

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT
FIRST SESSION**

**Thursday, 26 May 2005
(extract from Book 6)**

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

JOHN LANDY, AC, MBE

The Lieutenant-Governor

Lady SOUTHEY, AM

The ministry

Premier and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. S. P. Bracks, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Environment, Minister for Water and Minister for Victorian Communities	The Hon. J. W. Thwaites, MP
Minister for Finance, Minister for Major Projects and Minister for WorkCover and the TAC	The Hon. J. Lenders, MLC
Minister for Education Services and Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs	The Hon. J. M. Allan, MP
Minister for Transport	The Hon. P. Batchelor, MP
Minister for Local Government and Minister for Housing	The Hon. C. C. Broad, MLC
Treasurer, Minister for Innovation and Minister for State and Regional Development	The Hon. J. M. Brumby, MP
Minister for Agriculture	The Hon. R. G. Cameron, MP
Minister for the Arts and Minister for Women's Affairs	The Hon. M. E. Delahunty, MP
Minister for Community Services and Minister for Children	The Hon. S. M. Garbutt, MP
Minister for Manufacturing and Export, Minister for Financial Services and Minister for Small Business	The Hon. A. Haermeyer, MP
Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrections	The Hon. T. J. Holding, MP
Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Planning	The Hon. R. J. Hulls, MP
Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs	The Hon. Gavin Jennings, MLC
Minister for Education and Training	The Hon. L. J. Kosky, MP
Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Commonwealth Games	The Hon. J. M. Madden, MLC
Minister for Gaming, Minister for Racing, Minister for Tourism and Minister assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. J. Pandazopoulos, MP
Minister for Health	The Hon. B. J. Pike, MP
Minister for Energy Industries and Resources	The Hon. T. C. Theophanous, MLC
Minister for Consumer Affairs and Minister for Information and Communication Technology	The Hon. M. R. Thomson, MLC
Cabinet Secretary	Mr R. W. Wynne, MP

Legislative Assembly committees

Privileges Committee — Mr Cooper, Mr Herbert, Mr Honeywood, Ms Lindell, Mr Lupton, Mr Maughan, Mr Nardella, Mr Perton and Mr Stensholt.

Standing Orders Committee — The Speaker, Ms Campbell, Mr Dixon, Mr Helper, Mr Loney, Mr Plowman and Mrs Powell.

Joint committees

Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Cooper, Ms Marshall, Mr Maxfield, Dr Sykes and Mr Wells. (*Council*): The Honourable S. M. Nguyen and Mr Scheffer.

Economic Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Delahunty, Mr Jenkins, Ms Morand and Mr Robinson. (*Council*): The Honourables B. N. Atkinson and R. H. Bowden, and Mr Pullen.

Education and Training Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Eckstein, Mr Herbert, Mr Kotsiras, Ms Munt and Mr Perton. (*Council*): The Honourables H. E. Buckingham and P. R. Hall.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Duncan, Ms Lindell and Mr Seitz. (*Council*): The Honourables Andrea Coote, D. K. Drum, J. G. Hilton and W. A. Lovell.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms McTaggart, Ms Neville, Mrs Powell Mrs Shardey and Mr Wilson. (*Council*): The Honourable D. McL. Davis and Mr Smith.

House Committee — (*Assembly*): The Speaker (*ex officio*), Mr Cooper, Mr Leighton, Mr Lockwood, Mr Maughan, Mr Savage and Mr Smith. (*Council*): The President (*ex officio*), the Honourables B. N. Atkinson and Andrew Brideson, Ms Hadden and the Honourables J. M. McQuilten and S. M. Nguyen.

Law Reform Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Beard, Ms Beattie, Mr Hudson, Mr Lupton and Mr Maughan. (*Council*): The Honourable Richard Dalla-Riva, Ms Hadden and the Honourables J. G. Hilton and David Koch.

Library Committee — (*Assembly*): The Speaker, Mr Carli, Mrs Powell, Mr Seitz and Mr Thompson. (*Council*): The President, Ms Argondizzo and the Honourables Richard Dalla-Riva, Kaye Darveniza and C. A. Strong.

Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Baillieu, Ms Buchanan, Mr Dixon, Mr Nardella and Mr Smith. (*Council*): Ms Argondizzo and Mr Somyurek.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms Campbell, Mr Clark, Ms Green and Mr Merlino. (*Council*): The Honourables W. R. Baxter, Bill Forwood and G. K. Rich-Phillips, Ms Romanes and Mr Somyurek.

Road Safety Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Harkness, Mr Langdon, Mr Mulder and Mr Trezise. (*Council*): The Honourables B. W. Bishop, J. H. Eren and E. G. Stoney.

Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee — (*Assembly*): Mr Crutchfield, Mr Hardman, Mr Ingram, Dr Napthine and Mr Walsh. (*Council*): The Honourables J. M. McQuilten and R. G. Mitchell.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Assembly*): Ms D'Ambrosio, Mr Jasper, Mr Leighton, Mr Lockwood, Mr McIntosh, Mr Perera and Mr Thompson. (*Council*): Ms Argondizzo and the Honourable Andrew Brideson.

Heads of parliamentary departments

Assembly — Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. W. Purdey

Council — Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr W. R. Tunnecliffe

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Dr S. O'Kane

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Speaker: The Hon. JUDY MADDIGAN

Deputy Speaker: Mr P. J. LONEY

Acting Speakers: Ms Barker, Ms Campbell, Mr Cooper, Mr Delahunty, Mr Ingram, Mr Jasper, Mr Kotsiras, Mr Languiller, Ms Lindell, Mr Nardella, Mr Plowman, Mr Savage, Mr Seitz, Mr Smith and Mr Thompson

Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Premier:

The Hon. S. P. BRACKS

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier:

The Hon. J. W. THWAITES

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

Mr R. K. B. DOYLE

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

The Hon. P. N. HONEYWOOD

Leader of The Nationals:

Mr P. J. RYAN

Deputy Leader of The Nationals:

Mr P. L. WALSH

Member	District	Party	Member	District	Party
Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie	Bendigo East	ALP	Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Derrimut	ALP
Andrews, Mr Daniel Michael	Mulgrave	ALP	Leighton, Mr Michael Andrew	Preston	ALP
Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Lim, Mr Hong	Clayton	ALP
Baillieu, Mr Edward Norman	Hawthorn	LP	Lindell, Ms Jennifer Margaret	Carrum	ALP
Barker, Ms Ann Patricia	Oakleigh	ALP	Lobato, Ms Tamara Louise	Gembrook	ALP
Batchelor, Mr Peter	Thomastown	ALP	Lockwood, Mr Peter John	Bayswater	ALP
Beard, Ms Dympna Anne	Kilsyth	ALP	Loney, Mr Peter James	Lara	ALP
Beattie, Ms Elizabeth Jean	Yuroke	ALP	Lupton, Mr Anthony Gerard	Prahran	ALP
Bracks, Mr Stephen Phillip	Williamstown	ALP	McIntosh, Mr Andrew John	Kew	LP
Brumby, Mr John Mansfield	Broadmeadows	ALP	McTaggart, Ms Heather	Evelyn	ALP
Buchanan, Ms Rosalyn	Hastings	ALP	Maddigan, Mrs Judith Marilyn	Essendon	ALP
Cameron, Mr Robert Graham	Bendigo West	ALP	Marshall, Ms Kirstie	Forest Hill	ALP
Campbell, Ms Christine Mary	Pascoe Vale	ALP	Maughan, Mr Noel John	Rodney	Nats
Carli, Mr Carlo	Brunswick	ALP	Maxfield, Mr Ian John	Narracan	ALP
Clark, Mr Robert William	Box Hill	LP	Merlino, Mr James	Monbulk	ALP
Cooper, Mr Robert Fitzgerald	Mornington	LP	Mildenhall, Mr Bruce Allan	Footscray	ALP
Crutchfield, Mr Michael Paul	South Barwon	ALP	Morand, Ms Maxine Veronica	Mount Waverley	ALP
D'Ambrosio, Ms Liliana	Mill Park	ALP	Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn	Polwarth	LP
Delahunty, Mr Hugh Francis	Lowan	Nats	Munt, Ms Janice Ruth	Mordialloc	ALP
Delahunty, Ms Mary Elizabeth	Northcote	ALP	Napthine, Dr Denis Vincent	South-West Coast	LP
Dixon, Mr Martin Francis	Nepean	LP	Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio	Melton	ALP
Donnellan, Mr Luke Anthony	Narre Warren North	ALP	Neville, Ms Lisa Mary	Bellarine	ALP
Doyle, Robert Keith Bennett	Malvern	LP	Overington, Ms Karen Marie	Ballarat West	ALP
Duncan, Ms Joanne Therese	Macedon	ALP	Pandazopoulos, Mr John	Dandenong	ALP
Eckstein, Ms Anne Lore	Ferntree Gully	ALP	Perera, Mr Jude	Cranbourne	ALP
Garbutt, Ms Sherryl Maree	Bundoora	ALP	Perton, Mr Victor John	Doncaster	LP
Gillett, Ms Mary Jane	Tarneit	ALP	Pike, Ms Bronwyn Jane	Melbourne	ALP
Green, Ms Danielle Louise	Yan Yean	ALP	Plowman, Mr Antony Fulton	Benambra	LP
Haermeyer, Mr André	Kororoit	ALP	Powell, Mrs Elizabeth Jeanette	Shepparton	Nats
Hardman, Mr Benedict Paul	Seymour	ALP	Robinson, Mr Anthony Gerard	Mitcham	ALP
Harkness, Mr Alistair Ross	Frankston	ALP	Ryan, Mr Peter Julian	Gippsland South	Nats
Helper, Mr Jochen	Ripon	ALP	Savage, Mr Russell Irwin	Mildura	Ind
Herbert, Mr Steven Ralph	Eltham	ALP	Seitz, Mr George	Keilor	ALP
Holding, Mr Timothy James	Lyndhurst	ALP	Shardey, Mrs Helen Jean	Caulfield	LP
Honeywood, Mr Phillip Neville	Warrandyte	LP	Smith, Mr Kenneth Maurice	Bass	LP
Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp	Ballarat East	ALP	Stensholt, Mr Robert Einar	Burwood	ALP
Hudson, Mr Robert John	Bentleigh	ALP	Sykes, Dr William Everett	Benalla	Nats
Hulls, Mr Rob Justin	Niddrie	ALP	Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton Ross	Sandringham	LP
Ingram, Mr Craig	Gippsland East	Ind	Thwaites, Mr Johnstone William	Albert Park	ALP
Jasper, Mr Kenneth Stephen	Murray Valley	Nats	Trezise, Mr Ian Douglas	Geelong	ALP
Jenkins, Mr Brendan James	Morwell	ALP	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Swan Hill	Nats
Kosky, Ms Lynne Janice	Altona	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Scoresby	LP
Kotsiras, Mr Nicholas	Bulleen	LP	Wilson, Mr Dale Lester	Narre Warren South	ALP
Langdon, Mr Craig Anthony Cuffe	Ivanhoe	ALP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

CONTENTS

THURSDAY, 26 MAY 2005

PETITIONS		
<i>Schools: religious instruction</i>	1459	
<i>Housing: disruptive tenants</i>	1459	
VICTORIAN CHILD DEATH REVIEW COMMITTEE		
<i>Report 2005</i>	1459	
ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE		
<i>Country road toll</i>	1459	
DOCUMENTS	1459	
APPROPRIATION MESSAGES	1460	
BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE		
<i>Adjournment</i>	1460	
MEMBERS STATEMENTS		
<i>Gordon Institute of TAFE: awards</i>	1460	
<i>Disability services: south-western accommodation</i>	1460	
<i>Michael Wyatt</i>	1461	
<i>Neighbourhood houses: funding</i>	1461	
<i>Visek festival</i>	1461	
<i>Hospitals: reporting systems</i>	1461	
<i>Glencare: activities</i>	1462	
<i>June McDonald</i>	1462	
<i>Rotary: Cheltenham</i>	1462	
<i>Deer Park Primary School: Cairnlea campus</i>	1463	
<i>Murray cod: cheese baits</i>	1463	
<i>Umbria Jazz Melbourne festival</i>	1463	
<i>Lake Colac: redevelopment project</i>	1463	
<i>Australia Israel Cultural Exchange</i>	1464	
<i>Drought: north-west Victoria</i>	1464	
<i>Eastern Region Community Housing</i>	1464	
<i>Craig Johnston</i>	1465	
<i>Ann Nichol House, Portarlington</i>	1465	
<i>Knox Reconciliation Action Group</i>	1465	
<i>Montrose Primary School: Education Week</i>	1466	
<i>Green Gully Soccer Club</i>	1466	
<i>Mitcham–Frankston project: land acquisition</i>	1466	
RACING AND GAMBLING ACTS (AMENDMENT) BILL		
<i>Second reading</i>	1467	
VICTORIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE BILL		
<i>Second reading</i>	1469	
STATE TAXATION ACTS (GENERAL AMENDMENT) BILL		
<i>Second reading</i>	1471	
NATIONAL PARKS (ALPINE NATIONAL PARK GRAZING) BILL		
<i>Second reading</i>	1473	
PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT (WILLIAMSTOWN SHIPYARD) BILL		
<i>Second reading</i>	1480	
APPROPRIATION (2005/2006) BILL		
<i>Second reading</i>	1481, 1505	
<i>Consideration in detail</i>	1513, 1516	
<i>Remaining stages</i>	1516	
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE		
<i>Children: child deaths</i>	1496	
<i>Infrastructure: national coordination</i>	1496	
<i>Alpine National Park: media campaign</i>	1498, 1499, 1500	
<i>Budget: leak</i>	1498	
<i>Transport: infrastructure</i>	1499	
<i>Budget: education and training</i>	1501	
<i>Alpine National Park: mountain huts</i>	1501	
<i>Taxation: reform</i>	1502	
APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT 2005/06) BILL		
<i>Second reading</i>	1515	
<i>Remaining stages</i>	1516	
ADJOURNMENT		
<i>Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary: management plan</i>	1516	
<i>Sri Lanka: tsunami victims</i>	1516	
<i>Kyabram and District Health Services: capital works</i>	1517	
<i>Women: domestic violence</i>	1517	
<i>Planning: Kyneton Bowling Club</i>	1518	
<i>Greensborough bypass: emergency telephone</i>	1518	
<i>Snowy River: rehabilitation</i>	1519	
<i>Pyrenees: community-building project</i>	1519	
<i>Kew Residential Services: site development</i>	1520	
<i>Carrum Bowling Club: funding</i>	1520	
<i>Responses</i>	1520	
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE		
Tuesday, 24 May 2005		
434. <i>Police and emergency services: Elwood drag racing</i>	1523	
595(a). <i>Premier: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1524	
595(b). <i>Agriculture: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1524	
595(h). <i>Corrections: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1525	
595(k). <i>Employment and youth affairs: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1525	
595(l). <i>Environment: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1525	
595(m). <i>Aboriginal affairs: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1526	
595(p). <i>Sport and recreation: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1526	
595(z). <i>Multicultural affairs: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1526	
595(aa). <i>Planning: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1527	
595(ab). <i>Police and emergency services: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1527	
595(am). <i>Water: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1527	

CONTENTS

596(e).	<i>Attorney-General: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1528
596(h).	<i>Corrections: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1528
596(k).	<i>Employment and youth affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1528
596(l).	<i>Environment: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1529
596(m).	<i>Aboriginal affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1529
596(n).	<i>Commonwealth Games: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1529
596(p).	<i>Sport and recreation: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1530
596(z).	<i>Multicultural affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1530
596(aa).	<i>Planning: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1530
597(a).	<i>Premier: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1531
597(b).	<i>Agriculture: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1531
597(c).	<i>Energy industries and resources: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1531
597(k).	<i>Employment and youth affairs: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1532
597(l).	<i>Environment: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1532
597(am).	<i>Water: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1532

Wednesday, 25 May 2005

595(n).	<i>Commonwealth Games: Haystack Public Affairs Pty Ltd</i>	1535
596(b).	<i>Agriculture: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1535
596(c).	<i>Energy industries and resources: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1536
596(am).	<i>Water: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd</i>	1536
597(e).	<i>Attorney-General: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1537
597(h).	<i>Corrections: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1537
597(m).	<i>Aboriginal affairs: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1538
597(n).	<i>Commonwealth Games: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1538
597(p).	<i>Sport and recreation: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1538
597(z).	<i>Multicultural affairs: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1539
597(aa).	<i>Planning: Social Shift Pty Ltd</i>	1539

Thursday, 26 May 2005

The SPEAKER (Hon. Judy Maddigan) took the chair at 9.33 a.m. and read the prayer.

PETITIONS

Following petitions presented to house:

Schools: religious instruction

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of citizens of Victoria concerned to ensure the continuation of religious instruction in Victorian government schools draws out to the house that under the Bracks Labor government review of education and training legislation, the future of religious instruction in Victorian schools is in question and risks becoming subject to the discretion of local school councils.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly of Victoria take steps to ensure that there is no change to legislation and the Victorian government schools reference guide that would diminish the status of religious instruction in Victorian government schools and, in addition, urge the government to provide additional funding for chaplaincy services in Victorian government schools.

The petition of citizens of Victoria concerned to ensure the continuation of religious instruction in Victorian government schools, and to provide additional funding for school chaplains.

By Mr ROBINSON (Mitcham) (35 signatures)

Housing: disruptive tenants

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria:

The petition of residents of Holmby Road, Cheltenham, draws to the attention of the house the disruption caused to the amenity of the neighbourhood and safety of residents, more particularly infant children, as a result of successive tenancies of the house owned by the department of housing. The residents have endeavoured to support occupiers of the house owned by the department over a long period of time and now feel that it is time the property reverts to private ownership.

Prayer

The petitioners therefore request that the department of housing place the property they own in Holmby Road, Cheltenham, for sale at the earliest possible time.

By Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) (14 signatures)

Tabled.

Ordered that petition presented by the honourable member for Sandringham be considered next day on motion of Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham).

VICTORIAN CHILD DEATH REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report 2005

Ms GARBUTT (Minister for Children), by leave, presented annual report.

Tabled.

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Country road toll

Mr TREZISE (Geelong) presented report, together with appendices, minority report and minutes of evidence.

Tabled.

Ordered that report, appendices and minority report be printed.

DOCUMENTS

Tabled by Clerk:

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 — Section 17DA Order granting under s. 17D a lease over the area of Yarra Bend Park (two documents)

Financial Management Act 1994 — Report from the Minister for Environment that he had not received the 2004–05 annual reports together with an explanation for the delay in tabling of the:

Falls Creek Alpine Resort Management Board

Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort Management Board

Mount Buller and Mount Stirling Alpine Resort Management Board

Mount Hotham Alpine Resort Management Board

Mitcham-Frankston Project Act 2004 — Orders varying the project area and the extended project area (four orders)

Statutory Rules under the following Acts:

Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1984 — SR No. 30

Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997 — SR No. 31

Planning and Environment Act 1987 — SR Nos 30, 33

Subdivision Act 1988 — SR Nos 30, 32

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 1998 — SR No. 34

Subordinate Legislation Act 1994:

Minister's exemption certificates in relation to Statutory Rule Nos 32, 33

Youth Parole Board and Youth Residential Board — Report for the year 2003–04.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES

Messages read recommending appropriations for:

Accident Compensation and Transport Accidents Acts (Ombudsman) Bill
Courts Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill
Energy Safe Victoria Bill
Health Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

Ms ALLAN (Minister for Education Services) — I move:

That the house, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday, 14 June 2005.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

Gordon Institute of TAFE: awards

Mr TREZISE (Geelong) — Last night the Gordon Institute of TAFE in Geelong held its annual regional training awards night before a record crowd of 400 guests including students and their families. The Gordon Institute of TAFE is Geelong's largest provider to new apprentices of customised training programs to cater for the needs and skills of individual trainees and apprentices as well as their employers and workplaces.

The overall Geelong region apprentice of the year was awarded to 19-year-old Jasmin Beardon for hairdressing. Jasmin is obviously a young woman with much drive and initiative, as she already has her own salon, Studio 169, and currently employs three apprentices. This is the first time since 1991 that a hairdressing apprentice has won the award. The Geelong region trainee of the year went to Belinda Stokes for business administration. Gordon Institute of TAFE is clearly one of the best TAFE institutions in the country, providing training in areas such as building and construction, cookery, hairdressing, business management and automotive trades, to name a few. Over 50 talented apprentices and trainees received awards within their fields of training.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr TREZISE — I also commend all the apprentices who last night won other awards or were nominated for awards. I congratulate Martha Kinsmen and her staff at the Gordon Institute of TAFE for their ongoing work. The Gordon Institute of TAFE and the Bracks government enjoy a very good working relationship. The Gordon Institute of TAFE has been the recipient of more than \$30 million in government funding since 2000 to ensure students such as Jasmin and Belinda train in first-class facilities.

Disability services: south-western accommodation

Dr NAPTHINE (South-West Coast) — The communities of Warrnambool, Portland and south-west Victoria demand action from the Bracks Labor government to provide urgently needed accommodation for people with disabilities. Two new community residential units (CRUs) — one for Warrnambool and one for Portland — are desperately required to begin to meet the needs of at least 15 adults with intellectual disability in south-west Victoria who are currently homeless and are being shifted from respite bed to respite bed or living on borrowed time with ageing parents or other ageing relatives.

In March 2002 Mr Tim Harrop, from the Department of Human Services, said in a letter:

The Department of Human Services is about to expand the shared supported accommodation options in the Warrnambool area. The new facility will accommodate up to five people ...

... It is anticipated that this residential service will commence by May 2002.

But no action has as yet commenced on this facility. The then Acting Minister for Community Services said in a letter in January 2004:

I have authorised the allocation of funding for a five-bed purpose-built facility to be located in the Warrnambool area.

But again no action has been taken. The minister should be aware that there are at least 15 adults with intellectual disability in desperate need of a permanent accommodation in south-west Victoria. This is a desperate situation. It is a situation in which the Bracks government has not built one extra bed of permanent accommodation for people with intellectual disability in the south-west since it began its term of office compared to the excellent work done by the previous government. Action is urgently needed to build new CRUs in Warrnambool and Portland.

Michael Wyatt

Ms McTAGGART (Evelyn) — I rise today to pay tribute to a very special member of the Lilydale ALP branch, Michael Wyatt. I first met Michael not long after I was elected. He was a very interesting individual with a warm and friendly personality. He would often attend our branch meetings and contribute to discussions on local issues and general policy frameworks. Michael was certainly a visionary and wanted the world to be an ideal place for everyone. He had some interesting theories on democracy and governance. Those were outlined in his book *Beyond Capitalism — Natural Laws and Political Strategies for an Equitable Global Future*. Michael also had a special interest in global warming and our environment. He presented me with many reports outlining his views on how to respect and utilise the resources of our wonderful planet.

Sadly, on 11 May Michael took his own life. He was only 55 years old. He had battled with mental illness for nearly 20 years, and life had become too burdensome for him to stay with us. Michael leaves behind his lovely wife and best friend Sue, as well as his children, Victoria and Peter. His funeral brought together many of his close friends and family as well as his colleagues from Parks Victoria. It was an emotional tribute to a lovely man to have there so many people whose lives he had touched in a very special way. Many shared their stories with the congregation. It was a beautiful service that included poetry, quotes and music — things that were very special to Michael. I send my sincerest condolences to Sue, Victoria and Peter. I say to Michael: rest in peace. You will be sadly missed.

Neighbourhood houses: funding

Mr MAUGHAN (Rodney) — The Bracks government stands condemned for its failure to adequately fund the state's 350-plus neighbourhood houses and learning centres. This sector plays a very important role, particularly in country Victoria, in providing an access point for government services, in providing opportunities for individuals to take control of their own growth and learning, in building more cohesive communities and helping to overcome disadvantage and inequality, and in empowering people to take more control over their own lives.

Neighbourhood houses and learning centres facilitate the resourcing of programs and activities and utilise volunteers within the community to develop skills, provide for lifelong learning, and provide information and referral pathways for growth and empowerment within their own communities. As such they make an

enormous contribution to reducing disadvantage and minimising potential social problems that are likely to emerge in later years when it is far more expensive for the community to deal with them.

It is therefore very disappointing that for the sector, which utilises more than 13 000 volunteers who collectively provide more than 1 million hours of work per annum, where the coordinators of the neighbourhood house coordination program are only funded for an average of 17.8 hours per week and where some neighbourhood houses and learning centres are not funded at all, the government could only manage a meagre \$12.4 million over four years when the sector actually requires something of the order of \$22 million over two years.

Visek festival

Mr LIM (Clayton) — Many members of this house have attended Visek which is one of the major festivals in the Buddhist calendar. It is normally celebrated on the first full moon of May to commemorate Buddha's birth, his enlightenment and his passing. It is also called Buddha Day.

