–2001 – \$70 000

2001–2002 – \$70 000

- (4) No other grants have been received to support the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Program during the requested periods and the Program is funded entirely from the State Government budget and the Natural Heritage Trust. The Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater have however received various grants from Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria which complement the work of the Recovery Program.
- (5) The following officers were employed on the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Program during the requested periods:
- During 1999/2000 a total of 4.4 full-time equivalent officers.  
 During 2000/2001 a total of 4.4 full-time equivalent officers.  
 Until March 2002 a total of 4.4 full-time equivalent officers.
- (6) There are 3.4 full-time equivalent officers currently employed on the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Program.
- (7) Figures from the annual censuses conducted by the Helmeted Honeyeater Recovery Team since 1990 are given below. Prior to the establishment of the Recovery Team two less comprehensive surveys were conducted by the Fisheries and Wildlife Department and those results are also included.

Between 1989 and 1998 the entire wild population of Helmeted Honeyeaters was individually banded with a unique colour-combination which allowed accurate population counts. However, as the population increased and the priorities of the recovery team changed, it became impracticable to maintain a fully banded population. Complete population counts were therefore no longer attempted. Instead, the population has been monitored by documenting the number of successful breeding pairs and the number of young fledged each breeding season.

Since 1980 the only population that has existed is at Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve.

September 1984	40–44 adults
March 1987	32–36 adults
1 March 1990	46 adults and 24 juveniles [18 breeding pairs in the preceding summer]
1 March 1991	53 adults and 20 juveniles [15 breeding pairs]
1 March 1992	53 adults and 29 juveniles [20 breeding pairs]
1 March 1993	55 adults and 28 juveniles [22 breeding pairs]
1 March 1994	65 adults and 33 juveniles [21 breeding pairs]
1 March 1995	58 adults and 42 juveniles [27 breeding pairs]
1 March 1996	60 adults and 45 juveniles [27 breeding pairs]
1 March 1997	63 adults and 42 juveniles [25 breeding pairs]
1 March 1998	66 adults and 37 juveniles [24 breeding pairs]
1999 breeding season	20 breeding pairs produced 30 juveniles
2000 breeding season	19 breeding pairs produced 36 juveniles
2001 breeding season	20 breeding pairs produced 33 juveniles
2002 breeding season	21 breeding pairs produced 37 juveniles

- (8) The total numbers of Helmeted Honeyeaters in captivity at 30 June each year are listed below. The reduction of the total population since 1999 is mainly attributable to the intensive trials of release to the wild that have taken place since then.

30 June 1990 – 13 individuals  
 30 June 1991 – 23 individuals  
 30 June 1992 – 25 individuals  
 30 June 1993 – 4 individuals  
 30 June 1994 – 7 individuals  
 30 June 1995 – 18 individuals  
 30 June 1996 – 20 individuals  
 30 June 1997 – 19 individuals  
 30 June 1998 – 32 individuals  
 30 June 1999 – 40 individuals  
 30 June 2000 – 39 individuals  
 30 June 2000 – 32 individuals  
 22 April 2002 – 36 individuals

(9) Two Helmeted Honeyeaters were held at the Melbourne Zoo on behalf of the Recovery Team between 22 August 1997 and 26 November 1998 when they were returned to the captive breeding colony at Healesville Sanctuary.

(10) and (11)

Since 1 January 2000 a total of 22 captive-bred Helmeted Honeyeaters have been released. Details are provided below:

5 February 2000

Two juveniles released at Beer's Bridge, Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, as part of trials of release techniques.

12 January 2001

One pair with two nestlings released at Diamond Creek, Bunyip State Park.

26 January 2001

Two adult pairs released at Diamond Creek, Bunyip State Park.

27 February 2001

One pair and their 35-day-old offspring released at Diamond Creek, Bunyip State Park.

March–April 2002

Two adult pairs, one adult female and four immatures released at Diamond Creek, Bunyip State Park, i.e. nine individuals in total.

(12) Two of the birds released in February 2001, and all except one of the birds released in March and April 2002, were alive on 19 April 2002. The other 11 birds have disappeared from the release sites after remaining for various periods and their status is unknown.

(13) The cause of death has only been established for one released Helmeted Honeyeater. It is known to have died as a result of injuries caused by an ill-fitting radio-transmitter harness. Attachment of tiny radio-transmitters is a standard method of tracking wild birds to monitor their movements. It is the only technique that gives a good chance of understanding the fate of released birds once they leave the general area of the release site.

The fate of the other 11 birds released is unknown as none were carrying a radio-transmitter at the time of their release.

**Treasurer: state petrol taxes**

**840(b). MR LEIGH** — To ask the Honourable the Treasurer how much money has been raised annually since 1985 in state petrol taxes.

**ANSWER:**

I am informed that:

- the amount raised annually by Victoria in petroleum taxes is summarised in the attached table:

	\$ million
1985–86	211
1986–87	215
1987–88	238
1988–89	228
1989–90	295
1990–91	352
1991–92	372
1992–93	350
1993–94	470
1994–95	484
1995–96	505
1996–97	507
1997–98	364
1998–99	392
1999–2000	426
2000–01	51
2001–02	–

- until 5 August 1997, petroleum franchise fees were levied on the grant of a licence to trade in petroleum products. The fees were paid by wholesalers on a monthly basis.
- from 1 July 1997, petroleum franchise fees were reduced by 10 per cent.
- on 5 August 1997, the High Court cast doubt on the validity of franchise fees under Section 90 of the Australian Constitution.
- the Commonwealth then began collecting petroleum replacement revenues and returned them to the States and Territories in accordance with a formula based on the Commonwealth Grants Commission assessment.
- petroleum revenue replacement payments were abolished from 1 July 2000 in accordance with the *Intergovernmental Agreement on the Reform of Commonwealth-State Financial Relations*.
- revenue from 1997–98 onwards is net of subsidies paid to oil companies (being the difference between the revenue replacement tax rate and the business franchise fee tax rate)