What is the significance of Visek? Firstly, it celebrates the birth of a unique and very special human being. The Buddha was born into a life of royal privilege, surrounded by all that one could wish for in a material sense. Despite all of this he sensed that all those natural and material pleasures could not last and would one day vanish. Indeed, he saw all mankind as subjected to the vicissitudes of life — old age, sickness and death.

Secondly, Visek celebrates the Buddha's awakening. After six years of hardship and continual striving and searching he finally gained enlightenment. He had achieved the final knowledge that would bring to an end the cycle of endless rebirth, old age, sickness and death through the attainment of blissful nirvana, the state of no rebirth. Thirdly, we celebrate his liberation to nirvana. His noble passing, although it was a very ordinary death with no miraculous transformation or magical ascension into heaven, told the world what it means to be a complete human being.

Hospitals: reporting systems

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — Last month the Bracks government changed the way it reported on waiting lists and waiting times in Victorian hospitals to make it harder to find out how our hospitals are performing. The former quarterly *Hospital Services Report* established by the Kennett government has been replaced with a half-yearly glossy brochure complete

with a colour photo of the Premier, while important indicators have been relegated to a web site without comparative data, or have been dropped altogether. However, on the restricted data still available, waiting lists and waiting times at Box Hill Hospital are continuing to deteriorate.

The elective surgery waiting list has risen from 1166 patients in December 1999 to 1895 in December 2004 — an increase of 63 per cent, with 729 additional people waiting. The deterioration in the semi-urgent elective surgery waiting list is even worse, rising from 421 patients in December 1999 to 821 in December 2004 — an increase of 95 per cent or 400 people waiting in pain for operations such as hip replacements or hernias. Semi-urgent patients should get the surgery they need within the clinical target of 90 days, but in December last year 209 patients had been waiting longer than 90 days, compared with only 64 patients in December 1999.

Box Hill residents are still waiting for the redevelopment of the hospital after the master planning done in 2002 was never acted upon. They are also waiting for a car park after the government abandoned the previous plans in 2002. Box Hill residents are entitled to a government that takes responsibility and gets results, instead of a Bracks government —

The SPEAKER — Order! The member's time has expired.

Glencare: activities

Ms MORAND (Mount Waverley) — I recently visited the Glen Waverley community centre to call in on the Glen Waverley seniors and to see the activities conducted by Glencare. Glencare is an activity group for frail older people funded by the Department of Human Services. It is auspiced by Wavecare which is a not-for-profit community-based counselling service based in Glen Waverley and it provides a great service to our community.

Glencare provides frail older people who need varying levels of assistance with an opportunity to socialise every Tuesday at the Glen Waverley community centre. This enables older residents of the city of Monash to maintain their independence and have some fun while they are doing it. Activities such as word games, group crosswords and puzzles are arranged every Tuesday. When I visited the group was being entertained by a volunteer on an electric piano and the group was really enjoying that.

One of the most impressive aspects of this program is the work of the many volunteers who make this program possible. When I visited I met with the coordinator, Josephine Brown, who works in several different volunteer roles in our community. The work of volunteers is so incredibly important to the community; there are so many different jobs they undertake in supporting others, and they certainly deserve our acknowledgment and recognition.

June McDonald

I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the celebration this year of 50 years of service to education by June McDonald. June is the principal of Essex Heights Primary School, which is this year celebrating its 40-year anniversary. June has been at the school as a principal since 1979, and Essex Heights Primary School will be well known to many members in the eastern suburbs for providing a great education in a welcoming and caring environment for over 600 children, including many with a range of disabilities.

Rotary: Cheltenham

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — I pay tribute to the current president, Greg Vawdrey, and members of the Rotary Club of Cheltenham for the excellent work undertaken on the fundraising Ray of Hope Gala Dinner for the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.

Over the course of the last 100 years Rotary clubs around the world have worked constructively to make a difference to their local communities. I especially wish to acknowledge the courage and commitment of Bernadette Hamilton-Greer, who after being diagnosed with a rare cancerous tumour resolved to help those who had helped her. Bernadette, a member of the Cheltenham Rotary Club and a patient at the East Melbourne centre, held the view that the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre's work as the only specialist cancer hospital and the largest dedicated cancer research group in Australia was invaluable to not only people in her own condition but all other cancer sufferers. She also held the view that all the staff at Peter MacCallum do the most amazing work and that it is a privilege to help those efforts.

According to the director of radiology at the Peter MacCallum, Dr Alex Pitman, the objective of the fundraising was for it to go towards the purchase of a digital angiography machine. Angiography machines provide real-time X-ray vision for guiding minimally invasive procedures necessary in a broad range of cancers. The project received wide support from a

broad range of people, including a letter of support from the wife of the Prime Minister, Mrs Janette Howard, and it was also supported by Craig Bennett, the chief executive officer of the Peter MacCallum, and senior radiographers at the Peter MacCallum. The local industry there to help included Australia Post, Siemens Medical Equipment, Phillips Medical Equipment, Toshiba and the district Governor of Rotary 9810, Denis Hyland.

Deer Park Primary School: Cairnlea campus

Mr LANGUILLER (Derrimut) — It gives me great pleasure to confirm that Education Week was celebrated in style by students in Melbourne's west, beginning with the official opening of Deer Park Primary School's new Cairnlea campus. The relocation of the 130-year-old school took place in August last year, and the new campus was opened by the federal Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Honourable Pat Farmer, and me representing the Minister for Education and Training. It was a joint effort, and our government is very proud in having contributed to a very significant opening in my electorate of Derrimut.

More than \$5 million of joint funding between the federal and state governments was used to upgrade the school's capacity from 200 pupils to 450. Principal Glenn Knight is reported in a local newspaper as saying:

We had considerable community consultation on the project and are very happy with the way things are going.

Education Week celebrated the centenary of secondary school education in Victoria and acknowledged the service of more than 600 teachers in Victorian government schools, including Jackson School in St Albans, Albion North Primary School, Kings Park Primary School and Deer Park Secondary College. The event was also attended by the good mayor of Brimbank, Cr Natalie Suleyman, who is strongly supporting the initiatives of the government, together with Crs Sam David and Troy Atanasovski.

Murray cod: cheese baits

Mr INGRAM (Gippsland East) — I would like to draw to the attention of the house an issue that has been raised with me by Simon Kaminskis in a number of letters he has written to me. It is quite a concerning issue, with reports from anglers in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia of Murray cod having been found dying from ingested cheese. Cheese baits are being used increasingly along the Murray River and its tributaries to catch Murray cod. The belief is that it

imitates the smell and taste of the bardy grub. Cod have been found dead with ulcerated and blocked stomachs from putrid cheese. Also cod that have been killed for the table have had their stomachs ulcerated and blocked with cheese. There is also one report of a cod in a tank dying after being fed cheese.

I ask that the government investigate this. It would be a simple matter of acquiring some aquaculture-bred Murray cod and doing a trial to see if this is a problem. If they fed cheese to them and this occurred, you would then be able to test the theory that this is a problem. If that is the case, action needs to be taken to make sure that cheese is not used as bait for Murray cod, because it is a threatened species and we need to make sure that we are not putting them at increased risk through angling activities.

Umbria Jazz Melbourne festival

Mr MILDENHALL (Footscray) — It was my pleasant duty as parliamentary secretary for the arts to represent the government at as many events of the Umbria Jazz Melbourne festival as I could possibly attend. The festival, which went from 5 to 15 May, was dynamically led by Albert Dadon and inspirationally crafted by famed artistic director Carlo Pagnotta. The world-class program was imported from Umbria and consisted of 60 ticketed performances and 62 free performances, which attracted a total audience of over 133 000, including 122 000 to the free events.

Many who passed by Federation Square would have been amazed at the quality of such acts as Dr Bobby Jones and the Nashville SuperChoir, Funk Off, and Rockin' Dopsie and the Zydeco Twisters, who delighted the crowd. Jessica Nicholas from the *Age* said:

The amount of publicity generated by Umbria Jazz Melbourne 05 is unprecedented for a jazz event in this country.

It was clearly the biggest jazz event in the Southern Hemisphere and a tribute to the funding support provided by the Victorian Major Events Corporation. May it go from strength to strength in future years.

Lake Colac: redevelopment project

Mr MULDER (Polwarth) — I have been heartened over the past few weeks to have noted the visits to my electorate of Polwarth by both a member for Geelong Province in the other place in her role as Parliamentary Secretary for Environment and the member for Ripon in his role as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development. With not only one but two members

taking time out of their busy schedules, and within a short time of each other, to meet with Colac-Otway shire representatives to inspect and discuss the shire's funding application for the Lake Colac project, I can only assume that both see this project as one truly deserving of their support. I should therefore be optimistic and believe that funding approval of the shire's application will be granted.

The Lake Colac redevelopment will play an integral part in the district's future. There is a huge potential for increased tourism in and around the Lake Colac precinct, which is strongly supported by local business and the community as a whole. Colac-Otway shire has maintained and continues to maintain strong economic growth, and tapping further into the tourism market with projects such as the lake development is intended to continue this trend. Given the importance being placed on this development, the community is obviously very keen to get things under way.

Applications for funding have been lodged, and we now look forward to the support shown by the personal visits to Polwarth by the member for Geelong Province in the other place and the member for Ripon being translated into funding approval in the very near future.

Australia Israel Cultural Exchange

Mr LUPTON (Pahran) — I commend the Australia Israel Cultural Exchange on its success in fostering cultural links and cooperation between Australia — in particular, Victoria — and Israel. Last night the Victorian Parliament Israel Friendship Group welcomed the chairman of AICE, Mr Albert Dadon — who is also the head of the Umbria Jazz Melbourne festival — to Parliament House. Albert Dadon spoke about the launch of AICE and its successes over the last two years, including establishing the first Australian film festival in Israel, which was opened by the Premier in Tel Aviv in June 2004 and which I also attended. The Premier also opened the inaugural Israeli film festival in Melbourne in September 2004, which I also attended.

Australia, and in particular Victoria, has had a very close relationship with Israel since we cast the first vote for the creation of the state of Israel in the United Nations General Assembly. This relationship has focused in particular on the political and personal connections between us. By increasing bilateral exchanges on a cultural level our relationship can only be further strengthened, enabling greater involvement and understanding to be extended throughout the wider community. I strongly endorse the work of AICE and look forward to its continuing success.

Drought: north-west Victoria

Mr WALSH (Swan Hill) — I refer to the announcement yesterday by the Premier that he and the Minister for Agriculture will visit north-west Victoria next week. Might I say that my constituents are cynical of politicians flying into the area for the mandatory photo opportunity, mouthing platitudes and riding into the sunset — raising hopes but delivering little.

The Premier is the master of spin. I say: look at what he does, not what he says. Does the Premier seriously believe providing \$400 000 to each of eight shires in the region for social infrastructure is drought assistance for small business and farmers? If he does, he is delusional. Before the 2002 election the Premier and the then Minister for Agriculture visited northern Victoria and announced a state drought package, including direct cash grants of up to \$20 000 to assist farmers to pay bills like water rates and shire rates. Back then we actually had a Minister for Agriculture who cared about country people and had a commitment to the industry he represented. The current minister is like the Scarlet Pimpernel.

They seek him here,
They seek him there.
Those farmers seek him everywhere.
Is he in Spring Street?
Has he slipped out?
That damned elusive Minister for Drought!

The Victorian minister has been missing in action when it comes to representing north-west Victorian farmers and small businesses in their time of need. I call on the Premier to deliver real state assistance when he visits the area, not just take advantage of a photo opportunity.

Eastern Region Community Housing

Ms MARSHALL (Forest Hill) — Recently I had the pleasure of meeting Mr Paul Ryan, the manager of Eastern Region Community Housing, an innovative and best practice social housing organisation that assists people with access to affordable and sustainable housing. Community Housing Ltd offers a range of services associated with transitional and permanent accommodation. It opened in 1994 with only one employee and a \$63 000 grant. In 10 years Community Housing has grown to a team of 40 people based in Box Hill, with three regional offices — Moonee Ponds, Morwell and Bairnsdale.

Community Housing has experienced strong growth in the number of properties and tenancies it manages, with more than 750 dwellings under management in Victoria by the end of the year. This is made up of

400 transitional houses and 350 dwellings for long-term accommodation. The number is growing by around 100 properties per year. One of the keys to Community Housing's housing management success is that projects are developed with local community partners who are motivated to meet the needs of the disadvantaged in their community and are staunch advocates when seeking support from local councils and government.

This was illustrated most recently in January of this year when the Minister for Housing in the other place opened 10 units designed and built by Community Housing Ltd in partnership with Boroondara City Council. This project was part of the state government's social housing innovation project. The units are well located and in easy walking distance of shops and other community facilities. They offer several examples of innovative design which complement and enhance the streetscape as well as offering a high level of amenity for the tenants. It is through projects like this and its continued advocacy for the disadvantaged that Community Housing — —

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

Craig Johnston

Mr SMITH (Bass) — It is interesting to see that that union thug and commo Craig Johnston is being released from prison today. Some in here of course would probably think it was a shame it was not last Friday, and he could have gone along with the other thugs to the ALP state conference. Johnston, as we know, was jailed for his violent attacks at Johnson Tiles and Skilled Engineering, and we now know that he will be out to again attack employers and the federal government.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions said it does not want him, but that other commo thug, Martin Kingham, cannot wait for his union mate to be released so they can cause mayhem on building sites and for employers across Victoria. We also wonder where current union leader and Trades Hall Council chief and former commo thug Brian Boyd stands on this issue. For the terror Craig Johnston caused to the staff at Johnson Tiles he should have been jailed for at least 10 years. Doug Cameron from the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union does not want him back. Maybe he should stand for pre-selection for the Labor Party. He has got a few of his thuggish mates here in the Legislative Assembly of the Victorian Parliament.

Ann Nichol House, Portarlington

Ms NEVILLE (Bellarine) — On Thursday, 12 May, I was very pleased to be part of the opening of the newly extended and renovated Ann Nichol House aged care facility in Portarlington, which is a service of Bellarine Community Health. Prior to the redevelopment Ann Nichol House was a 30-bed, low-care facility. We now have a 60-bed low-care facility as part of the redeveloped Ann Nichol House. Of these 60 beds, 20 are in the dementia-specific wing, Sims Lodge, and all the beds have been built to accommodate residents at a high level as the needs of the community require. The project involved the sale of the former Sims Lodge at Point Lonsdale, the building of 29 new beds in two wings and renovations to the existing Ann Nichol House, including an extended kitchen and dining room.

All up, the cost was \$3.7 million, and the state government was pleased to contribute \$250 000 towards the project. The \$1.2 million raised by local residents and from various trust funds was significant. The contributions from local residents indicate the high regard the community has for Ann Nichol House. It is this significant contribution from so many people that has made the project a reality. Special thanks and acknowledgment to John Fendyk, the current chief executive officer; Moyneen Curtis, the previous chief executive officer; the past and present chairs of the board of management, Nan Lukey and Sandy Austin; Jenny Gibbs, who chaired the project steering committee; the staff at Ann Nichol House and Sims Lodge; and the residents and families who lived through the construction and the difficult transition. Congratulations! This is a state-of-the-art facility that will be appreciated by Bellarine residents.

Knox Reconciliation Action Group

Mr LOCKWOOD (Bayswater) — Today I would like to make mention of the Knox Reconciliation Action Group (KRAG). The group was started in 2003 as an initiative of the Knox council and has been growing in confidence ever since. I was a founding member of that group, which now runs under its own steam. It is a group that is keen to raise awareness of Aboriginal reconciliation as an issue and to put the local Knox community more in touch with the indigenous culture that was prominent in the area before white settlement. Though relatively few indigenous people live in Knox, it is important from a cultural and heritage point of view for everyone to know more about the origins of the local area.

The activists in the group are Ray Higgs — in fact both the Higgs — Sahndra Nelson, Debbie Sherman, Elkie White, Henry and Sue Atkinson, Don McArthur, Imelda and Peter Evans, Anne Schmidt, Craig Woodward, Cameron Rodda, and Steve Barrington, and David Farrell offers some advice and support. A flag raising event is on today for the National Day of Healing (Sorry Day). It is a big occasion for the group, as it will be its first significant event in Knox. The council has been raising the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag for the past four years for Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week, but not for National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Observance Committee Week.

Reconciliation week commences tomorrow and runs until 3 June. Today there will be didgeridoo playing by Shane to create some atmosphere and a welcome to country performed by Vicki Nicholson-Brown. After the flag raising all present will be invited to take a leaf and lay a branch at the foot of the flagpole. A feature of the week is an indigenous art exhibition at the council, to be opened by the mayor, Jenny Moore, as part of today's ceremony. There will be free indigenous food and morning tea following the flag raising.

Montrose Primary School: Education Week

Ms BEARD (Kilsyth) — This year Education Week at Montrose Primary School coincided with a celebration of the school's 125th anniversary. A large number of special events were organised to mark this significant occasion. I was privileged to attend the opening ceremony for the week's celebrations on Monday morning as part of a whole school assembly, where I was delighted to present the school with a certificate from the Department of Education and Training. Each grade performed an item, among which were songs, the prep's heel-and-toe polka, which had everyone's toes tapping, mime and a delightful maypole dance. The children were obviously aware of the significance of this historic occasion, as their performances were superb.

Other guests present were local identities Kevin and Joy Heinz, and Margaret Atkins, a former principal for 17 years. The Heinz family's name is enshrined at the school, with one of the school houses named Heinz as a tribute to their commitment to the school community. We all enjoyed seeing Ivy Kernahan, the past secretary, who now contributes so enthusiastically to the Montrose community. Other celebrations planned for the week included grandparents and special friends' day, with olden-day games, paper bag lunches with no pre-packaged food, a whole-school birthday party, a bush band incursion, a celebration dinner and a

Back-to-Montrose Primary School Open Day with Devonshire teas, bush music and an olden-day equipment display on Saturday. The school song, written for the occasion, was inspiring.

Montrose Primary School has a great leadership team in the principal, Peter Durkin, the assistant principal, Geoff Sperring, and a wonderful teaching staff. The Montrose community appreciates its good fortune, and enrolments at the school are on the increase.

Green Gully Soccer Club

Mr SEITZ (Keilor) — I rise to congratulate the Green Gully Soccer Club on its millennium games last Sunday, which I had the pleasure of attending. It is a significant event for a soccer club that has been in existence for 50 years in my electorate. It put on a display for the community involving all the young junior players — some 120. That was followed by a senior match, which was played between Green Gully and the Melbourne Knights. It went off well, with excellent play and good sportsmanship. There were fireworks after the match, followed by live bands and entertainment for the community.

I again raise the fact that soccer only seems to get a mention when there are brawls and fights, not when the soccer community displays its ability to entertain the community for the benefit of the young people in our areas. I again urge the media to in the future take up such issues when there are celebrations by the soccer community in Victoria so that they are covered as well. It only goes to show what soccer is doing for our young people. It is the same with football: what would those young kids do if they were not training? They would not have any recreational facilities available to them. It is totally run by volunteers, and they should be congratulated as well.

Mitcham–Frankston project: land acquisition

Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte) — Yet again we have outer east residents being treated with contempt by this arrogant state government. Residents of Hillcrest Road, Ringwood, will have their family homes compulsorily acquired —

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

RACING AND GAMBLING ACTS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Mr PANDAZOPOULOS (Minister for Gaming) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am proud to present this bill to the house today. This bill contains measures which protect racing industry and government revenue, enhance the integrity of racing and wagering and support the industry to efficiently and effectively administer the conduct of racing.

The Bracks government recognises the important contribution which the Victorian racing industry makes to the social and cultural fabric of the community, and vital economic input which the industry delivers to the state.

Strategies contained within this bill support the economic contribution of the racing industry by guarding against practices which seek to divert revenue from Victoria. Victorian racing is also renowned for the highest standards of probity and integrity and this bill will support the industry to maintain these standards.

The Bracks government is also committed to providing the racing industry with the required tools to survive and grow into the future. Accordingly this bill also includes amendments, requested by Racing Victoria Ltd, which support this body to fulfil its important role as the peak body for the thoroughbred racing industry in Victoria.

In addition to racing-related initiatives, amendments contained in this bill also provide for an additional \$45 million annually to be raised from the health benefit levy and directed to Victoria's public hospital system.

Key features of the bill

I now turn to some of the key features of this bill.

The bill contains the following key amendments within the sphere of racing and gaming regulation:

the creation of a new offence prohibiting the unauthorised publication of race fields;

legislative support to facilitate the transfer of the crown release from the Victoria Racing Club to Racing Victoria Ltd;

consistency of process for appeal rights to Racing Victoria Ltd's racing appeals and disciplinary board; and

an increase in the annual health benefit levy payable by gaming operators and the casino operator.

New offence — unauthorised publication of race fields

The bill creates a new offence prohibiting the publication of race fields by unauthorised wagering service providers.

This amendment is designed to protect the industry against the current and potential practices of unauthorised wagering operators based interstate or overseas.

Unauthorised wagering service providers generate, or have potential to derive, significant revenue from Victorian racing however unlike authorised operators make no financial contribution to the industry or to state revenue in return.

It has been established that betting turnover on Victorian racing, currently being generated by large corporate bookmakers in the Northern Territory, is resulting in a significant revenue loss to the Victorian racing industry and government.

In addition, the transactions of unauthorised wagering operators are invisible to racing regulators. As a consequence, these transactions undermine the integrity of Victorian and Australian racing.

This new offence adds another brick to the wall of protection for the Victorian racing industry and all its related revenues. The offence is intended to deter interstate and overseas operators from unauthorised use of Victorian racing's product.

The amendment is also consistent with the legislative approach adopted in other states such as New South Wales which is in the process of prosecuting a corporate Darwin bookmaker for the unauthorised use of NSW race fields.

The offence fills a gap in an existing suite of betting-related offences contained within the Gambling Regulation Act.

It is important to note that the offence has been drafted so as to provide the government with capacity, if so desired, to exempt selected betting operators from its application. Such flexibility is a relevant consideration in the context of the current review being undertaken of

Victoria's electronic gaming machine, wagering and lotteries licences.

Appropriate exceptions to the offence have also been identified to ensure that there are no unintended consequences for industry stakeholders, such as newspapers, who perform a legitimate service function to the industry when reproducing race field information.

In summary, this offence will reinforce measures available to combat illegal betting, its consequential threats to racing integrity and the revenues of both the industry and government.

The offence does not in any way inhibit the state from licensing new wagering service providers in the future as its application is only in respect of illegal operators.

This amendment has been requested by the racing industry and accordingly will be welcomed by the industry both within Victoria and nationally.

Transfer of Crown lease

This proposal is the first of two technical amendments to the Racing Act that have been requested by Racing Victoria Limited.

The amendment provides for the transfer of the crown lease for a specific piece of land known as 'Racing Victoria Centre' from the Victoria Racing Club to Racing Victoria.

Legislative support for the formal transfer of this lease is in harmony with Parliament's decision to establish Racing Victoria as the governing body for the Victorian thoroughbred racing industry in 2001.

The proposal also alleviates any potential future concerns regarding the legitimacy of Racing Victoria as the rightful holder of the Crown lease for this land.

Racing Appeals and Disciplinary Board

This second technical amendment relates to the operations and functions of Racing Victoria Ltd's 'Racing Appeals and Disciplinary Board'.

This board was established following the conduct of a review by Racing Victoria of the role and structure of its organisation in 2003. This board is now the first avenue of appeal for licensed participants found guilty of a race day offence by the stewards, and also holds originating jurisdiction over more serious matters identified within the rules of racing.

The proposed amendments are technical in nature. However, they are important for the industry to ensure that there is certainty and consistency of process in appeal rights to the board.

Health benefit levy

Finally, this bill provides for an increase in the health benefit levy payable by gaming operators and the casino operator.

These amendments to the Gambling Regulation Act and the Casino Control Act will provide for an increase in this annual gaming machine levy by an additional \$1 500 per annum per machine. The levy will now raise \$91 million per year which shall go directly to the hospital and charities fund.

In total, the increase generates \$45 million in additional annual revenue. This revenue is applied to the gaming machine operators to ensure that the community gets a fair share of the super profits that these operators make because of the regulation of the number of machines.

It is important to note that the increase in the levy will have no impact on players, as they will continue to be protected by the legislated minimum payout rate of 87 per cent.

The Treasurer has also announced a \$3.5 million assistance package to the racing industry in 2005–06, in recognition of the impact on racing industry revenues from its joint venture with Tabcorp.

It has been four years since the government last increased the levy on gaming machines. This was consistent with an undertaking of the Bracks government to ensure that there would be no further gaming tax increases in its first term.

Conclusion

The bill contains a range of amendments to key acts within the racing and gaming portfolios. It is an important step in the government's commitment to facilitate and promote a viable, accountable and strong racing industry and also supports government health and community service objectives.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrantdyte)

Debate adjourned until Thursday, 9 June.

VICTORIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE BILL

Second reading

Mr HOLDING (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is twofold:

1. To re-enact the Victoria State Emergency Services Act 1987 to establish a statutory authority to manage the Victoria State Emergency Service (SES).
2. To improve the transparency and equity of the insurance-based funding system for the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board (MFESB) and the Country Fire Authority (CFA). The bill will implement recommendations of the Department of Treasury and Finance's 2003 *Review of Victorian Fire Services Funding Arrangements*.

SES

The Bracks government is committed to creating a strong, sustainable and dynamic SES.

The Bracks government has strengthened the SES. We will continue in our efforts to support its long-term sustainability and identity as a separate emergency service organisation.

The SES is a key provider of emergency service assistance within Victoria's comprehensive emergency management framework, which in turn is widely recognised as highly effective in its delivery of services and planning for emergencies.

The SES has the primary responsibility for responding to extreme weather events such as floods and storms, and is the main provider of road accident rescue services in Victoria.

The SES also provides critical support to other emergency services, including:

provision of operational support to fire services during seasonal bushfire campaigns;

search and rescue activities for Victoria Police; and

critical support to local government with emergency prevention and management planning.

The SES provides these services through a statewide network of over 5500 volunteers and has traditionally been a business unit within the Department of Justice.

The SES volunteers have been performing well, as demonstrated by their excellent response to the recent February 2005 storms. However, the organisation has been hampered by challenges, such as:

a management structure that urgently needs reform to respond to increased demand;

regulatory requirements, changed community expectations and population growth in key urban corridors; and

the need for a sustainable budget framework that assesses and enhances the performance of the organisation.

The Bracks government is committed to equipping the SES with the capacity to address these present challenges and prepare for the future. This bill provides this capacity to the SES through re-enacting the SES as a statutory authority.

In addition, these changes will make it clear to SES volunteers that they are valued and supported. It will create efficient processes that support volunteers and allow them to focus on their training and emergency response, rather than paperwork.

Over the two terms of the Bracks government, SES volunteers have told us that the present structure of the SES does not give them parity with their colleagues in other emergency service organisations. We have listened and acted on their feedback.

Key benefits of the re-enactment of the SES as a statutory authority

Structural parity across all three primary emergency response services.

Both the MFESB and CFA are successful statutory authorities. As a statutory authority, the SES will be aligned with the organisational structure of the MFESB and the CFA.

The structure and governance arrangements of a statutory authority will strengthen the SES to enhance partnering relationships with other emergency service organisations.

The government's vision is that the SES achieves significant corporate and operational efficiencies by partnering more with their comparable emergency

service organisations. This structure facilitates that vision.

Creating structural comparability between Victoria's key emergency service organisations will facilitate the development of strategic, statewide deployment capabilities. Common operating platforms and corporate services cultures will speed the development of this capability.

The structure of the organisation

The new entity provides for a reinvigorated management structure that will import high-level corporate expertise into emergency operations and provide guidance for the management of the SES. It will include an expert board, a chief executive officer and a director of operations.

The expert board will provide high-level expertise in financial and operational management.

A chief executive officer will provide strategic advice to the board and manage the organisation. The director of operations (reporting to the chief executive officer) will focus on the delivery and improvement of emergency response services.

Reporting and governance

The new authority (as a public entity) will be subject to the requirements of both the Public Administration Act 2004 (the PAA) and the Financial Management Act 1994. The requirements of these acts provide a comprehensive framework to ensure good governance in the Victorian public sector.

Some examples of the requirements under these acts that will improve the governance of the SES include:

the requirement that directors must at all times, in the exercise of their functions, act honestly; in good faith; with integrity; in a financially responsible manner and exercise a reasonable degree of skill, care and diligence.

the requirement of the PAA that the board ensures it has procedures in place to govern the conduct of its meetings; inform the minister of any major risks to the effective operation of the entity; install adequate risk management systems and monitor and assess the performance of individual board members.

the provision of financial and other information (such as a corporate plan, statement of corporate intent, business plan, annual report and financial statements) that details information about operations.

A statutory authority ready for action

The government has devoted considerable effort to ensure that upon commencement, the systems and operations of the new entity have been seamlessly transferred, and that it is ready to focus on the delivery of its core emergency response services.

These reforms will enhance the sustainability of the SES and therefore Victoria's multi-agency, multi-hazard emergency management arrangements.

Improving the transparency and equity of the current insurance-based funding system

The amendments contained in this bill to the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 and the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Act 1958 will deliver the Bracks government's commitment to transparency and equity in the fire service funding system.

The need to enhance the transparency and equity of the current insurance-based fire services funding model was identified by the Department of Treasury and Finance's 2003 review of Victorian fire services funding arrangements.

The review identified an apparent lack of connection between the fire services levy amounts collected by insurance companies and resulting contributions to the fire services. Community and business are united in demanding transparency in the way insurers charge them, and this bill will deliver this transparency.

The bill will ensure that companies itemising a fire services levy (or like description) on premiums, will be required to report these amounts to the CFA and MFESB. In the interests of transparency, the CFA and MFESB will have the power to publish these amounts in their annual reports.

The current funding model does not address this government's principle of equity across business and community sectors.

The bill will require high-level deductibles (i.e. excesses) contained in the insurance policies of major corporates to be included in the calculation of insurance company contributions to fire service budgets (this is an equity measure).

For the purpose of assessing contribution, the insurer's contribution will now be assessed against the full insured value (minus an allowable deductible of \$10 000). A formula allowing the full value of the insured value to be calculated will be contained in regulation. This measure is aimed at distributing the

funding burden equitably across all insurance companies, including those with customers who have high levels of deductibles.

Amendments contained in this bill will clarify existing uncertainty in the MFB and CFA acts to ensure that while the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority will not be treated as an insurance contributor in terms of government property, it will have to make contributions to the fire services like any other insurer for any insurance business conducted in the non-general government sector.

The bill will also clarify some existing technical anomalies relating to the calculation of contributions required from insurance intermediaries, brokers and owners.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrantyte).

Debate adjourned until Thursday, 9 June.

STATE TAXATION ACTS (GENERAL AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Mr BRUMBY (Treasurer) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In the state budget handed down on 3 May, the government announced major taxation reform including further land tax relief worth \$823 million over five years. The principal objective of this bill is to make the necessary amendments to the taxation laws to implement these commitments, and a range of other government initiatives.

The bill enacts the government's undertaking provided in the 2003–04 state budget to abolish debits tax from 1 July 2005. This was foreshadowed under the intergovernmental agreement on the reform of commonwealth-state financial relations, and confirmed at the commonwealth-state ministerial council on financial relations on 26 March 2004.

The Land Tax Act 1958 is amended to give effect to the extensive reform package announced in the budget. This includes:

reducing the middle land tax rates that apply to property holdings valued between \$750 000 and

\$2.7 million, which will deliver savings of up to 44 per cent;

bringing forward by one year the reduction in the top marginal rate announced in the 2004–05 budget, estimated to benefit over 2300 land tax payers;

increasing the tax-free threshold by \$25 000 to \$200 000, thereby eliminating land tax bills for around 21 000 Victorians;

providing a general land tax rebate for the 2005 land tax year, estimated to approximate \$59 million;

capping the increase in land tax liabilities for the 2006 land tax year; and

providing a full land tax exemption for more than 450 aged care facilities, supported residential services and rooming houses backdated to 1 January 2004.

These reforms will benefit around 44 000 taxpayers who have been impacted by the increased valuations that reflect Victoria's buoyant property market. This targeted relief continues the most significant land tax reform in the state's history. The changes mean 98 per cent of Victorian businesses will pay less land tax than in any other state.

In addition the bill implements the land tax exemption for private caravan parks announced on 4 December 2004 and backdated to 1 January this year. This exemption, as well as that for aged care facilities, supported residential services and rooming houses will be subjected to a special land tax rate where previously exempt land is no longer used for an exempt purpose. An amendment to remove an anomaly in the refund provisions for unoccupied land subsequently used as a principal place of residence and the adoption of similar administrative provisions for information gathering as those found in the Taxation Administration Act 1997, are also contained in the bill.

It was also announced in the budget that the highly successful additional \$5000 first home bonus for any qualifying first home purchase up to \$500 000 will be extended until the end of this year, and then will be available at the reduced amount of \$3000 until 1 July 2007. The additional grant has been an outstanding success helping over 24 000 Victorians buy their first homes. The take-up rate in regional Victoria has been particularly pleasing. Access to the more limited first home buyer concession in the Duties Act 2000 continues to be suspended while the additional grant is in place.

There are significant changes to the sub-sales provisions of the Duties Act 2000 which have been the subject of extensive consultation with the Law Institute of Victoria and industry players. The fundamental basis of duty is that changes in beneficial ownership in land, however achieved, are subject to conveyance duty. For reasons of equity and revenue protection, it is essential that duties are applied fairly and effectively. An entirely new regime will be introduced by this bill which will ensure that additional duty is only applied when there are multiple dutiable transactions. The previous provisions had given rise to anomalies and reform in this area reflects the government's commitment to working with the taxpayer community. I thank those who have contributed to these proposals and appreciate the genuine recognition given by business and practitioners to the state's role as custodian of revenue.

Another significant measure is the proposal to extend the corporate reconstruction exemption to consolidations as defined under commonwealth law. This too has been the subject of significant industry input. The government acknowledges that changing business practices entail regular review of existing legislative exemptions and this measure is further proof of the government's proactive approach to taxation law reform.

As noted earlier, the bill enacts the abolition of debits tax from 1 July 2005. It further contains provisions in the Duties Act to enact the government's commitment in the budget to abolish business rental duty from 1 January 2007. This highlights the transformation in state taxes where since 1999 Victoria has gone from being the state with the highest number of business taxes to having the equal lowest. The lead-in time for the abolition of rental duty allows commercial hire businesses, especially those which enter into special hiring agreements, plenty of time to adjust their practices.

The bill abolishes, with reasonable transitional provisions, three little used exemptions from duty. These are:

where there is a vesting of land because of a foreclosure of mortgage. The registrar of titles advises that there are about five of these cases a year. The concession is inequitable as the mortgagee obtains the legal and beneficial interest in the land upon a foreclosure order and, in any other situation, a transfer of this interest would be dutiable;

upon a transfer of property (either land or a motor vehicle) to a shareholder if made as the result of a reduction in capital; and

upon a transfer of property (either land or motor vehicle) to a shareholder if made as a result of the voluntary winding up of the company.

In both these latter cases, these provisions are rarely used and are inequitable in the sense that a shareholder does not already, by virtue of ownership of shares, enjoy a beneficial ownership of the property of the company. Therefore a transfer to a shareholder effects a change in both legal and beneficial ownership. Generally, the concessions offered from duty flow from an underlying assumption of an existing beneficial interest. It should also be noted that most other jurisdictions do not offer these concessions and the State Revenue Office believes that there is abuse of the winding-up concession in that the concession itself is the motivation for the voluntary winding up designed to benefit particular shareholders.

The government signalled on 13 April 2005 its intention to close a potential loophole in the land-rich provisions. The bill contains an amendment to clarify the definition of 'land-holder' which has been challenged on a narrow literal meaning. This amendment to clarify the meaning intended by Parliament will have effect from the date of commencement of the current provisions, being 13 May 2004. The change will remove any uncertainty in the market place and will ensure that Victoria's duty laws are fair and equitable.

The law will be changed to reflect industry's understanding of the provisions, will ensure that the tax treatment in this area is equitable across the board and will protect the revenue in the manner that was always intended. The bill contains some additional minor amendments to the land-rich provisions.

The bill amends the Pay-roll Tax Act 1971 to reflect the government's announcement in the Budget to exempt wages paid or payable by school councils from payroll tax. This exemption is to be backdated to 1 July 2004. The amendment is necessary because, due to the discretionary nature of funding provided to school councils, it cannot be clearly anticipated whether or not the payroll tax threshold for individual councils will be breached. Therefore funding allowances cannot be accurately made and councils are occasionally faced with unexpected payroll tax for which they have inadequate funding.

The Taxation Administration Act 1997 contains an amendment that adds the Country Fire Authority and the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board as 'authorised recipients' of taxpayer information for the purposes of the section 92 secrecy provisions. This

follows a request from the Emergency Services Commissioner and is designed to assist these authorities to better target compliance activity for verifying statutory contributions from persons insured with overseas insurers.

The bill further amends section 31 of the TAA which deals with potential reductions in penalty tax in circumstances where a taxpayer has made a voluntary disclosure. This follows the finding in the VCAT matter of Dr Peter Tisdall and the Commissioner of State Revenue where the tribunal allowed a reduction in penalty contrary to the practice of the State Revenue Office. The proposal is to clarify the operation of this section to the 'voluntary' provision of information specifically noting that providing information in response to an assessment by the SRO does not attract a reduction in penalty.

There are two more technical amendments easing the manner in which the market rate of interest can be set (section 25(1)(a), (2) and (3)), and how foreign currency and interest rates are valued (section 119). The amendment to market rate of interest is also made to the Taxation (Interest on Overpayments) Act 1986. Certain legislative terms are now obsolete and need to be replaced. This will also lead to greater uniformity between federal and other jurisdictional provisions.

The proposed amendments to the Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act 1979 will implement the 2005–06 budget measure to establish a transparent link between revenue from traffic cameras and speeding fines and the government's expenditure on roads, road safety and road maintenance programs.

From 1 July 2005, revenue from speed cameras, red light cameras and other speeding fines will be directed to improving and maintaining Victoria's road system through the Better Roads Victoria Trust Account.

The Business Franchise (Petroleum Products) Act 1979 established the Better Roads Victoria Trust Account. Section 13(3) of the act currently enables the trust to be expended for the construction and maintenance of roads. The bill amends the act to allow the trust to be spent on a wider range of road improvement initiatives, including road safety programs.

The changes reflect the government's commitment to a taxation system that is fair and equitable.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr CLARK (Box Hill).

Debate adjourned until Thursday, 9 June.

NATIONAL PARKS (ALPINE NATIONAL PARK GRAZING) BILL

Second reading

Mr THWAITES (Minister for Environment) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The National Parks (Alpine National Park Grazing) Bill will amend the National Parks Act 1975 to cease licensed cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park. The bill is an historic one and will make a major contribution to ensuring a sustainable future for what should be one of our finest national parks.

We are very fortunate to have protected within Victoria's world-class parks system splendid examples of the state's diverse natural environments — semi-arid deserts, woodlands, forests, rainforest, wetlands, native grasslands, and coastal and marine environments. Of particular relevance to this bill are the alpine and mountain environments, which are a feature of the Alpine National Park.

The Alpine National Park is Victoria's largest national park. It contains the headwaters of many of our major rivers and streams, diverse natural environments, rare plants and animals, significant wilderness areas, spectacular scenery, interesting historical sites and outstanding recreational opportunities. As part of the Australian Alps, the park is recognised as being of national and international significance and to have world heritage listing potential.

But — significant areas of this great park are also currently licensed for cattle grazing.

A maximum of 7914 adult-equivalent cattle (where two calves less than 12 months are equivalent to one adult) — or less than half a per cent of Victoria's beef herd — are licensed to graze in the park, with the licensed areas covering nearly half the park. There are 59 seven-year licences, most of which expire on 13 August 2005 with 4 expiring on 30 June 2006. There are also 2 annual licences.

Towards a more sustainable future for the Alpine National Park

Although cattle grazing is currently permitted in the Alpine National Park, it has long been recognised as a damaging activity in Australia's high country national parks.

Growing Victoria Together articulates the Bracks government's 10-year vision for Victoria. One of the key goals is protecting our environment for future generations. The parks system clearly has a major role to play in achieving that goal with respect to the natural environment. The creation of 13 marine national parks and 11 marine sanctuaries, the expansion of the parks system in the box-ironbark region, and the proposed national parks at Point Nepean and in the Otways are testimony to the government's commitment to date.

However, more than simply legislating to establish these parks, the government is keen to ensure that they are properly managed and protected. The recent state budget in which an additional \$91 million was allocated to park management reflects that priority.

The creation of the Alpine National Park in 1989 was a major step in achieving the goal of a world-class national park in the Victorian Alps.

Today, more than 15 years on, it is time for us to review the appropriateness of grazing in the park. It is time to acknowledge that cattle grazing is not compatible with the ideals of this great national park, nor is it compatible with the community's desire to better protect our natural environment. If we are serious about giving greater protection to the environment, and to our national parks in particular, cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park cannot continue. We must establish a new direction for the park and afford it the protection that a world-class national park deserves.

In coming to a decision to cease grazing in the park, the government has considered the many facets of this issue. It has been significantly assisted in this regard by the work of the Alpine Grazing Taskforce, which was established in May 2004 to examine and report on options relating to the long-term future of cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park. I thank the task force for its work.

In turn the task force was greatly assisted by the contributions of many individuals and organisations. It received some 3600 submissions; it met 85 individuals in 49 sessions in Bairnsdale, Omeo, Bright or Mansfield; and it made several visits to different parts of the national park with representatives of the Alpine Conservation and Access Group, Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria, Victorian National Parks Association and Parks Victoria. It also met with the MCAV, VNPA, several scientists and Parks Victoria in Melbourne. I thank all the many individuals and organisations who participated in the process. All of their contributions helped to inform the task force in its work and assisted it to compile its detailed report.

The decision to cease cattle grazing in the national park has not been taken lightly. The government is very aware of the diverse views on the issue, including the views of those who seek to continue grazing in the park. It respects those views and has taken them into account.

However, it would not be in the long-term interests of the park or future generations if, in the face of all the evidence and the government's goal of a sustainable future for the state, the government did not take this opportunity to cease grazing in the Alpine National Park.

The need for change

The continuation of grazing in the Alpine National Park does not make environmental or economic sense.

Sixty years of research, together with the significant changes seen since removing stock from the higher areas of Kosciuszko National Park and parts of the Victorian Alps decades ago, clearly show that cattle grazing adversely affects water catchment, soil and nature conservation values.

Cattle trample stream banks and fragile moss beds and springs, they threaten the survival of rare plants and animals, and they spread weeds. They reduce what should be magnificent wildflower displays and spoil the amenity of the park for visitors through their cow droppings. This is not what a national park should be.

'Soil erosion and damage and disturbance in the Alpine regions of Victoria caused by cattle grazing' is a potentially threatening process listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. There are at least 25 plant species, 7 animal species and 4 vegetation communities in the park that are considered significantly threatened by cattle grazing. These include 17 species listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act and 4 species listed as vulnerable under the commonwealth's Environment Protection and Conservation Act 1999.

The Alpine National Park is the only high country national park in Australia, where livestock grazing is permitted. It ended above the snowline in Kosciuszko National Park nearly 50 years ago and in the whole of that park (except for some stock routes) more than 30 years ago.

Furthermore, cattle grazing is currently allowed in five of the Alpine National Park's six wilderness zones. It is incompatible with wilderness objectives, which aim to maximise the extent to which these areas are undisturbed by such activities. Ceasing grazing will

give additional protection to these important areas of the park.

Importantly, the removal of cattle from the park will allow the rehabilitation of badly damaged moss beds and other sites and will increase the effectiveness of weed and pest animal control without the ongoing threat of cattle damage.

Ongoing grazing does not make economic sense either. The amounts required to be spent on managing the activity, particularly in the aftermath of the 1998 and 2003 fires, can never be recovered from the fees charged. That Parks Victoria has spent some \$2 million over the 5 years 1998–99 to 2003–04 in return for \$88 000 licence fees (excluding GST) highlights the poor economics of this activity and the unacceptable draw on the public purse. These costs do not include the hidden environmental costs to some of our most precious catchments and native flora and fauna.

To continue grazing, but with improved environmental management, would require extensive fencing of streams and moss beds, the provision of alternative watering points and ongoing monitoring of cattle. This would be expensive and would add significantly to the direct costs of managing grazing. It is neither practical nor appropriate in a national park.

In addition, the 1998 and 2003 bushfires have affected more than 60 per cent of the park and more than 80 per cent of the area licensed for grazing. Since the 2003 fires there has been very little grazing in the park — last season less than 10 per cent of the maximum allocation (less than 739 adult-equivalent cattle) grazed in the park.

A recent review by the independent scientific advisory panel established by Parks Victoria to advise on the issue of grazing following the 2003 fires concluded that grazing should not return to the burnt areas of the park above 1200 metres, or to severely burnt areas below that level, for at least the next 10 years.

The need for change is compelling. Now is the time to establish a new beginning for the Alpine National Park.

Having said that in relation to the park, the government confirms that grazing on public land in the high country will continue in state forest outside the park. There are a considerable number of licences over areas of state forest which allow about 10 000 cattle to graze. These include areas grazed by various park licensees as well as other mountain cattlemen and women. The traditions of high country grazing will continue in these areas.

Supporting the licensees, the high country community and the park

In making this historic decision, the government is keen to ensure that those affected are supported and that the opportunities that the decision presents for the park and the region are taken up. The government has therefore announced a range of significant initiatives to assist licensees, improve the natural condition of the park, help tourism and local communities, and support high country cultural heritage. I shall now outline these measures.

Licensees will be supported

To assist in the permanent transition from grazing in the park, the government is providing assistance to cattlemen and women to help them adjust their enterprises. There will be a payment calculated at \$100 per adult equivalent (based on the maximum licence allocation) per year for three years, to a maximum total payment of \$100 000 per operation. In this context, an operation is defined as a single licence or set of licences for which there is a common group of licensees with the one nominated contact person. A total of \$1.85 million has been allocated for this purpose over the three years.

In addition, some areas of state forest in the general vicinity of the park that are currently unlicensed or may be under allocated may be able to accommodate additional cattle. The Department of Sustainability and Environment will work with licensees to assess areas which licensees may consider to be suitable to their needs.

Weeds and pest animals in the park will be tackled

A recurring issue raised with the Alpine Grazing Taskforce was the real concern in the high country communities for better control of weeds and pest animals in the park. It was pointed out that focusing only on cattle overlooked the fact that there are other environmental issues in the park which need tackling. The scientific advisory panel which I referred to earlier also recently emphasised the need for a concentrated effort on weed control following the 2003 fires.

The government has listened to those concerns and has allocated \$2.2 million for weed and pest animal control in the national park over the next three years. This will augment the work which has already been occurring as part of the bushfire recovery program. As part of these programs, opportunities may arise for appropriately qualified licensees to participate.

Long-term damage will be repaired

Along with increased weed and pest control programs, there is an urgent need to rehabilitate some of the more damaged sensitive areas of the park, particularly moss beds. Moss beds are some of the most fragile parts of the high country and play a critical role by filtering and regulating the flow of water. A recent study of moss beds on the licensed area of the Bogong High Plains found that most were not in good condition. Their recovery will, in many cases, require active rehabilitation. Works have already commenced in some parts of the high plains as part of the bushfire recovery program. However, as part of post-grazing support measures, an additional \$650 000 will be provided to progress this work over the next three years.

High country tourism will be supported

The removal of grazing provides a splendid opportunity for promoting nature-based tourism in the Alpine National Park and boosting regional economies. In conjunction with other tourism features of the region, sustainable nature-based tourism will make a significant and ongoing economic contribution to the region. The removal of cattle will allow the magnificent summer wildflower displays to flourish on the high plains and the park to become more attractive to visitors. Its long-term value to the regional economy will increase.

The government is supporting tourism in the high country through a range of significant initiatives. It is contributing \$2 million towards sealing the Bogong High Plains Road. This will enable visitors to enjoy this magnificent part of the high country on a stunning touring route through the park, from Mount Beauty through Falls Creek and on to Omeo and the Great Alpine Road. Not only will visitors benefit but so, too, will local communities.

The government is also committing \$265 000 to implement aspects of the Omeo tourism destination plan, including promoting Omeo, business support and improvements to visitor facilities.

The history of the high country will be recognised

The high country has a varied and interesting history, and cattle grazing in various parts of the Alpine National Park is an important part of that history. To provide a more informative experience for visitors and to complement other tourism initiatives, \$240 000 will be provided for interpretive signage and information at key locations about the history of the high country,

including grazing. It is hoped that mountain cattlemen will contribute to this project.

As well, \$60 000 will be made available to help with the maintenance of historic cattlemen's huts by community groups such as the Victorian High Country Huts Association who are actively involved in such activities.

National and world heritage listings

With the cessation of grazing, the government will be working with the New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory governments to seek national heritage listing and then world heritage listing for national parks in the Australian Alps. This has been a long-term goal of the government and, if successful, will make a significant contribution to the long-term economic future of the region.

The bill

I now turn to particular provisions of the bill as they amend the National Parks Act 1975.

The bill will bring to an end licensed cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park.

Clauses 4, 7, 10, 11 and 12 will come into operation on 14 August 2005 after most of the seven-year licences expire. Of particular note, clauses 7, 11 and 12 will repeal sections 32AD, 57 and 58, which are the sections which allow grazing to occur in the national park. Clause 4 will repeal section 22C, which allows grazing to occur in certain wilderness zones. Clause 10 is a transitional provision.

Clause 9 will ensure that the four licences which expire on 30 June 2006 continue until that date, despite the earlier repeal of section 32AD, under which they are granted, and section 22C. Clause 9 will also make it clear that a licence issued under section 32AD is not able to be renewed.

Clause 6 recognises the circumstances of landowners whose freehold land is surrounded by or abuts the national park. The new section 30BA will enable the minister to permit cattle to be moved through the park (but not through a wilderness zone or a reference area) to or from freehold land if there is no practical alternative route. Such movements would need to be as expeditious as possible, and the granting of the right may be subject to conditions, for example, to minimise disturbance to park values.

Conclusion

The decision to end cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park is an historic one. It will herald in a new beginning for this great national park, helping to ensure its long-term protection and that it is one of our finest parks for this and future generations to enjoy.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte).

Mr THWAITES (Minister for Environment) — I move:

That the debate be adjourned for two weeks.

Mr INGRAM (Gippsland East) — I move:

That the word 'two' be omitted with the view of inserting in its place the word 'four'.

This is a very important piece of legislation for my communities, as the majority of the licensees reside in my electorate — 39 of the 61 licences are within areas of the Alpine National Park in East Gippsland that are in the municipalities of the Shire of East Gippsland and the Shire of Wellington. Therefore I need the opportunity to consult with my communities and the families involved, because this legislation will have a significant impact on those families.

As an Independent member of this Parliament it is necessary for me to be able to discuss with all those families exactly what it will mean financially and socially to them. I also think it is important that those licensees have the ability to discuss the impact of this with the other parties who are represented in this house. In my view it is essential that this bill be held over for an additional two weeks so that we can really get to the bottom of the issues and make sure that everything is taken into account in the consideration of this bill before it is debated in this place.

Mr THWAITES (Minister for Environment) — The government opposes the amendment. There has been an enormous period of discussion and consultation about all these issues, going back for at least a year. The task force was appointed approximately a year ago. The task force has had extensive discussions and consultations with all the various parties involved, including the cattlemen and the Mountain Cattlemen's Association. The views have been very clearly expressed, and the various aspects in this legislation have been gone through in a huge array of consultations right around the state.

In any event, because of the sittings of the Parliament, this matter will not come on for another few weeks. It is not just two weeks; it is three weeks before the Parliament returns in any event, so there will be longer than the usual period between discussions. That is certainly time for all the consultations to be had. I think that is not only fair but very reasonable, given the very long period of consultation we have had already.

Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte) — If there had been a legitimate process involved in arriving at this legislation and if there had been an appropriate scientific inquiry that objectively looked at the science involved in this issue, then the opposition would be relaxed about the standard two-week provision for consultation. But let us face it, this has not been a scientific analysis, this has been a total politically charged process. Having a four-member backbench committee instead of an all-party committee giving the minister so-called expert advice on this meant from day one that the process was going to be open to complete criticism — and complete bias, some would say.

In terms of the process, parties involved on all sides of this debate, be it the environmental proponents or the mountain cattlemen proponents, have been objecting to the procedures this minister has adopted in terms of so-called consultation. There is the fact that he overrode the requirement by a Federal Court ruling that he give 12 months notice to the mountain cattlemen if there were going to be dramatic changes to their licences. He overrode that Federal Court ruling using the excuse that the members of his backbench committee had not had the opportunity to take up the invitation of the Mountain Cattlemen's Association to inspect for themselves the situation in the high plains. The minister does not come to this debate with clean hands, because he did not give the 12-month agreed notice to the cattle grazers of his intention to make dramatic changes to their licence provisions.

On that basis the process has been flawed from day one. It has not been open to proper scientific analysis. Therefore, the opposition will support the Independent member for Gippsland East to ensure that we can have a fulsome consultation period. All this means for the minister is that we will be debating this legislation in July rather than in June; I am sure that will not make a great difference to the parties either way. We respect the fact that the member for Gippsland East has some very legitimate issues to do with his particular community, and no doubt other members of Parliament will be in a similar situation and will need to sit down and go through the financial implications of the compensation packages, the issues to do with access for moving cattle around from one freehold property to

another and what that implies, and any number of other matters. This is a very important bill. We will not amend the National Parks Act 1975 lightly, and there is a great deal of detail involved.

In the interests of all parties having a fair go in terms of ensuring that we have a comprehensive analysis, which has not been available to all parties to date in this process, the opposition supports the member for Gippsland East in his desire for an extension of the standard period for consultation.

Mr LUPTON (Pahran) — I also oppose the amendment moved by the member for Gippsland East. Extensive consultation has taken place over the last 12 months. As a member of the Alpine Grazing Taskforce I am very much aware of the extensive consultations that have taken place with all interested parties on this issue. The amendment that has been moved by the member for Gippsland East, although it seeks to have the debate adjourned for one month, would in effect mean that it would be adjourned for eight weeks because of the sitting dates of the Parliament. The house will not be sitting for three weeks, so the normal two-week adjournment that is the traditional procedure of this house will result in it not coming back on for further debate for three weeks in any event, regardless of this amendment.

The issues that were raised by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition need some closer analysis. He referred to Federal Court matters and the 12-month notice period that may be required when dealing with the issue of renewal or otherwise of licences in these circumstances. I refer the member to the fact that at the beginning of the period of consultation that was carried out by the Alpine Grazing Taskforce, the Mountain Cattlemen's Association entered into correspondence with the government about that 12-month notice period. The mountain cattlemen themselves requested and agreed that that 12-month notice not in fact apply because they wanted the opportunity to actively engage with the task force through the consultation period, and we were most happy to allow that to take place.

It is completely disingenuous for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to stand up in the house today and claim that that 12-month period has not been given effect, when the licensees themselves were the parties who requested that that notice period not apply in these circumstances because they wanted to engage in the consultation process. The consultation process itself was extremely extensive. The minister's remarks a little earlier in the second-reading speech enumerated the groups and organisations that were consulted over the last 12 months by the task force, which looked at all

sides of this issue and did not in any sense go into it with a predetermined point of view.

The final point I would make is that if one looks at the question of time, one sees that over the entire seven-year period of the previous Kennett coalition government no bill of consequence was ever adjourned for more than two weeks, despite requests by the opposition. So when the opposition in this house gets up and says it thinks that a bill such as this, because it is so large, needs to be adjourned for more than two weeks, it cannot be believed.

Mr RYAN (Leader of The Nationals) — The Nationals support the amendment by the member for Gippsland East. I listened with interest to the contribution by the member for Pahran, who was a member of the task force. I just hope that after walking down Chapel Street, Pahran, he has cleaned his boots of all those cowpats which are said to occupy the totality of the Alpine National Park — that is, if you believe the advertising campaign the government is now running!

The problem here is one of process and the way in which that process affects the people who are directly impacted by the outcome of this legislation. The process is complicated for a couple of reasons. The first is that we have had a mixture of messages coming from the government over the last few years on this issue. Back in 1999 its policy was to destroy alpine grazing. In a question time in November 2003 I asked the Minister for Environment, who is now at the table and who had the carriage of that legislation, whether the licences would continue, and he assured the world that they would.

We then had this sham of a task force, which is reflected in the report that has been produced by this so-called committee of inquiry constituted only of government members. In the course of that, purportedly, a number of meetings were held with a variety of people. To add to the confusion, the government now says that the decision that has been taken is based on science, so the emphasis on the discussions which they are said to have had and which are said to have formed part of the decision-making process completely evaporates.

For all those reasons, so far as that first point is concerned, there needs to be more time so we can have a look at what is behind the government's determination. Did this happen simply because of that predetermined position? Many would say that from 1999 this was always fated to happen. Does it have anything to do with the consultations which the

government says occurred but which, on the face of it and certainly from the government's stated perspective, appear to be irrelevant to the ultimate outcome, or is it to do with the so-called science? We need the opportunity to examine all of that and to have a look at any of the counterarguments with regard to it. All of those things add to the necessity of extending the time before the debate occurs on this bill.

The other element of process that we would say justifies the amendment is the government's approach to other legislation — for example, on the Point Nepean National Park. That legislation has been on the notice paper for literally months, yet the government has done nothing by way of bringing it on for debate. The contrast is stark. How can it possibly be, given its position on high-country grazing, which others would say the government has vacillated on even in the face of its stated position in 1999, that a committee report materialised this week after details of it were leaked, obviously, to the media over last weekend?

In any event, confirmation of the government's decision on this came on Tuesday. Here we are on Thursday, and we have legislation introduced into the Parliament to give effect to it — and we are supposed to come back here in a couple of weeks and debate the thing. As I said, that can be contrasted to the position that applies on the Point Nepean legislation, which has been sitting on the notice paper for months and absolutely nothing has happened. How can this, in the interests of equity and fairness and consistency of process, be seen to be appropriate in all the prevailing circumstances?

I say, Acting Speaker, that as a matter of equity and fairness and consistency of process the government should adopt the amendment moved by the member for Gippsland East and ensure that there is more time — if it is not, even then, appropriate time — to at least allow discussion to occur with the people who are at the sharp end of the stick and who are about to get kicked out of their 170 years of heritage and occupancy of the Alpine National Park, albeit for a very limited period of the year. They need to be treated with common decency and given an opportunity to have a true commentary on this. After all it is they who are being absolutely stitched up by this government, and they should therefore have the chance to have their say properly. At least if this amendment is accepted there would be a bit more time to achieve that outcome.

Ms GARBUTT (Minister for Community Services) — I rise to oppose this amendment. Essentially the argument in support of the amendment is about providing more time for consultation, and it is

that that I want to take issue with. There has been extensive consultation, and the minister referred to it in his second-reading speech, through the task force that he established. Just to go to the heart of that consultation process, as is outlined in the second-reading speech, there were 3600 submissions. That is substantial consultation in anybody's language. Eighty-five individuals attended 49 sessions held in the relevant areas, including Bairnsdale, Omeo, Bright and Mansfield, and of course there were many visits to the Alpine National Park itself. That is substantial consultation over a long period of time.

Mr Honeywood — An internal Labor Party process!

Ms GARBUTT — Do you think those 3600 people are Labor Party members? I think not. This was substantial and comprehensive consultation whereby everybody had their say and what they said was considered.

In addition to that we had the scientific advisory panel, which was established some time back and which has also reviewed the scientific evidence. The panel was headed by Professor Nancy Millis, and if anyone is trying to say that Professor Millis is a government stooge or anything else, then they do not know her. She has an enormous reputation in biology and is very well qualified to examine all the science about the issue. This panel did that and made the recommendation that there should not be cattle grazing for at least 10 years. So there was a scientific examination — a consultation, if you like — of this issue as well.

The minister has moved that the adjournment be for two weeks. Because the next two weeks are in fact recess weeks and Parliament is not sitting, it will be three weeks before this bill comes on for debate. If we examine the member for East Gippsland's proposal, we can see that because of the sittings of the house and the recess weeks it would be eight weeks before the debate resumed. The minister's proposal is closer to what the member has proposed than his own amendment, so we will be debating this in three weeks. There has been extensive consultation, and there are not any surprises in what has been announced. I think we should get on with it.

The other issues are how big the bill is and how much consultation is needed. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said this was a very large bill. Members should have a look at it: it is five pages long and has only 12 paragraphs. It is one of the smallest bills we have ever had. No wonder he is not able to be effective; he does not want to do the work. If this bill is too long,

how many of the bills that come into this place does he actually read? All the evidence shows that there has been extensive consultation. There will be sufficient time for further consultation, and then we should debate the bill.

House divided on omission (members in favour vote no):

Ayes, 56

Allan, Ms	Languiller, Mr
Andrews, Mr	Leighton, Mr
Barker, Ms	Lim, Mr
Beard, Ms	Lindell, Ms
Beattie, Ms	Lobato, Ms
Bracks, Mr	Lockwood, Mr
Brumby, Mr	Lupton, Mr
Buchanan, Ms	McTaggart, Ms
Cameron, Mr	Marshall, Ms
Carli, Mr	Maxfield, Mr
Crutchfield, Mr	Merlino, Mr
D'Ambrosio, Ms	Mildenhall, Mr
Delahunty, Ms	Morand, Ms
Donnellan, Mr	Munt, Ms
Duncan, Ms	Nardella, Mr
Eckstein, Ms	Neville, Ms
Garbutt, Ms	Overington, Ms
Green, Ms	Pandazopoulos, Mr
Hardman, Mr	Perera, Mr
Harkness, Mr	Pike, Ms
Helper, Mr	Robinson, Mr
Holding, Mr	Savage, Mr
Howard, Mr	Seitz, Mr
Hudson, Mr	Stensholt, Mr
Hulls, Mr	Thwaites, Mr
Jenkins, Mr	Trezise, Mr
Kosky, Ms	Wilson, Mr
Langdon, Mr	Wynne, Mr

Noes, 24

Asher, Ms	Mulder, Mr
Baillieu, Mr	Naphine, Dr
Clark, Mr	Perton, Mr
Cooper, Mr	Plowman, Mr
Delahunty, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Dixon, Mr	Ryan, Mr
Doyle, Mr	Shardey, Mrs
Honeywood, Mr	Smith, Mr
Ingram, Mr	Sykes, Dr
Jasper, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Kotsiras, Mr	Walsh, Mr
McIntosh, Mr	Wells, Mr

Amendment defeated.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 73

Allan, Ms	Leighton, Mr
Andrews, Mr	Lim, Mr
Asher, Ms	Lindell, Ms
Baillieu, Mr	Lobato, Ms
Barker, Ms	Lockwood, Mr
Beard, Ms	Lupton, Mr

Beattie, Ms	McIntosh, Mr
Bracks, Mr	McTaggart, Ms
Brumby, Mr	Marshall, Ms
Buchanan, Ms	Maxfield, Mr
Cameron, Mr	Merlino, Mr
Carli, Mr	Mildenhall, Mr
Clark, Mr	Morand, Ms
Cooper, Mr	Mulder, Mr
Crutchfield, Mr	Munt, Ms
D'Ambrosio, Ms	Naphine, Dr
Delahunty, Ms	Nardella, Mr
Dixon, Mr	Neville, Ms
Donnellan, Mr	Overington, Ms
Doyle, Mr	Pandazopoulos, Mr
Duncan, Ms	Perera, Mr
Eckstein, Ms	Perton, Mr
Garbutt, Ms	Pike, Ms
Green, Ms	Plowman, Mr
Hardman, Mr	Robinson, Mr
Harkness, Mr	Savage, Mr
Helper, Mr	Seitz, Mr
Holding, Mr	Shardey, Mrs
Honeywood, Mr	Smith, Mr
Howard, Mr	Stensholt, Mr
Hudson, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Hulls, Mr	Thwaites, Mr
Jenkins, Mr	Trezise, Mr
Kosky, Ms	Wells, Mr
Kotsiras, Mr	Wilson, Mr
Langdon, Mr	Wynne, Mr
Languiller, Mr	

Noes, 7

Delahunty, Mr	Ryan, Mr
Ingram, Mr	Sykes, Dr
Jasper, Mr	Walsh, Mr
Powell, Mrs	

Motion agreed to.

Debate adjourned until Thursday, 9 June.

**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
(WILLIAMSTOWN SHIPYARD) BILL**

Second reading

Mr HULLS (Minister for Planning) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Victorian government with this bill is taking a further step to show its support for the Tenix-Williamstown naval shipyard bid for the Department of Defence air warfare destroyer project, which would inject around \$3 billion into the Victorian economy and create 1600 new jobs at the site.

Earlier this year, because of the scale and importance to the Victorian community of this project, the Hobson's Bay planning scheme was amended to streamline planning requirements and provide certainty and

consistency by making the Minister for Planning the responsible authority for administering and enforcing the Hobson's Bay planning scheme for the site. The project was declared a project of state significance under part 9A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The port of Melbourne planning scheme also affects a portion of the site but the Minister for Planning is already the responsible authority.

This project is of enormous state significance, as it would employ up to 2200 people at Tenix Williamstown, around 600 of whom would be existing staff. Of the 2200, 1800 would be employed in construction and 400 on design, engineering, project management and logistics. This number does not include the additional jobs that would be created for local suppliers and other parts of the Victorian economy. That is why the government intends to ensure that the bid is supported by consistent, effective and streamlined planning processes.

In March 2005 the government foreshadowed that legislation would be introduced to ensure the Tenix-Williamstown naval shipyard continued to be used for marine engineering purposes. This bill delivers on that promise, giving further certainty in relation to the future of the site by ensuring that the site cannot be used for other, non-industrial purposes, without the future approval of the Parliament.

I now turn to the bill.

The bill inserts new part 3D into the Planning and Environment Act 1987, which introduces a process for the implementation of a Williamstown shipyard site strategy plan. This process is similar to that which was provided for in the Melbourne Airport Environs Strategy Plan under part 3C of the act.

The Williamstown shipyard site as defined in section 46ZA includes Crown land that is currently being used as a car park and for other public purposes. The land is included for consistency with the Tenix-Williamstown naval shipyard bid. However, the bill makes it clear that the strategy plan must not prevent the continued use by the public of the land in accordance with its current use. The land is specified in the act.

Section 46ZC provides that the minister may at any time prepare a strategy plan for the Williamstown shipyard site. Such a strategy plan would have to give effect to the purposes of part 3D of the act.

Under section 46ZED, the Williamstown shipyard site strategy plan will have to be approved by a resolution passed by each house of Parliament before it could

come into effect. Any subsequent amendments to the strategy plan will need to follow the same process as that for the original strategy plan.

Once the strategy plan is in force, section 46ZH requires that the minister prepare an amendment to any planning schemes that apply to the area to bring them into conformity with the strategy plan. Further, the minister must not authorise an amendment to a planning scheme that would be inconsistent with the strategy plan. This provision is similar to that provided for in the Heritage Act 1985 by the Heritage (World Heritage) Act 2004.

In keeping with the 'Better Decisions Faster' amendments made to the Planning and Environment Act 1987 by the Planning and Environment (General Amendment) Act 2004, to bring even greater consistency in decision making, the strategy plan will become a matter that a responsible authority must take into account in considering a permit application and that the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal may take into account should it become involved in considering such matters.

The Victorian government is delivering support, certainty and streamlined planning processes to ensure that Victoria has the greatest chance of success in its bid for the Department of Defence air warfare destroyer project. The government has been supported in this endeavour by the Hobson's Bay City Council. The council has been and will continue to be consulted on the plans for the site in order to ensure that amenity issues are addressed and the interests of the local community generally are well represented.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr BAILLIEU (Hawthorn).

Debate adjourned until Thursday, 9 June.

APPROPRIATION (2005/2006) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 19 May; motion of Mr BRUMBY (Treasurer).

Mr INGRAM (Gippsland East) — The budget that was handed down a couple of weeks ago by the Treasurer clearly contains some positive things for my electorate. I would like to point out some issues in the budget papers and some work that I have been undertaking with my community and with the

government to try to get some better outcomes. One of the positive outcomes is the increase in funding for the redevelopment of the Bairnsdale Regional Health Service for accident emergency, and that is an extremely important project for East Gippsland. It was committed to by the government at the last election, but once the work had been done on the planning for the proposal, it was fairly clear that it was going to cost more than the money allocated initially, so this budget actually contains the \$5 million that has been identified as the cost of this project.

The improvement of the accident emergency service at Bairnsdale is significant. Why is it such an important project for East Gippsland? The Monash University Rural Clinical School project is located in Bairnsdale and that is a great program. Anyone who has visited the Bairnsdale Regional Health Service would clearly identify that current facilities are in urgent need of upgrade, so that is a very positive budget item.

We have been working with members of the Paynesville community on the provision of an ambulance station at Paynesville. They have raised in excess of \$200 000 through the local ambulance auxiliary. They are a very committed group of people, and I congratulate them on their work in gaining community support and fundraising for that project. The group has met a number of times with the government and was hoping there would be funding available in this budget. At this point there is no line item in the budget for that purpose but I understand that Rural Ambulance Victoria (RAV) has been given a significant increase in funding in the budget and we are hopeful that by working with the Paynesville ambulance auxiliary, the minister's office and the local RAV, that funding will be made available from that increase to ensure that Paynesville gets an ambulance station.

Some negotiation would be needed in relation to existing staffing. My understanding is that there is the equivalent of one additional staff member to be based at Bairnsdale, but with effort that could be changed to Paynesville. A large portion of Bairnsdale's service delivery is done at Paynesville, so basically the Paynesville work is delivered out of the Bairnsdale station. There are some synergies and some advantages to delivering that service from a local base at Paynesville. The money the community has raised could go to the infrastructure so that the government could fund the recurrent expenses. We are working on that. I am hopeful, as is the community, that we will get an outcome from that budget increase to the Rural Ambulance Victoria.

There is some funding for police stations, and some of them have been announced previously, including small country police stations. On Friday next week the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is going to Bendoc. There are not too many people who know where Bendoc is — it is one of the most isolated places in this state. We are going up there to open one of the small rural police stations that has been rebuilt. One of my predecessors in this place, Bruce Evans, who was the member for Gippsland East for 31 years, used to use the argument that you have to apply the Bendoc test to everything government does.

To apply the Bendoc test means that if it will work for Bendoc, it will work anywhere. Basically that means that if you do not consider places in the isolated regions of the state when you fund programs or try to deliver programs, they will fail rural communities. I know the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is going to have an interesting drive all the way up to Bendoc. We will be looking at road funding and a whole range of issues when we go up there. The road up to Bonang and Bendoc is well below what would be an expected standard anywhere in the state. There is deep concern in the community about it. There are many issues in those small rural communities which we have raised in the last couple of days.

In relation to road funding in the budget, I welcome the funding for the Princes Highway in the east between Cann River and Genoa. Anyone who knows the roads in that far-east area knows it is one of our main arterial roads, and it is important that we improve it. There is a lot more work that needs to be done in road funding.

One thing that is not in this budget, which I am extremely disappointed about, relates to an item in the federal budget where funding was made available for the Great Alpine Road. We were hoping that the state government would match that funding to upgrade that road. Since the Great Alpine Road has been sealed right across the top of Mount Hotham there has been a major increase in traffic through that area and a large amount of motorbike traffic. Some areas of the road in the south between Bruthen and Ensay are in very poor condition, very windy and narrow with blind corners, and there have been a lot of accidents on that section of road. The funding that the federal government put forward will not go quite as far as is needed to improve the dangerous narrow sections. There are B-double trucks, school buses and other buses up and down that road. If the state government had matched the federal funding, the dangerous and narrow sections of that road could have been improved.

I would like to raise a number of other things. For a long while I have been pushing for an improvement to parks funding because, as I have said in this place before, my electorate has some of the best national parks in the state — we were debating earlier the Alpine National Park. In my electorate there are 10 000 square kilometres of national parks. When you look at the size of most of the electorates that are represented in this place, you see that the total area of the electorates of government ministers in this place would fit inside the area of my national parks. It is an enormous area. They are very special national parks and with many of them we will not put in infrastructure for tourists and others because of their size and isolation. National parks like the Cooracambra National Park will never really become tourist meccas because of their isolation and difficult terrain, but they are important assets for the state nonetheless.

We have very good parks which should have tourism infrastructure. We should be gaining the benefit from the tourism dollar, but governments have never put in the funding required to improve the tourism infrastructure so that people can enjoy the experience to be gained from the parks. If you look at my electorate you will see we have everything from, as we are discussing, the alpine areas well above the snowline, the high plains, down to the coastal areas like the Croajingolong National Park, the major river gorges like the Mitchell River National Park and the Snowy River National Park. There is a whole range of different experiences like the Buchan Caves, but there are real infrastructure problems in most of those areas. There are very few areas people can go to and very little accommodation available anywhere.

There is a philosophical problem with parks management and government-provided infrastructure. Management tends to say we have to put the infrastructure outside the national parks, but when you have national parks the size of the ones in East Gippsland the distance from private land outside the national parks means it is useless to put accommodation there. It means people cannot go and fully experience those national parks. At some stage we must look at how we provide camping areas. We should really open the debate about roofed accommodation in some of our national parks — not everywhere, but in strategic locations. There would be some real benefits from that for places like my electorate.

Clearly, where possible we need to focus on the smaller towns neighbouring those areas, because that is where the dollar goes back to the community and that is how the community benefits. I have raised this matter in this place a number of times, but one of the problems when

national parks are created or there are changes to the management of national parks is that the debate is always in the city. In local communities like mine national parks are often considered a drain or a negative. The only way to improve the perception of national parks in those local communities is for there to be a return to those communities. We have not seen that in East Gippsland. I would like to look at the significant increase in funding for national parks in this budget. My area will be putting its hand up very high to make sure some of the funding comes to the area with the largest portion of the state's national park estate. We are after high-quality infrastructure such as walking tracks for short walks so people can better experience the assets.

We probably have four major assets in East Gippsland — the Alpine National Park, the coastal areas and the Croajingolong National Park, the Gippsland Lakes and the Snowy River. The Snowy River National Park is one of the bigger national parks in my area. Most of it is wilderness area with very limited — basically zero — access. However, it is one of the images the area sells internationally. There has been a fair bit of debate about the Man from Snowy River over the past few days. The Snowy River is something the world clearly sees as an Australian icon, yet people can never experience what the Snowy River has to offer when they come to East Gippsland. You drive along the highway and you cross the river on the floodplain down near Orbost, and it does not have the ruggedness the image provokes.

If you drive up the Barry Way to Jindabyne, you really only touch the Snowy River near the border, where the same thing applies — it is in a large open valley. The real Snowy River is on the big bend in New South Wales, where it takes a 200-kilometre detour to the east through very isolated country with very rugged scenery. The other bit is through the Snowy River National Park. I have been working with Parks Victoria for a number of years to try to get a basic walking track to the Tulloch Ard Gorge, which is one of the greatest assets in the Snowy River National Park, but we have run into enormous challenges with that. That is something that needs to happen.

There are some positive things happening with natural gas in East Gippsland. Natural gas is being rolled out to Bairnsdale now — most of the main pipes are in the ground. Hopefully Patties and the hospital will be hooked up this winter, and then it will proceed to the residential areas after that. Providing natural gas to a company like Patties will save it close to \$500 000 a year. This is a very competitive company, but the provision of natural gas to businesses like Patties and a

whole range of other food processors in my electorate is very important. Unfortunately we have not had take-up offers in some of the towns like Orbost and Lakes Entrance, where it would be equally important for residential users.

I have raised a number of issues, but in the last minute I have in this debate I would like to mention ports funding. There is funding for ports in this budget, but funding is essential for Lakes Entrance. Lakes Entrance will have some major problems with infrastructure over the next few years and working out how it replaces some of its assets. The government will have to deal with this. I have had discussions with the Minister for Environment on this subject. It is an extremely important project, not only for the safety of the fishing and recreational fleets on the lakes but also for flood mitigation for Lakes Entrance. Replacement of the cutter dredge we have now will cost several million dollars. We have to look at the bypass system and the replacement of the *April Hamer* in the near future. Big projects, big money, and it needs to be done in future budgets. With that, I commend the budget bill to the house.

Ms McTAGGART (Evelyn) — It is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak on the Appropriation (2005/2006) Bill. What a fantastic budget this has been for Victoria. Residents in the shire of Yarra Ranges, and particularly those in my electorate of Evelyn, will benefit greatly from the allocation of funds to many worthy projects and infrastructure commitments.

As chair of the community advisory group for the Lilydale super-clinic I was pleased that funding of \$42 million was allocated to ensure that building works can now proceed at the three clinics — Craigieburn, Melton and, most importantly, Lilydale. The \$15 million project will be built in Clarke Street, Lilydale. I must say that we are getting great feedback from members of the community — they are all very anxious to see this facility built. The Premier and the Minister for Health visited the site at Lilydale the week before last and outlined the details of this much-needed project. The event was well attended by health professionals, local government representatives, community representatives and the community advisory group members. I would like to commend them for the work they have done with me on this project, and I hope they will continue to do so in the future.

In line with our last election promises, this facility will confirm our commitment to create a health precinct. The super-clinic will be located next to the Ranges Community Health Service in Lilydale and will

complement the outstanding community health programs already in place under the leadership of Linda West, the chief executive officer. It will provide a full range of proposed services including day treatments and diagnostic and medical services. Given that technology is advancing at a really rapid rate, it is envisaged that health procedures will be performed at a day clinic rather than involving an overnight stay in hospital, thus alleviating the pressure on our hospital system. These services are to be delivered in a community setting rather than having residents travel long distances to attend hospitals. I know from experience that some people are much more comfortable with these community settings rather than the threat of a big hospital.

I look forward to the construction of this wonderful facility, which will provide much-needed medical services to my constituents and those in adjoining electorates. I note that the member for Gembrook is in the chamber at the moment. I know that her constituents will appreciate this facility, as will the constituents of the members for Seymour and Monbulk. We have been deprived of health services in the outer east for quite some time, so this is much anticipated. The Bracks Labor government continues to rebuild the run-down health system left by the Kennett government. It recognises the importance of accessible health services to communities throughout the state. I know I speak for my parliamentary colleagues when I say that we are all absolutely thrilled with the three major health commitments for our communities outlined in this budget.

I have already spoken about the Lilydale super-clinic, but there is also a new \$30 million 60-bed health care facility in Knox which will house a 30-bed palliative care section. The government recognises the importance of this facility for terminally ill patients and their families. This facility will provide relief to sufferers and their families who have previously travelled to Kew and other areas for palliative care. As we all know, the strain of a loved one dying is enough for families to cope with without the added pressure of having to travel great distances from their local communities. The other 30 beds in this facility will be focused on rehabilitation for older residents to enable them to regain their strength after discharge from hospital. The Bracks government will spend a further \$7 million over the coming three years to assist and improve palliative care services throughout the state.

Access to mental health care facilities is often raised with me during consultation with local communities. I am very pleased to say that this budget provides \$180 million over the next four years to strengthen

services, which will ease the pressure on sufferers and their families. Maroondah Hospital in Ringwood has been allocated \$24.6 million for a new and expanded adult health ward. There are currently 30 beds allocated there, and this will be increased to 50 beds catering for the needs of patients in the outer eastern suburbs.

It will also enable patients presenting at the emergency department to be placed in a specialised unit to address the issues of their needs. It is proposed in the Lilydale super-clinic model that there may be some community mental health services as well. I am absolutely delighted we are looking at this issue. These three very important commitments to health have certainly been welcomed by the residents in the outer east. Over the three sites the government has committed some \$80 million to address the health service needs in our communities, which is fantastic.

I am sure the opposition is devastated that the Bracks government continues to deliver on our key priorities — health, education and community safety — whilst maintaining strong economic management. This is something the Liberals could not do in the seven years they governed the state. They had a fair bit of money, but they were not prepared to spend it on anything. That is why they had the money. The commitments made in this budget are proof that we are a government that listens to the needs of communities throughout Victoria and that we will continue to assist these communities by delivering services and infrastructure to support all Victorians no matter where they live — but most importantly in the outer east!

I see the Minister for Education and Training is in the house. I concur with her — education is the no. 1 priority of this government. We have the highest completion rate for year 12 in Australia. The sizes of our prep to grade 2 classes are lower than any other state. As a mother of twins who will be starting primary school next year, I am absolutely delighted that they will be in a small class. We can be confident that literacy and numeracy levels are up. The announcement of the money from *Backyard Blitz* will be great for some of my schools. The Mount Evelyn Special Development School will be receiving \$5500, along with Lilydale West Primary School, Wonga Park Primary School, Seville Primary School and Mount Evelyn Primary School. These school communities are absolutely rapt that they can start working on their grounds and playgrounds with this extra funding.

I was also very pleased that this budget allocates \$151 million to non-government schools in Victoria to assist with literacy, numeracy, retention rates and those students most in need. I recently received emails from

two of my local Catholic schools — St Patrick's School in Lilydale and Mount Lilydale Mercy College. Bernard Dobson, the principal of Mount Lilydale Mercy College stated:

I am confident that the funding will make a great difference to what we can do to help our young people. Thank you, you have made a difference. Pass on our thanks to the Treasurer, Minister for Education and Training and the Premier.

Brenda Russell from St Patrick's School said:

Catholic schools are extremely excited and appreciative of the increased funding and the four-year commitment.

Another fantastic initiative announced on top of the \$89 million SmartONE fibre-optic broadband network to be delivered to every government school was the Yarra Valley e-Rich Learning Environment project. This \$12.7 million project for 7 secondary schools and 40 primary schools in the Yarra Valley will create an innovative and technology-rich learning environment. It will provide access for 13 000 students, 700 teachers and 48 surrounding school communities with cutting-edge broadband technology. This will make our Victorian schools world leaders in technology.

The government can be proud that it is delivering this technology to our schools, which is something the federal government has failed to deliver on. I noticed during the federal campaign that the federal member for McEwen talked about broadband here and there. The federal government has not delivered. We are the ones that have done it. I congratulate the Minister for Information and Communication Technology. She came to the Upper Yarra Secondary College recently and announced this project. All participants are very excited at the prospect of using information and communications technology to enhance teaching and learning in our schools. This technology will equip our students with the skills they need for future work and life commitments.

I would like to commend the seven secondary schools committed to the project — Mooroolbark College, Lilydale High School, Lilydale Heights College and Pembroke Secondary College, which are in my electorate, and Upper Yarra Secondary College, Healesville High School and Croydon Secondary College — and wish them every success with the project. This is quite a contrast to the previous government, which sacked teachers, closed schools and distressed parents throughout the state. I worked in a local preschool which had nearly 30 kids in each class during the Kennett era. I talked to the mums and dads who had kids going to primary schools, and they were quite distressed. I am so proud that this government has turned all of that around.

I commend the Treasurer, as this is the sixth year in a row that the budget has delivered a surplus in excess of \$100 million, with an operating surplus of \$365 million in 2005–06 and further surpluses averaging \$394 million over the next three years. This government continues to deliver on education, health, police and infrastructure whilst maintaining a very strong financial position. The international rating agencies recognise the sound financial management of the government, and we still attract a long-term AAA rating.

The government can be proud of its investment in community safety since coming into office. Victoria is the safest state in Australia with a crime rate 23 per cent below the national average. Members of the community sense that personal safety has improved. This is probably due to the decrease in rates of violent crime, the reduction of reoffending rates, the funding for 1400-odd additional police and the building of 100 new police stations throughout the state. This is certainly a commitment that the government takes seriously. In the budget there is \$78 million to build or complete 54 police stations and provide 12 mobile police stations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Senior Sergeant Vin Butera and the members at Lilydale and Senior Sergeant Craig Keithly and the other members at Mount Evelyn for the great job they do in serving our local communities. It has been difficult for Victoria Police in recent times, and I would just like to reiterate the thanks and support that our local residents have shown to these local stations.

This government also recognises the importance of the State Emergency Service. The allocation of \$5.9 million in this budget comprises \$2.9 million for operating as a statutory authority, \$2 million for eight general-purpose trucks over two years and \$1 million for personal and protective clothing. I know the SES in Lilydale will certainly appreciate this funding, as it has raised the matter of protective clothing with me in the past. Its volunteers are also to be commended for the work they do in what are often challenging and difficult situations when assisting our local residents. My husband is a member of the local SES, and he is delighted that he will get new boots and overalls. That will be a help.

Constituents of mine who live in a rural interface area have raised the subject of public transport with me in community forums. I am pleased that this budget has delivered \$44.6 million over four years to improve bus services throughout the state. More importantly, the Shire of Yarra Ranges has been identified as a priority area for a

share of this funding so that more local services can be delivered to residents in my electorate. I recently announced improvements on the Chirnside–Ringwood, Chirnside–Warburton and Lilydale–Healesville routes. Local communities are very pleased with these additional services, which will give them better access to sporting and recreational activities, as well as their workplaces. Another commitment to our outer suburbs is an allocation of \$97.4 million for the outer metropolitan arterial roads program.

I congratulate the government on its commitment to build a new community legal centre in the outer east. This centre will provide legal advice and support to residents who often experience difficult times. Current services are accessed via the Eastern Community Legal Centre in Blackburn, and the people working there, along with MPs in the outer east, have welcomed this commitment. We look forward to the announcement on the location of this centre.

I have outlined the many positive initiatives announced in the budget for my electorate, but it is a budget that delivers for all of Victoria. It is an outstanding document that makes me very proud to be part of the Bracks Labor government. I commend the Treasurer on his brilliant budget, which delivers benefits to all Victorians, especially in the areas of health and education. It will also assist those who are experiencing hardship and difficult times. It is a priority of this government to support those people who are most in need. This was highlighted in the A Fairer Victoria policy, which will allocate \$780 million over the next four years. There is so much in this budget I could keep going all day, but I will conclude.

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms McTAGGART — I am out of time.

Congratulations to the Premier, the Treasurer and the government for delivering services and infrastructure that will make Victoria the best place in Australia in which to prosper. As a parent with young children I know that Victoria is certainly the best place in which to raise a family. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms LINDELL (Carrum) — It is great to follow the member for Evelyn and to echo her sentiments. I congratulate the Treasurer on delivering a budget that continues to grow the whole state, provides opportunity and prosperity and makes Victoria the best place in which to raise a family. The budget continues to invest in infrastructure, with a massive spend averaging \$2.6 billion per year for the next four years. Projects include the redevelopment of the Royal Children's Hospital, the Melbourne Markets at Craigieburn, and

major facility upgrades at over 50 schools, as well as the construction of 16 new and replacement schools. These are projects that would never have seen the light of day in the Kennett era.

In my electorate of Carrum the Patterson River Secondary College will receive \$3.2 million to provide flexible learning spaces and a revamping of student areas. This will certainly give a much-needed lift to student and staff morale. I am extremely pleased that the hard work of the principal, Maree Vinocuroff, and her staff, and the school council led by Mr Adrian Dunstan, has been recognised. The three Catholic primary schools that service my area will also share in the increased funding of \$115 million over four years to help needy non-government schools. St Ann's in Seaford, St Joseph's in Chelsea and St Louis de Montfort's in Aspendale all play a very important role in the education of many primary school students in my electorate. I am very proud to be part of a state government that has sought and delivered a new agreement with the non-government sector that will assist needy schools to meet their educational targets.

Whilst I am speaking on education I commend the Minister for Education Services and the Honourable Marsha Thomson, the Minister for Information and Communication Technology in the other place, for the development of the SmartONE initiative that will see all Victorian government schools provided with access to a high-speed fibre-optic broadband system. This has been made possible by the government's telecommunications purchasing and management strategy, and it will assist not only students but local businesses, families and whole communities. It is exceptional news for the community of Seaford, which has no access to the asymmetric digital subscriber line or a broadband service. Strange as it may sound, this is an area of metropolitan Melbourne where no broadband service is available.

Further assistance for low-income families with children attending kindergarten is also included in the budget through a further increase in the fee subsidy, making kindergartens more affordable.

A number of health initiatives in the budget will directly impact on the health services that people in my community utilise. Most importantly, funding has been made available for an additional radiotherapy machine at Monash Medical Centre in Moorabbin, and \$10 million has been allocated to redevelop and expand the emergency department at the Clayton campus of the Monash Medical Centre.

Funds have also been provided to establish a new 24-hour ambulance station in Mordialloc. The provision of \$30 million over two years for a blitz on elective surgery waiting times for up to 10 000 patients is a tremendous initiative in this budget that will deliver real results for people on elective surgery waiting lists. We all know about the dramatic growth in demand in the health sector over the last decade, and we know it will continue to grow. Smart, targeted initiatives such as this will be needed to ensure that demand in any one area is managed adequately. The budget also provides funds to hire an extra 900 staff to enable the admission of an additional 40 000 patients.

Wherever you look in this budget there is very good news for my electorate of Carrum. There is a boost to the State Emergency Service, and this is welcome news for the two SES units located at Chelsea and Frankston in my electorate. There is also an additional \$98 million in funding for the Country Fire Authority, and some of that will be used to build the new Patterson River fire station, the construction of which is due to start in the next week or so. And there is another \$14 million for the Community Safety Emergency Support program. This is a very successful program which has equipped the Carrum volunteer coastguard with a new towing vehicle and boat trailer to transport its new rescue vessel. That was the first to be provided by the Bracks government from the water safety program.

Representing a bayside seat, I know the importance of protecting our beaches and coastal assets. The \$20 million provided in this budget for repairing assets such as groynes and piers and the renourishment of beaches around Port Phillip Bay needs to be widely used, and I look forward to seeing the detailed allocation of those funds. As the minister already knows, the beach at Aspendale North has suffered substantial erosion in the past and was assessed in 2001 as needing sand renourishment in the medium term.

The budget also includes a \$788 million package for A Fairer Victoria, which funds a range of programs to reduce disadvantage among the neediest Victorians, including increases in domestic violence services, mental health services, disability programs and social housing. They are very targeted programs for our most marginalised and vulnerable people. The success of the state budget was underpinned earlier last week when Moody's Investors Services reaffirmed Victoria's AAA credit rating. Its report noted that economic expansion in Victoria is still expected to exceed the national average, boosted by business investment and consumer spending.

The opposition response to this budget has been disappointing. Members of The Nationals — unfortunately there are no members of The Nationals in the chamber at the moment; as normal, they are missing in action when they are needed — in particular when they were in office bemoaned the fact that they could not spend money on infrastructure or services because of the dire state of Victoria's finances. The lie to that is of course the \$1 billion surplus that was left unspent when the Bracks government came to office. Despite the pleas of communities across the state for a decent level of education and health services and additional police officers and despite the billion dollars of taxpayers money, the former coalition government forgot that governments are elected to spend Victorians' money wisely on service delivery. It failed to do that, and trying to rewrite history will not alter the fact that it hoarded an excessive surplus while denying all Victorians the basic services they deserve.

This is a fantastic budget. I am very proud to be a member of the Bracks government, which has covered all service delivery. A Fairer Victoria, which commits \$788 million to the most disadvantaged of our community, is something I will always remember and always be proud of. I commend the Minister for Victorian Communities, the Treasurer and all other cabinet ministers for their dedicated commitment to looking after all Victorians.

Ms LOBATO (Gembrook) — It is with great pride that I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation (2005/2006) Bill. Unlike my friend from Evelyn, I will try to keep my contribution relatively short. The 2005 budget extends the social and economic investment provided to the state of Victoria by the Bracks government. It not only extends the investment levels of the past five and a half years but also sets new ground. It is the most socially and economically progressive budget delivered for a very long time. I am so proud that I am a member of the government responsible for it.

In the brief time available to me I would like to concentrate mainly on two areas affected by this budget. One is the policy A Fairer Victoria, which proves the Bracks government's commitment to social justice. The second is the state budget's impact on the electorate of Gembrook. The budget meets the needs of every Victorian. It makes a commitment to social justice by addressing disadvantage. It introduces initiatives to make our communities fairer, yet while it does this it also reinforces the sound policies of economic management by making it easier to do business.

This budget will continue to drive employment growth, confidence and regional development. The budget shows that the Bracks government is continuing to meet the needs of the business community through the provision of land tax relief, the reduction in WorkCover premiums and the extension of the first home bonus scheme. The commitment shown to the business community extends the enormous amount of work done in last year's budget with the economic statement, *Leading the Way*, which was very well received in my electorate.

There is also a major investment in roads, schools, hospitals and transport infrastructure. It is very much unlike the federal budget, which distinguishes between the haves and have-nots and is a winners and losers budget. The Victorian Council of Social Service has called the Howard budget one that cements disadvantage and inequality. As Carolyn Atkins, the deputy director of VCOSS, said:

The federal budget will only serve to cement disadvantage and inequality across Victoria into the future. The federal Treasurer says that this is a budget for the future; however, the question seems to be: whose future — it is certainly not for the future of the one in four Victorians on low incomes.

This budget is brave enough to tackle the areas of disadvantage, which the federal government is obviously keen to ignore. Significant steps are outlined in this budget to address matters of social justice through the social policy statement *A Fairer Victoria*, which sets out 85 actions that will reduce disadvantage and create opportunities. It is an investment worth \$788 million. It meets the needs of those who are sick and allocates \$180 million for a comprehensive package to tackle mental illness, which is one of the most debilitating forms of ill health disadvantaging many Victorians. The outer east members have certainly been made aware of the isolation caused by this social illness, which is on the increase, and the many factors that contribute to mental health. We are very pleased it has been addressed in this budget.

The budget also allocates \$50 million for social housing to provide homes for those on low incomes so they too can raise their families with the security of a roof over their heads. It also increases funding for people with disabilities, provides more respite care to assist their caregivers and promotes wellbeing through early intervention and support services for those who need them. Very importantly to me, this is a government which has also tackled the serious but sometimes hidden problems of domestic violence with a \$35 million commitment to eradicating this social evil. The Premier acknowledged the issue concerning the hidden evils of domestic violence last night in an

address to Emily's List members and talked about the investment of \$35 million for this previously ignored issue. He reiterated the horrific statistics which we as women MPs keep reiterating to this house — that is, that domestic violence is the major contributor to death, disability and illness in women aged between 15 and 44. They are horrific statistics, and we are very pleased the government has recognised them and funded some progressive programs to counteract this social evil.

This budget does not, by ignoring them, blame those in society who need our help. On the contrary, it is a budget that recognises that we as a community have a responsibility to look after our fellow citizens, to show compassion towards those who are ill, disabled or in poverty. It is a budget that recognises that in helping our fellow Victorians we are helping ourselves by making healthier, stronger and better functioning communities.

I am delighted that the neighbourhood renewal program will continue to be a feature of this government. It has been an extraordinary success, and it has been extended to recognise the level of success it has had. All families are catered for with this budget, as the keystone funding areas of health and education — the essentials to every household in the state — again receive welcome boosts. All schools will receive high-tech fibre-optic broadband, another step in ensuring that all Victorian children receive a quality education. What is so important about that is that every government school in Victoria will receive that technology.

People across my electorate in Gembrook have welcomed the education funding. That will mean that three local schools will be able to see their master plans become a reality. The Minister for Education and Training is in the house; she needs to be congratulated on seeing that education is provided for the residents in the Gembrook electorate. Education had been severely neglected in the electorate; that was so evident to me when as a candidate I made my first school visit to Gembrook Primary School and found some concerning conditions. Ever since that day I have continually lobbied for improvements to that school. That was a major achievement and one that I am very, very proud of.

The \$1 million delivered to the Gembrook Primary School is, I believe, the most wanted, waited for and wished for \$1 million that the Treasurer has ever had the opportunity to deliver. The school council president, Matt Rannstrom, in his comments to the school on the day of the announcement said that it was the best thing to happen to Gembrook in 25 years. It is the Bracks

government that has been able to deliver this funding to the community after a wait of decades.

Beaconsfield Primary School, which is in a high-growth area, will receive \$4.41 million for its new classrooms and specialised buildings. On that day a delighted principal declared that he was the happiest man in Victoria. This announcement means that Beaconsfield Primary School will be in a fantastic position to meet the future needs of Beaconsfield residents, who will continue to grow in numbers. Emerald Secondary College, one of the major secondary colleges in the Dandenong Ranges, has received \$1.94 million for its extensions, which will include seven new classrooms.

The Schoolyard Blitz program is very popular. Many of my schools received it, so I will not go into it. These fantastic investments in education — in our children — will assist in keeping Victoria as a place that values knowledge, innovation and world-class education.

There has been a \$1 billion investment in health. I am trying to wind up and not copy my friend from Evelyn, but it is very difficult, because so many initiatives have been funded in the Gembrook electorate. I am just so very proud!

With public transport, which is very important to the outer east, once again this government has delivered. I am particularly proud of the new bus service between Warburton East and Warburton, a distance of about three and a half kilometres. The residents have been needing such a service for many years. It will increase their opportunity for education and employment, and I am very pleased the government has funded that.

I will be considerate and give some other members an opportunity to speak on this wonderful budget. I thank all ministers and the Treasurer. I commend the bill to the house.

Ms BEARD (Kilsyth) — Like others, I feel very privileged to be able to contribute to the Appropriation (2005/2006) Bill. The no. 1 priority for this government remains education. An amount of \$94 million is allocated to ensure that prep to grade 2 class sizes remain low. As a primary teacher I can say how vital these early years of schooling are, and this allocation will go a little further towards ensuring that children gain the most from those early years of education.

Additional funds of \$66 million will respond to the increasing numbers of enrolments in government schools and provide intensive support for early years numeracy. Every Victorian government school will have high-speed fibre-optic broadband connection to

improve online communication, offering a wealth of educational resources. Unprecedented capital works are included in this budget. Some members opposite seemed to find fault with spending money on capital works. We are very proud of that allocation.

An amount of \$151 million is allocated to Catholic schools. The Catholic schools in my electorate — St Richard's Primary School in Kilsyth and St Peter Julian Eymard school in Mooroolbark — certainly welcome this boost in their funding. Schoolyard Blitz has already been mentioned by the member for Gembrook. Nine schools in my electorate are delighted with their allocation under that program — Pembroke Primary School, Croydon Primary School, Croydon South Primary School, Croydon Special Development School, Dorset Primary School, Montrose Primary School, Bayswater North Primary School, Ruskin Park Primary School and Gladesville Primary School.

Along with the members for Gembrook and Evelyn I was present at the launch by the Minister for Information and Communication Technology in the other place of the Yarra Valley e-Rich Learning Environment Project. It will receive \$12.7 million in funding as part of the broadband framework, directly benefiting Croydon Secondary College, Pembroke Secondary College and primary schools in my electorate, creating an innovative technology-rich learning environment.

I refer to health. The commitment made before the 2002 election is seeing great benefits for the outer east. An amount of \$35 million is allocated to the stage 2 upgrade of the Maroondah Hospital. This follows the \$10 million upgrade a couple of years ago. It was wonderful to have the minister and the Premier present at that launch. An amount of \$24.6 million is allocated to a new and expanded mental health ward at Maroondah Hospital. This has been welcomed by all except the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, who scathingly commented that Spring Street was attempting to turn Maroondah Hospital into a pseudo mental hospital. That is a great slap in the face for people with or people who have family members with mental health problems. An extra \$573 000 will go to the Maroondah Hospital for a state-of-the-art videofluoroscopy ward. All in all, \$47 million has been allocated to Maroondah Hospital since I was elected in 2002.

The government has listened to the outer eastern members and the community advisory group in Lilydale and has now allocated funds for the Lilydale super-clinic, which will greatly benefit the people in my electorate by providing diagnosis, treatment and

follow-up care for patients from Kilsyth and Mooroolbark.

The 60-bed health care facility at Knox will see a 30-bed palliative care ward and a 30-bed aged and community rehabilitation centre, which we have heard so much about. I am delighted that that funding has been provided in this budget.

The State Emergency Service in Croydon will share in a \$4.9 million boost over four years which will provide additional personal protective clothing and equipment and eight additional SES trucks.

The community and the outer eastern members of Parliament have worked together and lobbied hard and now appreciate the funding in this budget for a new outer eastern community legal centre, which will service the Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges areas. It will provide local people with improved access to legal advice, assistance and education.

A Fairer Victoria, of which we are all so proud, is not just words. It makes a \$788 million commitment to improving opportunities and living standards for the neediest and most disadvantaged groups in our community. Regarding public transport in my electorate, the commitment to an additional Saturday night service between Croydon and Olinda will offer many residents the opportunity to enjoy their Saturday evenings. A SmartBus service will run between Frankston and Ringwood via Stud Road — I am sure the member for Frankston will be happy about that — and offer a very attractive alternative for people travelling from his electorate to mine.

Other initiatives include the abolition of stamp duty on mortgages and financial institutions duty. The top rate of land tax will be cut from 5 per cent to 4 per cent, with the threshold lifted from \$175 000 to \$200 000, and WorkCover rates will be cut to historic lows. This is a magnificent budget for the outer east and for all Victorians. It provides for record spending on infrastructure while maintaining Victoria's AAA rating. Residents of the outer east will appreciate the Bracks government's investment in their part of Melbourne, which goes a long way towards addressing the previous Liberal government's neglect of the region. We are yet to see the benefits of sacking nurses and teachers, destroying our public sector and selling off our utilities! Congratulations to the Treasurer, the Premier and cabinet for this generous yet prudent budget.

It is hard not to make comparisons with the federal budget. As a constituent of mine, Alan Clarkson, wrote in the local paper, this is a tale of two budgets: one by a

government which has overtaxed the electorate and in return offered tax relief predominantly for those who need it least; the other showing vision for the future with capital works and infrastructure from which generations of Victorians will benefit, while offering substantial assistance for those in our community who are the most disadvantaged. I too am very proud of this budget and commend the bill to the house.

Mr HARKNESS (Frankston) — The 2005–06 budget puts Frankston families first. I am very pleased and proud to stand up here and talk a little bit about it and about all the great things which are happening in Frankston. This budget reflects well the Bracks government's commitment to making Victoria the best place in which to raise a family, and it will certainly deliver opportunities and prosperity for all Victorians. It continues our strong investment in key services such as health and education, but it also makes important investments in infrastructure, particularly targeting the disadvantaged through A Fairer Victoria, the government's major new policy agenda.

In Frankston I am very pleased that \$1 million has been provided from the Community Support Fund for a visionary, multipurpose community facility in conjunction with the Brotherhood of St Laurence at its property at High Street, Frankston. I have had the pleasure of visiting this former Wesley Church site on many occasions, and I certainly take my hat off to Mr Kevin Rogerson, who is managing the site. The brotherhood is matching these funds with another \$1 million of its own. This is going to generate a truly community-based and grassroots facility which will be a major boon for Frankston and its people. The plan is that it will be an integrated, whole-of-community centre that will create a hub of activity where local residents, service providers, businesses and local government can meet. It will accommodate a variety of services, including referrals, community learning, training and recreational activities.

The Naranga School in my electorate will also be a major beneficiary. As part of the Bracks government's commitment to ensuring that all Victorian children get the best start in life, six new classrooms are going to replace the tired old portables at the Naranga School. In Mornington \$20 million has been allocated for a new aged care facility, a major fillip for the Mornington Peninsula, which is certainly facing significant growth in its ageing population. The Mornington centre will have 60 beds and incorporate state-of-the-art design and equipment. This again is a clear indication of the Bracks government's strong commitment to creating a healthier community, particularly for senior Victorians.

The member for Kilsyth talked about SmartBus bringing us closer together. Linking Frankston with Dandenong and Ringwood, SmartBus will provide frequent and reliable bus services for the south-eastern and eastern suburbs, connecting Frankston, Dandenong and Ringwood railway stations with the Bayside shopping centre in Frankston and the Knox City and Eastland shopping centres. This budget makes a \$47 million investment in new and improved local bus services on the urban fringe and growth areas as well as providing \$97.4 million for the outer metropolitan arterial roads program. As part of this program Seaford Road, which runs over the Frankston Freeway, is going to be upgraded.

Schoolyard blitzes have been mentioned. As part of the very successful Schoolyard Blitz program I can report that Overport, Frankston Heights and Ballam Park primary schools, as well as the Naranga School and the Frankston Special Developmental School will receive allocations to spruce up their grounds. This program is a terrific opportunity for schools across Victoria to really tap into community support by taking the concept of working bees to a whole new level, with financial assistance from the government. I am looking forward to participating in some of those projects around schools in my electorate.

Frankston schools will also benefit from the major rollout of new fibre-optic technology which will see every state school throughout Victoria using high-speed broadband communications. This is an \$89 million initiative, a massive investment in new telecommunications infrastructure that is going to have far-reaching benefits for everyone. SmartONE will drive the biggest improvement in telecommunications since the digitisation of telephone exchanges in the 1980s. The provision of fibre-optic broadband links to all government schools will improve broadband speeds by up to 60 times and ensure that Victorian schools have access to world-class communications solutions and networks. No other government education system in the country has adopted this initiative. It is a fantastic fillip for Frankston schools and schools across the state.

Once again, through the tireless hard work of the Treasurer this budget is economically responsible. The economic outlook for the state remains very positive and the budget fundamentals are strong, with the government delivering its sixth consecutive budget surplus.

We are building a healthier Victoria with a \$1 billion boost to the health system. We are making our community even safer, with the largest police budget in the state's history. We are creating a smarter, skilled

Victoria with a massive boost to schools. Skills, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships and post-compulsory training will all also be boosted. We are building better transport links, with over \$660 million in capital funding for the metropolitan transport plan, public transport upgrades and investment in country roads and rail. We are protecting our environment and water, enhancing Victoria's world-class park system with a \$121 million boost. We are creating a fairer Victoria with a \$788 million action plan to address disadvantage throughout the state.

Above all else, we are delivering opportunity and prosperity and ensuring that Victoria remains the best place to live and raise a family. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Premier, cabinet ministers and all the government members who have put so much effort into ensuring that this is the most successful budget in Victoria's history. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr HELPER (Ripon) — It gives me a great deal of pleasure, as it does every year, to speak on the appropriation bill. Maybe the reason for that pleasure is that under this government we have seen an unprecedented revitalisation of my electorate of Ripon.

This budget sets out to make a real difference to the communities throughout my electorate and indeed throughout regional Victoria and the whole of Victoria. In regional Victoria and in my electorate I certainly notice that a discernible sense of optimism exists in the individuals and the families that make up our townships and our farming areas. It is reflected on a statewide basis by people voting with their feet in an unprecedented population growth in recent history in regional Victoria of 1.2 per cent. That is clearly a demonstration that people are increasingly seeing regional Victoria as the place to live, the place to work and the place to bring up one's family.

I commend the Bracks government on bringing about policies which have made this so likely to occur. What builds this community confidence is the injection of capital funding to facilitate the delivery of services, and of course the service delivery that comes from that capital funding. It is not about bricks and mortar alone, it is about the services we deliver out of the buildings that we construct. It is about working with communities and it is about partnerships, not only with local government but with communities down to the level of every township, and down to neighbourhood levels as well. It is a real partnership that makes sure that whatever the government delivers resonates with and meets the aspirations of local communities. In short, it is about caring for the hundreds and indeed the

thousands of communities that make up regional Victoria.

The Bracks government can be proud of its record whilst being conscious of the reality that there will always be more to do and there are always more challenges to address. My electorate is a good example. In the lead-up to this budget — and since 1999 — the Bracks government has restored and rebuilt services to an unprecedented level. Just to give the house some examples, it includes the return of passenger rail to Beaufort and Ararat and the rebuilding of the Avoca, Dunolly, Maryborough, Stawell and Ararat hospitals, with the Stawell and Ararat hospital buildings to be officially opened by the Premier and the Minister for Health tomorrow.

There has been funding for the building of new police stations — and this is a small sample only — at Landsborough, Lexton, Learmonth and Maryborough amongst many others. There has been funding for the Maryborough Education Centre, and I am pleased that the Minister for Education and Training is in the house because I want to thank her for her personal interest, involvement and support for the Maryborough Education Centre. It is a project that on numerous occasions the opposition said would never happen, would never be supported by the government and was a pipedream. Well, it is out there. If opposition members want to get a map and work out where Maryborough is, they are welcome to come and have a look and see what magnificent work is taking place there. There has been support for community centres and projects throughout my electorate from small towns right through to the bigger towns. That is the basis on which this budget has built.

On the capital front the John Pickford House nursing home in Ararat will receive a \$7.5 million rebuild and the Skipton Health Service will receive a \$5 million rebuild. A whole new primary school will be built at Ross Creek. I wonder whether a single new school was built in regional Victoria during the seven dark years of the previous government, and here we are with two brand new state-of-the-art schools in my electorate alone. The Ross Creek Primary School is a \$2.67 million project. The Maryborough Education Centre, which I mentioned before, will receive funding of \$16.6 million for stage 2.

Lake Bolac is just outside my electorate, but it is a community that relates very much to Ararat in my electorate, so it is one I care about very much also. The Lake Bolac and Elmhurst police stations will be funded out of the largest police station replacement program in Victoria's history, and in this budget that program was

funded to the tune of \$77.8 million. That is another two police stations to add to the very long list of police stations that have been newly constructed in and close to my electorate.

We can see that the Bracks government is rebuilding the public infrastructure in my electorate of Ripon, and I know it is happening right across regional Victoria and across the whole state including the metropolitan area. The government has started rebuilding public infrastructure from the foundations up, so that we have state-of-the-art facilities from which to deliver services. That is what it is all about. It is not just about the bricks and mortar that put the buildings there, it is about the hospitals being rebuilt and actually staffed with nurses, doctors and medical staff. It is not just about building the schools, it is about employing more teachers and more specialists and providing the service of education from state-of-the-art facilities. It is not just about rebuilding the train line, it is actually about running trains on it so that people in Beaufort, Ararat and the surrounding communities feel a greater sense of connectedness to the rest of the state. It is about all of those things.

This budget has delivered tremendously for my electorate and for the whole of Victoria. I join other government members in congratulating the Treasurer, the Premier and the entire cabinet for having put together a fair, decent and equitable budget for Victoria.

Ms BUCHANAN (Hastings) — It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak on behalf of the residents, workers and visitors to the Hastings electorate in support of the Appropriation (2005/2006) Bill. This budget, like every other budget handed down by Premier Bracks and Treasurer Brumby, does what no Kennett budget ever did: it reflects an intelligent, prudent, strategic and sustainable commitment to economic, social and environmental infrastructure across the whole state of Victoria.

From a local electorate perspective I have witnessed the very tangible difference in the economic, social and environmental prosperity of the Hastings district, and I would like to look at aspects of this year's budget and relate how these further commitments will build on the opportunities my communities have to enhance the quality of life in so many different ways. It is salient to note that in over five and a half years the capital investment in our schools, our health services, our roads and transport networks and in our communities has been outstanding.

I would like to talk about the hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses across the Hastings

electorate, many of which have emerged over the past two years and many others of which have been providing excellent products and services not only locally but nationally and internationally for many years, cementing their status as a regional hub of innovation, competitiveness and quality.

These businesses, along with major employers such as Inghams and BlueScope Steel, and the Mornington Peninsula, Frankston and Casey councils are certainly endorsing the announcements to, firstly, reduce WorkCover premiums by another 10 per cent, saving businesses \$170 million per annum; secondly, abolish bank account debit tax, saving businesses \$250 million a year; and thirdly, abolish rental business duty, saving businesses \$65 million a year. This is in addition to the other excellent tax cuts, such as the payroll tax cut from 5.75 per cent to 5.25 per cent; the abolition of quoted and unquoted marketable securities duty; the abolition of duty on mortgages; and the abolition of financial institutions duty.

As businesses expand and need skilled staff to support the expansion, the allocation of \$12.5 million over four years will allow an extra 1600 people to undergo pre-apprenticeship training. The concurrent investment of a further \$27.8 million for TAFEs to acquire world-class equipment and teaching facilities will mean that those new and current businesses expanding across townships such as Langwarrin, Tooradin, Hastings and Balnarring will not have to endure being in a state that had the highest number of business taxes before the Bracks Labor government came in 1999, and is now equal lowest. Speaking of Balnarring reminds me that the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund is delivering natural gas not only to this township but also to Balnarring Beach, Somers and Merricks Beach. This will be an absolute economic and environmental boon for these townships, businesses, schools and residents.

I want to talk about how this budget builds on this government's commitment to excellence in education. It is good to see that the Minister for Education and Training is here. She has done an outstanding job in her portfolio for many years and I wish her many more to come. More investment has been committed to schools across the Hastings electorate than at any other time in the region's history. Schools much neglected by the previous government are now getting the resources they rightly deserve — for example, the excellent Westernport Secondary College, which is ably led by principal Simon Hamilton. The soon-to-be-completed Somerville campus of Mount Erin Secondary College has got its stage 3 funding. What an excellent community educational facility this will be for the Somerville region.

Every Catholic and non-government school across the Hastings electorate has certainly welcomed the commitment of an extra \$115 million in funding, and every school across the region has also actively embraced the Premier's reading challenge — I thought I would throw that in — and I thank him for his active championing of literacy across all Victorian communities.

One thing that all state schools are appreciative of and excited about is the \$89.3 million SmartONE rollout of the fibre-optic broadband network. I want to pay special attention to the excellent work of two outstanding female ministers: the Minister for Information and Communication Technology in another place, the Honourable Marsha Thomson; and the Minister for Education Services. These two powerhouse women have done what the whole cabinet of the federal government could not do, which was basically to get Telstra to pull its finger out and actually get broadband across the state. Well done, ladies! Their legacy will go down in history for the opportunities provided not only in an educational context but also for the growing IT needs of businesses.

The Hastings electorate has only a few small pockets where broadband is accessible by residents and businesses, and it is very shaky at that. They have been held back for an unacceptably long time because we have a federal government more concerned with getting its own dollars rather than letting Victoria tap into the economic prosperity that such technology brings.

There are many other initiatives in education, but honestly it would take me hours to outline their positive impact on communities. However, it is salient to note that collectively our education system is now geared to support children from all backgrounds and abilities to strive to learn, widen their horizons and broaden their opportunities in this world.

This is also a very socially progressive budget. The policy A Fairer Victoria says it all. I want to talk a little bit about some of the aspects of this policy. The funding of \$180 million for mental health has been widely welcomed by agencies and groups in the Mornington Peninsula and Westernport region. I have had the opportunity to interact with many people who work and provide support in this health field, and I would like to highlight some of these initiatives because I think they are absolutely fantastic.

The first is the government's strengthening of community-based clinical services. Funding of \$5.64 million will strengthen front-line community-based mental health services by building

the capacity of adult community-based services to treat clients sooner. Funding for building a sustainable living support service system has increased by 9 per cent to \$5 million over four years and will provide psychiatric, disability, rehabilitation and support services. Again, that is another excellent commitment to people who have issues in our society.

There are more resources for hospitals and step-down mental health care. A total of \$11.9 million is also being provided to provide access to acute beds and alternative care options. Most importantly with the step-up and step-down services there is funding for additional acute and in-the-home services. There is funding to support people with particular needs. Some \$3.28 million is going in there, or \$13.6 million over four years, to improve services for people who experience severe mental health problems or who are facing specific disadvantage, in particular expanding dual-diagnosis services for people suffering from both mental health and drug and alcohol problems. It targets additional assistance to people with a mental health illness who experience homelessness, and there is more emphasis on early intervention and prevention initiatives for children and young people through additional programs.

It is interesting to compare that with the recent federal government budget, which is absolutely and totally disappointing. There are stronger words I could use but I will not. In its budget the federal government announced \$39 million over five years nationally to look at the issue of supporting beyondblue to promote a change in the attitude of society to the issue of mental health, and only \$69 million over five years to look at the detection of, intervention in and management of young people with a mental illness. It is absolutely shameful. We have put more in as one state than the federal government has nationally. That is a total disgrace. I do not hear any members of the Liberal Party at state or federal levels speaking out against this terrible lack of investment in or commitment and thought for young people or anybody across Australia who has a mental health issue.

In conclusion, I could talk for hours about roads in the Hastings electorate and other infrastructure issues, but I will very briefly mention another excellent initiative — that is, the way we are looking at approaching and supporting services that deal with the issues of family violence. There is funding of \$35.1 million over four years to initiate a new approach to family violence in Victoria. This has been totally welcomed by many of the support groups, individuals and agencies across the Mornington Peninsula and Hastings region. Again, you can contrast that to what the federal government has

done. They had a lovely big advertising campaign that talked about it but did not back it up with services that would support people in domestic violence situations. It is absolutely shameful.

I will not go on forever, but I will say there are so many initiatives that have been funded around the Hastings electorate and the region that it is impossible to highlight them here today. Suffice it to say that I am proud to be Labor, serving a community that is no longer being ignored, and I fully commend this bill to the house.

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) — I want to talk about a couple of initiatives from the budget concerning my electorate which build on some of the other things we have been doing within my electorate over the last short while. The Honourable Bronwyn Pike, the Minister for Health, opened the emergency department at Bacchus Marsh hospital recently, and earlier this week, on Monday, at a community event we announced funding of \$13.8 million for the super-clinic and announced its location to my local residents. This builds on the other super-clinics in Evelyn and in Craigieburn.

Another great health initiative is a peak-time ambulance service for Melton. Five effective full-time new ambulance officers are coming into my region.

I am certainly having discussions about trying to get a community legal centre for the outer west within the Melton area. There is \$1.9 million for the Darley Primary School and some additional bus services for the Melton shire. The Darley Primary School really is a fantastic initiative — and I note the Minister for Education and Training is at the table. For seven long, dark years the Kennett government did nothing for the schools out in my region. I have visited great little schools like Coimadai Primary School, which it tried to close down. Certainly when I was a member for Melbourne North Province in the other place we fought a losing battle over the Bulla Primary School, which the Kennett government closed.

I want to talk very quickly about some of the volunteers and volunteer groups within my electorate. I refer to the Melton Secondary College's Friends of the Band and to Joan Jones, who is the music director; the Melton Street Surfer Committee and all the great volunteers in that; the Melton Environment Group; the Rotary Club of Melton Valley; and the Lions Club of Melton. I also refer to another top volunteer, Lyn Holdsworth, the treasurer of the Friends of Melton Botanic Gardens, who is also involved in the Toolern Creek group and a number of other environment and volunteer groups in

the region. Together with her daughter, Simone, she does a fantastic job.

In the couple of minutes I have left I want to talk about how this budget really highlights the differences between the Labor Party government and the Liberals. If you look at what we have been doing over our last five years, you can see that we have been reinvesting in our community. We have heard some of the budget speeches from the member for South-West Coast. I am still the director of his leadership campaign at this stage — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr NARDELLA — We are still working on the numbers for the member for South-West Coast, who has gone through some rough patches. There are some other contenders, including the member for Scoresby. Talking about rough spots and rough patches, obviously the member for Scoresby went through one, but we helped him out and made sure he got through.

The budget really highlights the terrific things we do, especially in regional Victoria and in a lot of the country areas within my electorate. Compare that with what the previous government did when it destroyed communities. The previous government was a wrecker; it did not know how to build. It talked about how to build and assist private enterprise, but when it came to building public facilities, public infrastructure and public companies, it had absolutely no idea. All it knew was how to flog them off and sack teachers, nurses and everybody else.

On that basis I congratulate the Treasurer on the budget and the government on a fantastic policy statement in *A Fairer Victoria*, and I commend the bill to the house.

Ms D'AMBROSIO (Mill Park) — Equally I am pleased to be able to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (2005/2006) Bill before the house. In particular I would like to make a general comment about the vision of this government in not only returning much-needed capital investment to the building of physical infrastructure but also funding community building, which is a concept which has been very much embraced by this government and which permeates throughout every policy and program it has implemented since its inception in 1999. The budget before us is no different in that regard and continues to build on the fine work done in the last few years. I congratulate the Treasurer for continuing the benefits that have been put in place as foundation stones for this budget, and I congratulate the Premier for that too.

Major initiatives for the northern area of Melbourne, which my electorate of Mill Park is part of, include the second stage development of the Northern Hospital. Some \$24.5 million has been allocated to expand the hospital so that it continues to keep up with the demands placed on it. I wish to state from the outset that the Northern Hospital is probably the most efficient hospital in Victoria. It has the busiest emergency department in Victoria, and the government is intent on increasing its capacity to deal with the expanding population in the outer northern suburbs of Melbourne. I am equally pleased to acknowledge the recent opening of the newly developed Austin Hospital. I congratulate the government for saving that hospital from privatisation.

We can see already that the government's agenda for health services has been robustly carried out in the north-eastern corridors of metropolitan Melbourne. Can I add that the redevelopment of the Northern Hospital will include 64 new medical beds, an expanded and improved emergency department to create greater privacy and also an extension of the existing paediatric unit. I can also add that the budget will deliver new schools to Mill Park Lakes, which is just north of my electorate. However, the benefit there is that in my electorate I have the largest state government schools in Victoria, so those new schools will certainly absorb some of that growth. It is very timely and welcome that funding has been announced in this budget for the development of two new schools in the South Morang area.

The budget does not forget the neediest of non-government schools, which will receive an increased allocation of funds. Again, in my electorate I have two schools which are the largest Catholic schools in Victoria in terms of student population. I know they were categorised as needy schools in the previous government's capital works expenditure, and I trust they will benefit from this boost in funding in this budget.

I also wish to acknowledge the continuation over the next four years of the trailing bus service, which is the best service in Victoria, with its high frequency and the many passengers it carries. I congratulate Minister Batchelor for his foresight in recognising that this bus service, which links growing communities to the Epping train station, acknowledges the great need for improved access to public transport — and that is being delivered.

Sitting suspended 1.00 p.m. until 2.01 p.m.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Children: child deaths

Mrs SHARDEY (Caulfield) — My question is to the Minister for Children. I refer to today's report on child deaths which found the current system to have inadequate risk assessment, inadequate monitoring, a lack of consultation, a lack of understanding, insufficient information, a lack of timeliness and delays, and I ask: what is the minister's latest excuse to try to hide her total mismanagement of Victoria's child protection system? What does she say to the families of the children who have died?

Ms GARBUTT (Minister for Children) — Any child death is tragic. It is distressing for the families and the carers involved. The Victorian Child Death Review Committee acts as a powerful watchdog over Victoria's child protection system, and I have tabled its report every year. The annual report seeks to learn from events and to drive improvements to our system of care. The number of child deaths varies every year. The review committee advises that there are no meaningful trends in the number of deaths — for example, this year's report shows that there were 19 deaths in 1996, there were 32 deaths in 2002, 12 deaths in 2003 and 16 last year. The committee also advises that:

As in previous years, most of the child deaths were due to acquired illness and disease, or accidents.

The government's reform of the child protection and family support systems is well under way. The committee has said:

It is pleased to note that a number of recent Department of Human Services initiatives aim to address common themes arising from the review of child deaths.

Our new community-based projects are cutting child abuse rates in some of Victoria's most disadvantaged communities. That means child protection notification rates in Victoria are dropping — defying the increases across other jurisdictions. Our reforms will ensure that the child protection system can better cope with the complex needs of at-risk children and families and deliver services to families under pressure earlier.

Infrastructure: national coordination

Mr MERLINO (Monbulk) — My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier outline to the house the significance of the forthcoming Council of Australian Governments meeting and in particular the importance of promoting national coordination of infrastructure needs?

Mr BRACKS (Premier) — I thank the member for Monbulk for his question. The Parliament will not be sitting again until after the Council of Australian Governments meeting. The COAG meeting will be held next week and will involve the Prime Minister, the premiers and the territory leaders. It has probably the largest and most significant agenda for a COAG meeting — certainly since I have been Premier and probably for a long time before that.

The COAG meeting agenda covers a wide range of issues including health and the report back on work force planning within the health system. This matter was dealt with at the last COAG meeting with a further report scheduled for this meeting. Native vegetation and biodiversity and examining uniform rules and conditions around the country are on the agenda. Indigenous affairs, child pornography, national competition policy, skills, workplace relations, industrial relations, water and infrastructure are all on the agenda. This is arguably the biggest COAG agenda for many years. Our government has taken the position that, as is evident from the actions we have pursued over the past 12 months, we are seeking a cooperative arrangement between the commonwealth and the states, and we are doing everything we can to achieve that outcome.

If you look at, for example, COAG's indigenous community trials in Shepparton and the successful implementation of them by the commonwealth and the state government of Victoria, that has been a great initiative forged with the local community through Rumbalara and the local council. I think that is a good example of cooperation between the state and federal governments and what can occur. It is on the record that Victoria was the first state to proceed with the national water initiative after the federal election. I indicated to the Prime Minister that we would seek to sign that, and he was grateful for that commitment. It is my understanding that every other state and territory has subsequently proceeded to secure that national water initiative agreement for the country.

There was an issue with the goods and services tax and the renegotiation of the agreement once the existing tranche of taxes has been removed. Every state and territory has now decided to remove those taxes. There was not a cooperative approach to the examination of how the GST would be dealt with in the future, but rather a unilateral approach on the part of the federal Treasurer. Nevertheless, the Victorian Treasurer led a position which has now been agreed to by all states except New South Wales and Western Australia that there would be a phased-in reduction of other taxes. That has now been built into our forward estimates.

I want to congratulate the Treasurer for his leadership on this issue. I think it has positioned Victoria extremely well. There is certainty in the state. We have removed all the taxes we were requested to remove under the intergovernmental agreement, and we have moved forward even further by including that future tax in the forward estimates, even though there is no agreement. We have put it in the forward estimates anticipating that there will be an agreement in the future. I congratulate the Treasurer on that.

Of course there will be issues where there are differences. The announcement today by the Prime Minister of further workplace relations and industrial relations reforms — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Scoresby!

Mr BRACKS — That is one area where there will be a clear difference between the states and territories and the commonwealth government.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask members to be quiet and allow the Premier to answer the question.

Mr BRACKS — We stand ready to protect Victorian workers as much as we can. Look at the measures we took to protect 350 000 Victorian workers from the Kennett government's Workplace Relations Act system. We moved to protect them by moving them onto federal awards.

Mr Honeywood — On a point of order, Speaker, I refer to your ruling about the 4-minute maximum for ministers statements. The Premier has now been speaking for far too long according to that ruling.

The SPEAKER — Order! I have actually never given a ruling saying that the maximum time for an answer to a question is 4 minutes, but certainly 4 minutes is considered a reasonable time. The Premier has been speaking for some time now. I ask him to conclude.

Mr BRACKS — I will summarise. Clearly there will be differences. I am very proud of the fact that over the last five and a half years we have moved in this house to protect Victorian workers who were left with very poor conditions after the Kennett government's reforms and changes. I am pleased the federal government has taken them over as part of the

Workplace Relations Act. We have forced that position through legislation here and referral.

The other matter which was mentioned by the member for Monbulk was in relation to infrastructure. Infrastructure is on the agenda. That is very important to deal with in relation to impediments to growth of the Australian economy in the future and unlocking that growth and making sure that we have better productivity and investment which will further drive those improvements through investment and infrastructure. We are doing our bit.

Finally, we are investing \$10 billion over the next four years and \$20 billion over the next eight years. What we want and what we are seeking is a clear indication from the commonwealth on how it is going to deal with some of those national infrastructure issues, which is an important matter. If we have an arrangement there, we will certainly unlock that productivity for the future.

Alpine National Park: media campaign

Mr RYAN (Leader of The Nationals) — My question is to the Minister for Environment. I refer to the government's \$250 000 propaganda blitz against the mountain cattlemen and the obviously doctored photograph which has been a part of that campaign. Further, I refer to the government's assertion that any alterations to the photo were made without its knowledge and consent. I ask: if the minister did not order the changes to the photo, is he still going to pay for the advertisements?

Mr THWAITES (Minister for Environment) — Big picture! Here we are on this side of the house — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The house will come to order. I remind the Leader of The Nationals not to comment while the Speaker is on her feet. I ask the minister to continue his answer without any interruption from the Leader of The Nationals.

Mr THWAITES — We have made a very significant environmental decision, because on this side of the house we stand for something. We stand for protecting our environment. We stand for protecting the national park — —

Mr Wells interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Scoresby will cease interjecting in that manner.

Mr THWAITES — We also stand for allowing grazing to continue outside the national park in the state forests. Members of the opposition parties deny that and say it is not real. In fact there are 10 000 head of cattle licensed to graze in the high country areas outside the national park. We stand for those things. We are going to communicate those things. We are doing it because it is such an important issue for the Victorian Parliament.

Mr Doyle interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

Mr THWAITES — We will continue to do that.

Mr Wells interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Scoresby has been warned about his language before. I will not warn him again.

Budget: leak

Mr STENSCHOLT (Burwood) — My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer outline to the house whether there have been any further updates of the leak of the Victorian budget 2005–06?

Mr BRUMBY (Treasurer) — I thank the honourable member for Burwood for his question. I can advise the house that PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) has concluded its investigation into the leak of state budget information which was aired on television on Monday, 2 May. I am pleased to say that the investigation has determined conclusively that the leaked material was in fact the final printed version of the budget overview document. It was the document that accompanies the budget papers.

PricewaterhouseCoopers found that the final version of the overview was not available to any government minister, ministerial staff member or government official until after the leak occurred. The investigation examined the process of external providers to the budget paper production, but from those providers it was unable to pinpoint the source of the unauthorised release. PricewaterhouseCoopers has suggested that to take the investigation further the department could involve the use of police powers.

Accordingly this morning the Secretary of the Department of Treasury and Finance referred the report from PricewaterhouseCoopers to Victoria Police. The police have powers in relation to questioning and examining records to determine whether an offence has

occurred. Obviously they have powers which are not available to PricewaterhouseCoopers. PWC has recommended that the public release of its finding may prejudice that police investigation, but it does provide the summary which is contained in the press release I have released today. Essentially what it says is that none of the procedures that it performed revealed that the budget overview document displayed on the story presented on the Channel 9 news on Monday, 2 May, had characteristics indicating it was other than the final version of the printed, folded, bound and stapled budget overview document. I repeat: that document is not available.

As members know, those documents come over to Treasury on the morning of the budget at about 7.30. The matter has been referred to the police. Obviously the government considers the unauthorised release of budget information to be a very serious matter. Accordingly a decision has been made to refer it to the police. I should also say that the findings of the report will be used to improve the way in which the budget papers are managed, prepared and produced in the future. Obviously, the 24-page budget overview document is an excellent document because it is a succinct summary. It has certainly been well received. You might compare our budget — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The house will come to order.

Mr BRUMBY — It was very well received on Tuesday, and it was very well received on Monday night. It was a good budget. That matter has been provided to the police, and they will undertake further investigations.

Alpine National Park: media campaign

Mr DOYLE (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Premier. I refer to the government's dishonest, misleading, deceptive and doctored advertisements on alpine grazing, and I ask: will Consumer Affairs Victoria investigate and prosecute breaches of the Fair Trading Act by the government and its advertising agency?

Mr BRACKS (Premier) — I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I reject all the accusations that are raised in that question. On the contrary, the photographs show what the scientific experts have said conclusively, including the federal environment department, which indicated that there was significant damage caused by cattle in the Alpine

National Park. We have created an alternative for those cattle grazing in the alpine areas, and that is the state forest. Importantly on this side of the house we will be remembered in years to come — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! The level of interjection is too high. I ask members to assist the Speaker by being quiet and allowing the Premier to continue his answer.

Mr BRACKS — We will be remembered in years to come as the government that protected the very sensitive high country in the Alpine National Park, and of course the members opposite will be seen as the people who tried to block it.

Transport: infrastructure

Mr ANDREWS (Mulgrave) — My question is directed to the Minister for Transport, and I ask: can the minister outline to the house the latest examples of where the Bracks government is providing infrastructure to build a better Victoria?

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Transport, on what appears to be a fairly broad question.

Mr BATCHELOR (Minister for Transport) — I will just relate it to transport infrastructure, if you like!

Mr Doyle — That has narrowed it down nicely.

Mr BATCHELOR — Good. We are committed to building a statewide transport system that looks after people, moves freight efficiently and reliably and generally creates a safe operating environment for the movement of people and freight. Our transport infrastructure projects deliver substantial time savings for moving freight, and the new infrastructure will greatly reduce the costs to business and make transport more accessible to the Victorian community.

The EastLink project is a terrific example of that. It is being delivered in a timely manner, and it will be a great boost for Victoria generally and for the eastern and south-eastern suburbs in particular. That provision of infrastructure will create over 70 000 direct and indirect jobs over the life of the project. That is just one example of how transport infrastructure and its construction deliver jobs and economic growth. Add to that other major initiatives like the Pakenham bypass and the Geelong bypass, which, I need to remind the member for Polwarth, have both been funded in previous budgets.

Mr Mulder interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Polwarth!

Mr BATCHELOR — Then there is our \$97 million outer metropolitan roads upgrade. There is also the \$81 million commitment to rural roads to upgrade the Calder, Bass and Princes highways. These are the sorts of infrastructure projects in transport that are delivering great benefits. In fact Victoria's strength is in having a strong and confident infrastructure base that attracts business and drives the economy.

P & O's announcement of its intermodal terminal at Somerton is another example of how the provision of government infrastructure leads to great investment in the state. We provide the infrastructure, and business comes to us. Strengthening our economy is an important objective of the commitment the Bracks government has made to investing in infrastructure right across Victoria. The Dynon port-rail link is another critical piece of infrastructure that will help build our economy. This will be a multimodal, integrated freight project that will bring benefits to the port of Melbourne, the economy of Victoria and the nation as a whole.

As well as these road infrastructure upgrades, we are revitalising rail right across Victoria. We are modernising the tracks and signals; we are redeveloping Spencer Street station; we are introducing new trains and new timetables; we are providing improved ticketing systems; and we are making the system safer for the people who operate and use our transport.

The regional fast rail project is the biggest of these revitalisation projects in Victorian rail, and it will bring a range of economic, social and transport benefits to the people of country Victoria. We are delivering to country Victorians, because in the past they were ignored by the previous government and regarded as toenails. It is not hard to see that the Bracks government is building a better Victoria. We are making Victoria a better place in which to raise a family, to carry out business and to invest in our community.

Alpine National Park: media campaign

Mr DOYLE (Leader of the Opposition) — My question is to the Minister for Environment. I refer to the government's dishonest, misleading and doctored advertisements on alpine grazing and to the minister's statement yesterday, that 'that is not the photo I saw', and I ask: does the minister mean that yesterday's artificially dark photograph was the fault of the *Herald*

Sun and the *Age*, and is it not true that these newspapers had secrecy provisions enforced so that their editors could not see or verify these advertisements?

Mr THWAITES (Minister for Environment) — Numerous allegations and statements or misstatements are made by the Leader of the Opposition — and that is because opposition members do not stand for anything on this issue. They are trying in every way to divert attention from the fundamental issues about whether — —

Dr Napthine interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for South-West Coast!

Mr THWAITES — We as a government have stood for protecting the park. We have stood for allowing grazing outside the park. We have stood for a very good transition package of up to \$100 000 for cattlemen.

Mr Doyle interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Leader of the Opposition should be careful about his language and not use unparliamentary language.

An honourable member interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! It is against the rulings of previous Speakers for members of this house to call other members liars.

An honourable member — I did not.

The SPEAKER — Order! Members can say that a member has told a lie, but they cannot call them liars or suggest that they have been lying.

Mr THWAITES — Opposition members, out of their own mouths, have nothing to say but puff and huff, puff and huff. They will not debate whether we should renew the licences or not. They will not debate that because they are not interested. They do not have any policies. We on this side of the house have made a very significant decision. We are backing it up with communication, which is important and we stand by that.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask members to not interject in that unparliamentary and rude manner and to allow the minister to answer the question.

Mr THWAITES — I certainly make no criticism of the *Age* or the *Herald Sun*. The criticism I have is of the

opposition's complete failure to come up with any policy on this issue.

Budget: education and training

Mr HUDSON (Bentleigh) — My question is to the Minister for Education and Training. Will the minister advise the house of infrastructure initiatives aimed at building a better education and training system for Victorian families, particularly initiatives which foster innovative approaches in education and training?

Mr Perton interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Doncaster!

Ms KOSKY (Minister for Education and Training) — I thank the member for Bentleigh for his question and for his very strong interest in education. As everyone in this house knows, the budget that came down several weeks ago has education placed very importantly as its highest priority. Within that budget there is funding for facilities for excellence — \$80 million is provided for state-of-the-art buildings which will focus on specialisation within our secondary schools and look at innovative program delivery in key areas such as technology, arts, science and sport, which will address obesity.

Two rural learning campuses are being established under this budget, one at Marlo and another one, and we will be announcing that site very shortly. A sports school in Maribyrnong will focus on lifting physical education and the health of all people — —

Mr Perton interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Doncaster will cease that continual interjection!

Ms KOSKY — Hopefully that will have some flow-on to other members of the community, including members of Parliament! We are committed to providing innovative building facilities which match the flexible pathways and the flexible education that we need to deliver. Several years ago we introduced the new Victorian certificate of applied learning (VCAL), which has been very successful right around Victoria. I am very pleased to advise the house today — —

Mr Perton interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The member for Doncaster!

Ms KOSKY — I am announcing a new facility for post-compulsory education — that is, for technical

training — the Holmesglen Secondary Vocational College. Over \$2 million will be provided for a centre of technical excellence, which is far more than the federal government is providing for its Australian technical colleges. We are providing more for this one facility than the federal government is providing for its individual facilities — far more. That facility will offer VCAL, pre-apprenticeships, school-based new apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational education and training in schools programs.

Mr Doyle interjected.

Ms KOSKY — I will thank the local member. This facility will be based in Moorabbin, within the member for Bentleigh's electorate. I will very much thank the local member; it was very good advice from the Leader of the Opposition! The facility will provide building pre-apprenticeships and VCAL for school-based new apprenticeships in engineering, electronics, hospitality and multimedia. It will incorporate years 11 and 12 — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! Would the members at the table cease conversing across the table and allow the minister to be heard.

Ms KOSKY — Thank you, Speaker. It will incorporate years 11 and 12 in industry-focused applied learning. We are doing that in partnership with industry, business and secondary schools. Holmesglen TAFE has been working on this concept since early last year. I want to commend Bruce Mackenzie, the chief executive officer, for his vision. He realised, along with others, that there was a need for technical education in that area which focused on years 11 and 12. He did not talk about the problem. We are not talking about the problem; we are actually putting the solution in place.

Whilst the federal government talks about technical colleges, it is struggling to get players to the table for its technical colleges. We have the ideas, we have the dollars, we have the networks and we are doing it. So the very first technical college will be where? The Holmesglen facility will be in Moorabbin. When will it be built? It will open in 2007 at a cost of over \$2 million, which this government is providing for the facility. I will take great pleasure in writing to my counterpart in Canberra to tell him how it can be done quickly.

Alpine National Park: mountain huts

Mr DIXON (Nepean) — My question is to the Minister for Tourism. Given that one of the justifications for the government's decision to ban

mountain cattlemen from the Alpine National Park is the increased emphasis on ecotourism, I ask: why has the government only allocated \$60 000 for the maintenance of two mountain huts, when 40 huts were destroyed during the 2003 bushfires?

Mr Wells interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The Minister for Tourism, without the assistance of the member for Scoresby!

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PANDAZOPOULOS (Minister for Tourism) — I do not need notes. I remind the non-shadow minister for tourism on the other side, because the opposition does not even have a shadow minister, that Tourism Alliance Victoria and the tourism and transport task force have both put out press releases in support of the government's decision and that this initiative is welcomed by the tourism industry.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr PANDAZOPOULOS — I think the peak groups are the ones that are in touch and know what is best for tourism. The reality is that the package that has been raised in the north-east has been particularly welcomed by the Omeo Business and Tourism Association and by the Legends, Wine and High Country Regional Tourism Marketing Committee. Who else is there? There is East Gippsland and there is the Alpine shire — all the tourism communities in that area.

I know whose side I am on. I am on the side of this package, because it is good for tourism. As I said the other day in this house, the growth in tourism is in nature-based tourism and ecotourism. The regions of the north-east that have been underdeveloped in tourism need more resource support. So the Omeo region, the region that will be connected with the Bogong High Plains Road and the upgrade to the Alpine National Park, needs support. The Minister for Environment has announced a series of packages. It is all forward for the future of tourism in the north-east. The reality is that it is this government that is delivering for tourism in the north-east. The others do not have a policy; they do not even have a shadow minister.

Taxation: reform

Ms BEARD (Kilsyth) — My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer outline to the house the government's — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask members to the left of me to be quiet and allow the member for Kilsyth to ask her question.

Ms BEARD — Can the Treasurer outline to the house the government's commitment to taxation reform and any new information relating to Victoria's taxation competitiveness?

Mr BRUMBY (Treasurer) — I want to thank the member for Kilsyth for her question. Since the release of the Victorian budget we have also had, in this last week, the New South Wales budget. I am pleased to say that following the New South Wales budget and the change in tax arrangements made in New South Wales, the relative tax competitiveness of Victoria versus New South Wales has further improved.

Victoria's tax percentage as a share of gross domestic product is now 0.58 of 1 per cent below that of New South Wales. That means that our competitiveness has further improved. So for Victoria as a place for investment, new private sector activity and new jobs, the story we have to tell is even stronger than it was before the budget. Our taxation — —

Honourable members interjecting.

Ms Asher interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! The level of interjection is too high, particularly from the member for Brighton.

Mr BRUMBY — Our taxation revenue growth in the budget I delivered just over two weeks ago reduced by half a percentage point; in New South Wales it increased by 6.3 per cent. We are abolishing debits tax on 1 July this year, and we are abolishing rental duty from 1 January 2007.

Dr Napthine — I raise a point of order, Speaker, with regard to anticipation. We have before us in orders of the day the State Taxation Acts (General Amendment) Bill, which covers the state taxation changes in the budget. The second reading of that bill took place this morning. We also have before the house the Racing and Gambling Acts (Amendment) Bill, which includes the changes to the levy on gaming machines. I put it to you that the discussion the Treasurer is now undertaking with regard to state taxation is anticipating debate on these important taxation bills that are currently before the house.

Mr Batchelor — On the point of order, Speaker, the rule of anticipation relates to bills that are on the

government business program, not those that are on the notice paper. That has been the position of previous Speakers, and the Treasurer is entirely entitled to answer this question.

The SPEAKER — Order! In relation to the point of order raised by the member for South-West Coast, the items are not on the government business program. The Treasurer is entitled to talk about broad policy decisions, but obviously in relation to matters that are on the government business program, he would not be able to go into exact details of what might be in bills that are on that program.

Mr BRUMBY — As I announced in the budget, we are cutting land tax by \$823 million over the next five years. As part of those changes we also announced significant reforms abolishing land tax for aged care facilities, supported accommodation and rooming houses, and we have backdated it to 1 January 2004. That was extraordinarily well received. A press release from the Victorian Association of Health and Extended Care is headed ‘Aged sector hails budget’s land tax relief’, and a media release from the Tenants Union of Victoria says:

Land tax relief should mean lower rents and better protections for aged care, SRS and rooming house residents.

Despite the budget announcement and despite the media commentary about this matter, I have received representations on it from the Honourable Ron Bowden, a member for South Eastern Province in the other place and opposition spokesman for ports. He has written to me arguing for land tax relief for aged care facilities and boarding houses. Mr Bowden wrote me a letter dated 20 May. The budget was brought down two and a half weeks ago. He attached to the letter copies of all the representations made to him from groups in his electorate. They said:

Please convey our concerns in the strongest possible terms to Treasurer Brumby before the state budget is delivered on Tuesday, 3 May.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BRUMBY — There is page after page!

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BRUMBY — Here it is, 20 May!

Mr Smith interjected.

Mr BRUMBY — The member for Bass may interject. I do not know if the member for Bass has set

up the honourable member for South Eastern Province. Has he?

Mr Smith interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! I am not quite sure that the interjections from the member for Bass are very useful. I ask the Treasurer to answer the question, ignoring the interjection from the member for Bass.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr BRUMBY — The honourable member knows that he should not respond with interjections like that. Just in case Hansard missed it, the member for Bass said, ‘I don’t have to’. Clearly it is not his work; it is the work of the member for South Eastern Province. The member concerned was the author of the Gilligan’s Island proposal. In this case — —

Mr Perton — On a point of order, Speaker, the minister is restricted to answering the question in relation to the administration of government business. He is entitled to refer to a letter written to him by a member asking for change, but then he is not entitled to go on to make other references to the member.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! There have been a number of comments made across the table between members of the opposition and the government which perhaps were unnecessary, but I think it is a little difficult to uphold that point of order in the current circumstances. I ask the Treasurer to continue with his answer, briefly.

Mr BRUMBY — Speaker, the member has written to me and I will be responding to the member, but obviously on this occasion the member concerned has missed the boat.

The SPEAKER — Order! The time for questions has now expired.

Mr Wells — On a point of order, Speaker, I seek your clarification. During question time I was warned and cautioned on a couple of occasions about using the word ‘lies’ and ‘lied’. It is my understanding that during parliamentary debate it is only if you call someone a liar that you are warned. I seek your clarification on the words ‘lies’ and ‘lied’.

The SPEAKER — Order! I will give a ruling in a moment, but when I am sitting in this chair it is sometimes quite difficult to hear what a member is saying. The member certainly continued to yell out

what sounded very much to me like 'liar'. I ask the Clerk to pass me the book on Speakers' rulings, which he has in front of him.

This is a ruling from many Speakers:

Depending upon the manner in which the term is used, it is not unparliamentary to use the expression 'that is a lie'. It is an entirely different matter to say that a member is a 'liar'.

Allegations that a member is lying

If a member takes offence to such remarks, the practice of the house is that they should be withdrawn unequivocally.

In relation to the house it says that saying someone is telling a lie can be objected to. Some of the expressions the member for Scoresby has used in the house before have certainly sounded to me like 'liar', and I would have thought that accusing people in this house of telling lies all the time is not a particularly gentlemanly way to proceed.

Dr Napthine — On a different point of order, Speaker, during question time I raised a point of order with regard to anticipation, and in response you ruled that anticipation relates only to matters on the government business program. I have examined the standing orders and the Speakers' rulings to the best of my ability in the short period of time available to me, and I feel it is necessary to raise this for clarification. It is my understanding, based on the longstanding practice of this house and on Speakers' rulings, that the rule of anticipation relates not just to the government business program but also to matters of government business on the notice paper. I ask you to clarify that, Speaker, with regard to future rulings.

The SPEAKER — Order! Yes, and indeed I uphold the point of order. I was incorrect in that ruling. The member for South-West Coast is right: it relates to all the matters that are on the notice paper. However, in relation to the rule of anticipation, members are allowed to give broad policy statements, if you like, but are not allowed to go into the specific details that are contained in a bill.

Mr Brumby — I raise a different point of order, Speaker, that relates to the ruling you made earlier today concerning matters which could be canvassed in relation to the budget, which in part was raised by the member for South-West Coast in his point of order. I seek your clarification. It has always been my understanding — and, I believe, the practice of the house — that following the release of the budget and the Treasurer's budget speech it is in order for questions

to be asked by either side of the house on matters contained in the budget. I believe that common practice of the house has always been followed and that it in a sense overrules or supersedes any other standing orders in relation to anticipation.

The SPEAKER — Order! As a matter of clarification, in responding to the member for South-West Coast I was referring to the bills that he said were on the notice paper. I made a ruling after the budget last year, which was actually on a motion of the Leader of the Opposition, that those provisions would be suspended for the budget; so members can refer directly to items in the budget. The member for South-West Coast was talking about different bills.

Mr Batchelor — On a point of order, Speaker, I refer — —

Mr Doyle interjected.

The SPEAKER — Order! Sorry, I was not aware that the Leader of the Opposition wanted to raise a point of order, but if he wants to, he should go ahead.

Mr Doyle interjected.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr Batchelor — No, he won't be Premier. Don't be silly!

The SPEAKER — Order! If the Minister for Transport has a point of order, I ask him to raise it; otherwise, I ask him to sit down.

Mr Batchelor — Speaker, I refer you to the ruling of Speaker Plowman on 12 November 1997, and would ask you — —

The SPEAKER — Order! What is the point of order?

Mr Batchelor — It relates to consistency in rulings by Speakers. I would ask you to take that into account and report back to the house. That ruling relates to anticipation and says that as:

... the bill ... was not listed on the weekly government business program and there was no guarantee that it was to be called on for debate in the following week, the Chair ruled that it would not accept any argument about anticipation.

That is exactly the point I put to you before, when I stated that it was my recollection that this was a precedent that had been set by previous Speakers. I would ask you to reflect upon that and the different rulings that have been given during the course of today.

The SPEAKER — Order! I will discuss it with the Clerk and report back at the beginning of the next week.

APPROPRIATION (2005/2006) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed.

Mr MAXFIELD (Narracan) — This afternoon I rise to make a few brief comments. As we know, over the last five and a half years in a budgetary sense the Bracks government has delivered huge amounts of resources to rural and regional Victoria. There is no doubt that my area of Narracan, West Gippsland, Gippsland as a whole and the Latrobe Valley have been very successful in gaining significant interest. After the previous years of neglect of our area it is quite exciting to see the vitality that is now coming into the region. Over the last few years my electorate has seen the rebuilding of many schools, including the Trafalgar High School, the Warragul Regional College, stages 1 and 2 of the Drouin Secondary College and the Newborough and Warragul campuses of the Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE, all of which have been beneficiaries of funding. The budget provides further funding for education in my electorate with the Drouin Secondary College receiving over \$3 million for its third stage.

I am also extremely excited about the access to broadband technology across our schools. Quite a lot of our country schools have been unable to access broadband technology, and it is really very exciting that the government has initiated this improvement in technology for our schools. Although we know that the quality of education in our country schools is good, and the increased staffing provided by the Bracks government has been well received, as well as the additional computers, there has been difficulty in not being able to access broadband. So this commitment of almost \$90 million to deliver broadband to our country schools is very exciting. The infrastructure that will be used to deliver broadband will flow across to the communities, which will also be able to access it, so it will not just be the schools but also the surrounding communities that will gain from the infrastructure upgrade to deliver broadband to schools. For example, Noojee does not have broadband access, but it also does not have mobile phone coverage. For a number of years the residents and I have been lobbying the federal government, Telstra and other companies over the issue of mobile phone technology. Recently, when I was there, they told me that they regarded access to

broadband as even more important than access to mobile phone coverage, which highlights the benefits of the upgrade to broadband technology that will be delivered by the Bracks government's commitment.

On the issue of health, we have significant gains in health across our community. Following the disastrous closure of the Moe hospital by the Kennett government and the closure of the Traralgon hospital and the closure of the mental health facility, we had real difficulties in our community. But the Bracks government has brought the Latrobe Regional Hospital back into public ownership at its new site, and it is now being upgraded with a \$20 million cancer unit. The largest cancer unit outside Melbourne and Geelong is being built in the Latrobe Valley, and people across Gippsland will be able to gain the benefit of being able to stay in Gippsland for cancer treatment rather than having to travel to Melbourne.

On top of that there is \$11 million for a new mental health facility with 11 beds in Traralgon. There was also the announcement in the budget of \$6.7 million for the health centre in Warragul, and that is an exciting development. We bought the site three years ago and are now very much looking forward to the upgrading of that site. We have seen significant increases in funding in the health sector, as well as increases in services and increases in the number of nurses. The number of teachers has also increased.

The other exciting area is community safety. The budget provides funding for a new police station for Rawson, and that is very exciting for us, as well as an increase in police numbers. The Warragul police station will be finished within a couple of months, and I know the Warragul police are keen to move in. In Moe the staff are very thrilled with their brand new police station. What great news for community safety. Neighbourhood renewal in Moe is one of our exciting projects, and the police have recently told me that the crime rate in the neighbourhood renewal area in Moe is down by 40 per cent — the crime rate has dropped by 40 per cent!

That shows that in the key areas of crime, health and education the Bracks government is delivering, and this budget has very much delivered to my electorate. I thank the Treasurer for a wonderful budget that has been very well received in my electorate.

Mr WYNNE (Richmond) — I rise to make a very brief contribution to the appropriation debate today and indicate that this has been an extraordinarily successful budget. It is one that has been widely applauded across the community. Certainly it is a budget that provides an

excellent balance between ensuring that we have strong economic growth and encourage investment and job growth, and social justice, which was achieved with the hallmark release prior to the tabling of the budget of the *A Fairer Victoria* social justice package.

Having come from the social justice area, I think this is truly a landmark budget of the Bracks government. Certainly all of the colleagues I have spoken to in the community and welfare sectors have widely applauded this budget as being one which is fair and equitable and which fundamentally addresses disadvantage in both city and rural communities. It is one that will go a long way towards addressing systemic disadvantage; it is very much a hallmark of a Labor government.

I want to touch upon a couple of areas that are a hallmark of the *A Fairer Victoria* document. I refer specifically to the mental health initiatives where \$180 million is being invested over the next four years in mental health services focusing on early intervention, prevention, expanding community-based services and of course more resources for the hospital system. I know that colleagues on both sides of the house respect my colleague and friend the former member for Melbourne, Neil Cole, who is a very strong advocate in the mental health area. When I was talking to him only a few days ago he indicated the extraordinarily widespread support amongst mental health groups across Victoria for this outstanding \$180 million package.

Members well know that affordable housing is an area that has been a longstanding interest of mine, and over the next four years \$50 million will be spent to expand supply and provide more public housing and also to bring VicUrban much more strongly into focus as a delivery vehicle of affordable housing projects on behalf of the government. That is a really wonderful initiative.

The final area I want to briefly touch upon is the neighbourhood renewal program. This is an extraordinary success story of this government. The member for Brunswick and I represent inner city areas of Melbourne, and wherever you go there is major urban renewal investment in the inner city of Melbourne. There are also projects in areas like Ballarat and Wendouree. This program is an investment in both the physical and the social infrastructure of areas that have suffered systemic disadvantage. The scores are already on the board in terms of the work that has been done, and I refer specifically to my own example of the Collingwood and Fitzroy public housing estates, which are two of the largest public housing estates, where we are building back both the physical and social fabric. It

is fantastic to see that the government has indicated its ongoing commitment not only to those urban renewal projects but to a further expansion of the program in both metropolitan and rural settings.

This is a fantastic budget by any measure. All the business and social commentators across media outlets have very much affirmed a budget that goes to the heart of what Labor governments are about — ensuring that we have a strong economy but an economy that is tempered by our understanding and our capacity to reach out to those who are most disadvantaged in our community. I commend this budget to the house.

Mr LUPTON (Pahran) — It is a pleasure for me to be able to speak in support of the 2005–06 state budget, which further builds on the achievements of the Bracks Labor government since coming to office, particularly in the areas of health, education, community safety and creating a sustainable environment. This budget is fundamentally about fairness, about addressing disadvantage and about building a prosperous future by investing in infrastructure and our community services. The budget's expansionary investment is made possible because of the strong financial management of the Bracks government. This government came to office with a promise to maintain at least a \$100 million operating surplus year after year, and this budget again delivers on that promise. The operating surplus estimated for the 2005–06 year is \$365 million, and it is in this environment that we have record investment in infrastructure of \$3 billion this year and more than \$10 billion over the next four years. This is all being done with a low and sustainable level of debt and a commitment to maintaining our AAA credit rating, which has just been confirmed again by the ratings agencies.

As I said, this budget builds on the achievements of the Bracks government in those all-important areas of health, education and community safety. Since this government came to office there has been a 54 per cent boost in funding for health services and an additional \$2 billion to build, modernise and upgrade hospitals, health services and aged care facilities, with over 5700 nurses being added to the hospital services in this state. This budget builds on these achievements, and it has been described in the media as a \$1 billion health tonic. The Alfred hospital in my electorate is a major beneficiary of that spending. We are also on track building the new Alfred centre, which will deliver a new elective surgery centre to the people of my electorate of Prahran and the wider community.

The budget also boosts spending on psychiatric and mental health services, with \$180 million over the next

four years. That includes a new psychiatric intensive care unit at the Alfred hospital in the Prahran electorate, which I am very pleased about. The new 24-hour Health Assist help line is an innovation in this budget which will assist people in determining where they should go for outpatient or general practitioner services and will be an improvement to the way we manage hospital services in this state, and that is to be welcomed.

The budget also builds on achievements in education. Of course we have over 5300 more teachers in this state as a result of the government's education initiatives. We have lower class sizes and the rebuilding and maintenance of schools. Primary school enrolments are growing in my electorate. Prior to this government's coming to office they were going down, but we have turned that around. Toorak, Stonnington and South Yarra primary schools were all under threat from the previous government as remaining small primary schools, but we now have community confidence in the continuing work those schools are doing in the communities, and that has been reflected by people lining up to enrol their children in those local primary schools. That is a great achievement.

This budget has another great initiative — that is, the high-tech fibre-optic network broadband rollout for every government school. It also has \$151 million in extra funding for non-government schools. That will be particularly well received by Catholic primary schools in my electorate like St Mary's in St Kilda East and Our Lady of Lourdes in Prahran, and also the Jewish day schools like Yeshiva College and Beth Rivka.

The budget also builds on achievements in community safety. We have funded the 1400 additional police that we promised the people of Victoria, and we have continued to build new police facilities and give the police the resources they need. We have the biggest police budget in this state's history and the lowest crime rate. I know that police in my area are very pleased with the resources and with the success of those policies. Our local police told me that, as an example, assault rates in the Prahran area have gone down by over 20 per cent in recent times as a result of the community safety initiatives of this government, and we will continue to pursue those vigorously in the future. The budget also includes funding for 12 mobile police stations, which will be assigned to the different regions. I know that in my electorate, which is in region 1, there will be two mobile police facilities and they will further assist police in ensuring that the crime rate goes down and remains very low. We will continue to make community safety one of our highest priorities and the crime rate the lowest in Australia.

The government should be applauded for the way it has approached the construction of this budget. It is a fair budget. There is additional funding to support the great social policy document *A Fairer Victoria*. This budget will continue the work of the Bracks government that gives children a better start in life. Improvements to child and family support services will continue. There has been an increase in the kindergarten fee subsidy. A new Office for Children will be set up and funded. There is a stronger and more effective response to family violence. There is greater support for people with disabilities and people with mental illnesses. This is a budget that gives strong economic growth to the future employment and investment environment in Victoria. It makes sure that Victoria is undoubtedly the best place in Australia to raise a family.

Mr CARLI (Brunswick) — It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the appropriation bill. It is a budget that has been extraordinarily well received by people in my electorate. It has been particularly well received by many of the people who have often questioned me about whether this Labor government is Labor enough — that is, whether it is tackling true disadvantage and making this a better society. People who have often shown some scepticism are clearly convinced by this document, and particularly by the document that preceded the budget, *A Fairer Victoria*, which is a social justice statement demonstrating the government's financial and strategic commitment to tackling structural disadvantage in Victoria in both urban and rural settings. My community is very active, and a lot of people are involved in the community sector and not-for-profit organisations. There has been an extraordinarily positive response from those people.

I want to touch on a couple of aspects of the budget and the direction of the Bracks government. One item I want to mention is the redevelopment of the North Melbourne railway station, which is of great importance to people who use the Upfield line and also to people who use other rail lines — both regional and the northern and western system — that go through North Melbourne. Around 2 million people use that station as an interchange. They get off and get onto another train there. The station is very much a 19th century station. It is not compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The platforms are not wide enough for all the passengers who wish to use them. There is enormous congestion, and there are delays.

There is a whole raft of problems. It is a great initiative of this government to actually tackle the redevelopment front on and make it a priority action. The commitment this year is not only to begin the early works but also to do the detailed planning work for what is essentially an

overall rebuild of the station. That will include a new overpass between platforms; lifts and escalators to make it DDA-compliant; passenger information displays; canopies and weather protection, of which there are none at the moment; changes to platforms; and improvements to security. It is an important initiative that is going to benefit a lot of commuters. It will improve the performance of the rail system.

The increased use of rail in the state will grow even more with the opening of the new Spencer Street station next year. It is a great and necessary thing, and it needs to be done. At the moment the Department of Infrastructure is working with all stakeholders, including the City of Melbourne, which I must say is very supportive of this project.

Another element that is very important to me is the commitment this government has to local community infrastructure. Next week the Minister for Health will open a new community sports centre which was the gym at the old Brunswick Secondary School in Victoria Street. The whole school was going to be sold off by the previous government, but when we got into government we did not sell it off but decided to use it for important community infrastructure — and that is exactly what has happened on site. We have seen a number of health organisations relocate to this site. The front of the old school is now being used by a business incubator. It has been leased to the City of Moreland for 10 years to build jobs and give innovative firms an ability to create work and create business. Another element that I think is important is the location on the site of the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture. That is a really important organisation that works with refugees and people who have been traumatised by torture. It will fit very well into Brunswick, and it has enormous community support. That project is also being funded by the Bracks government.

We have seen a situation where the old Brunswick Second School, a piece of public infrastructure which was going to be sold off, has been kept in public hands and is now being utilised very effectively by health services and a business incubator — and we also have a major sport complex. Again I support this budget and support the directions and the priorities of the Bracks government, which is very much about not only building infrastructure and building business confidence but also tacking disadvantage in our community.

Mr MILDENHALL (Footscray) — In the context of speaking on an acclaimed budget — a budget that has inspired Victorians around the state and provides

more assistance, resources and a vision for an electorate like mine — I point out that one of the most exciting projects in my area is the establishment of what will become one of the leading sports precincts in Australia. It consists of the \$18 million Whitten Oval redevelopment, to which the state has committed \$3 million. That early commitment has allowed other contributions such as the commitment by the commonwealth to fall into place. The centre will be a hub for community sport, high-level training and health strategies for the west.

The education minister has also recently announced that the state's specialist secondary school sports academy will be built at the Maribyrnong Secondary School site. This is great leadership on the minister's part, and planning is already under way for the development.

Mr Baillieu — How is the pool?

Mr MILDENHALL — Just stick around. The third leg of the precinct is the redevelopment of Victoria University's specialist sports testing and biomechanics facility, set in the context of a high-quality indoor aquatic and sports facility. Finally there is the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre, the highest quality and most innovative regional aquatic facility yet seen in this state. It includes unequalled green technology and the provision of facilities for people with disabilities, integrated with community health services, alongside a 50-metre indoor pool.

The Bracks government's \$6.75 million contribution is the largest ever made by a state government to a municipality for an aquatic facility. To achieve this requires strong leadership — and it took strong leadership by the Maribyrnong council to replace the ailing Footscray pool with the new aquatic centre. But a vocal group of local Greens supported in here and publicly by the member for Hawthorn and Mr Atkinson, a member for Koonung Province in another place, opposed the new centre and demanded that the ailing Footscray pool remain, along with its \$1.2 million annual operating loss — the worst in Australia — and its rapidly deteriorating physical state. They eventually demanded that both facilities remain operating, which would have resulted in a financial disaster for both and a 20 per cent rate increase in the already high-rate Maribyrnong municipality — an absurd proposition.

The member for Hawthorn's advocacy for the financially crippling, low-quality old pool, in spite of the independent panel's findings and the facts, was irresponsible, populist, cynical and opportunistic opposition politics at its worst. I have a message for the

member for Hawthorn and his Green mates in the Save Footscray Pool group: we are not going to put up with low-quality, crap facilities in the west anymore. Labor leadership at the local and state level has been strong in the face of the hysteria and bullying tactics. The aftermath of the controversy has been equally bizarre. The hysteria over the issue saw a death threat being made against the mayor of Maribyrnong within hours of the council's decision to sell the old pool, and a person has been charged in relation to that matter. I am sure the member for Hawthorn would join me in condemning that sort of behaviour, which is totally foreign to any civilised community's way of resolving what has been a difficult issue.

There is a happy ending, as the Salvation Army has been successful in its bid to purchase part of the site of the old pool for a 90-bed facility for the marginalised aged community, thereby addressing an acute issue in my community, because providing accommodation for this group has become very difficult in the face of increased housing prices. With strong leadership and a strategic and caring budget, the Footscray and inner west communities will continue to thrive. I have great pleasure in endorsing the budget for its statewide and in particular its local application.

Mr LEIGHTON (Preston) — This is a great budget for Preston and the northern suburbs. It is also a very good budget for two of the most important things in life: mental health services and information technology. I will come to those in a moment.

As I said, this has been a great budget for the northern suburbs, with the announcement that the wholesale fruit and vegetable market will be relocated to Epping and the announcement of \$24.5 million for the redevelopment and expansion of the Northern Hospital stage 2A, including \$1 million to extend the emergency department. This is a growth area but one that was never funded properly under the Kennett government. It closed the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital (PANCH) but never fully resourced the Northern Hospital.

Preston is going very well. We saved the courthouse, which was going to be closed by the Kennett government. We have built and opened a new police station. We have built and opened the PANCH Health Service in place of the public hospital the Kennett government stole. Our priority now is the revitalisation of Preston Central, which this government has previously designated as a principal activity centre. I was pleased that the government announced \$155 000 for three projects: \$65 000 for an upgrade of Cramer Street; \$60 000 for detailed planning of key

development sites in Preston; and \$30 000 for way finding and signage. Unlike the Camberwell attitude of the member for Hawthorn, we would be happy to see revitalisation and redevelopment of the Preston activity centre. It extends from the Preston railway station through the market — we need to maintain and preserve the fresh fruit, meat and fish area — and the retail strip shopping centre to the council offices and the post office on the other side, which I would like to see redeveloped. There is a chance to do a lot of exciting things there, and it seems we would welcome redevelopment and revitalisation.

I made the comment that this has been a very good budget for both mental health and information technology. The budget commits \$180.3 million over four years for capital works and expanded services in mental health. I cannot go through the lot in 5 minutes, but the budget includes additional beds. It is important in a time of deinstitutionalisation that we have beds available for acute inpatient admissions for those who need it, through to step-down facilities, outpatient services and crisis assessment and treatment teams. I want to mention two aspects in particular. The first is an additional \$5 million for psychiatric disability rehabilitation and support services. I want to pay tribute to the work of one of those groups — the North Eastern Alliance for the Mentally Ill, which is one of the leading groups to the extent that it is now providing services into New South Wales. I welcome the pricing review and the fact that money is to flow to those groups.

The additional funding for mental health includes allocating money for the mental health work force. Many of the professionals in the mental health work force trained, like me, in the 1970s and are close to retirement. We will face a real crisis in trained mental health professional numbers. I think it is important that we both train them at a basic level and run proper postgraduate courses.

The area I wish to finish off on is the lead we are taking in the provision of broadband services. The current federal coalition government has shown no leadership in promoting broadband services throughout Australia. This is an initiative we are taking in Victoria. The telecommunications purchasing and management strategy is delivering enormous savings to areas of the state government which will flow through to local government. The announcement of funding to provide broadband in state schools is a fantastic development. It is a great budget for Preston. It is a great budget for the provision of mental health services, and it is a very good information technology budget.

Mr LIM (Clayton) — I am so delighted to be taking part in this debate on the Appropriation (2005/2006) Bill that to suggest that I am happy would be an understatement. In all my years in this house I have never seen so many people upbeat about a government, even going back to the so-called can-do Kennett government, in terms of the support and enthusiasm that have come through the ranks.

This budget is extraordinary. I refer of course to the part of the budget that targets the disadvantaged and the section of our community which has really needed help for so long. Looking at the allocation of funding for the A Fairer Victoria program, the \$788 million, we are just so happy. We understand there is a need for us to investigate what section of the community needs to be helped, but it would be remiss of me not to express my initial apprehension, an apprehension that was shared by many other members on this side who have strong connections with the migrant community, particularly members with large components of the ethnic community in their electorates. For example, a seat like Clayton comprises something like 56 per cent non-Anglo voters. The *A Fairer Victoria* document does not mention the ethnic community as being disadvantaged, and it took some discussions with senior members of our government before I realised that all the programs in this \$788 million package directly address a whole range of problems common to the migrant community.

I can go through each of the programs. An example is the allocation of \$46.4 million for troubled teenagers to get their lives back on track. On this point I am very pleased to share some good news with the house. I have read the annual report of the Youth Parole Board every year. For the first time the one tabled in the house today made me smile because I know this government has responded significantly and effectively to the plight of teenagers from Indo-Chinese backgrounds who are in trouble. For the first time the Youth Parole Board's annual report says in black and white that the number of young offenders from the Indo-Chinese community has decreased.

From the first year I became a member of Parliament and read the annual report considerable concern was expressed about the number of offenders from that community as it was out of proportion to their number in the community. We now have this report which says the number has decreased. This has not been brought about by some miracle. It has happened because from the first year the Bracks government came to power certain measures have been put in place. I recall the Minister for Community Services at the time, the member for Pascoe Vale, introducing a special program

to train social workers from an Indo-Chinese background to go into the corrections system to assist the kids inside prison and after they come out. That happened because this is a government that cares and responds. I recall that at that time we were campaigning on the theme of Labor listens, Labor leads and Labor acts — and we did act.

A Fairer Victoria is building on that. It is making government more forceful and stronger in supporting communities in need. I could go on and on about the rest of the money specifically allocated in this area, but I understand that the time limitations are such that I have to wind up very quickly. I feel nothing but pride for the budget. I know that every member on this side of the chamber can walk tall and proud because it is a fairer budget. We are going back to our roots, to the true believers, and we should be proud. I commend the budget to the house.

Ms DUNCAN (Macedon) — This afternoon I am also very pleased to speak on the Bracks government's budget which continues on from previous budgets to deliver good things to the state of Victoria. Budgets are generally not riveting documents to read. They will certainly never make the bestseller list, but they clearly demonstrate a government's priority. We again particularly see the priorities of this government by the way it spends the state's revenue. There is a huge emphasis on rebuilding infrastructure in this state and continuing to rebuild the education and health systems.

I will take a quick look at a snapshot of some of the budget's key initiatives. There is continuing reform of business taxes; there will be \$823 million in land tax reforms over the next five years; and there is \$868 million in this budget for education. One particular initiative which I think is excellent is the \$89 million to extend broadband to all Victorian schools. This has been warmly welcomed in the electorate of Macedon by very small schools which would never have hoped to receive this level of technology. They will now have access to the speed of service offered by that technology. Of course part of that rollout is updating 700 exchanges. Of those 700 exchanges, 600 are in rural Victoria. This will bring forward technology that many of these schools would have waited a very long time to have ever received.

The budget continues on with that scheme of rebuilding infrastructure and extending benefit to all Victorians, no matter where they live. One particular initiative in the budget that I would like to highlight is a new peak ambulance service for Sunbury. The budget provides recurrent funding of \$650 000 a year and allocates

\$200 000 in capital funds to provide additional crew in the Sunbury area during peak demand times. This is a demonstration of the government's high priority for an excellent health service right across Victoria, no matter where you live. This will ensure that response times in Sunbury continue to provide that level of care.

Other initiatives specifically for Macedon that I would like to highlight include the rebuilding of the police station in Macedon. Of course this comes on top of a number of new police stations that have been built in the electorate of Macedon since 1999. Specifically, there is the rebuilding of the Gisborne police station which was a very small and old police station. There are also new police stations for Romsey and Lancefield. This new station in Macedon is also warmly welcomed.

The other part of the budget that I would like to highlight is the increased expenditure for non-government schools. Having come from the non-government school sector, I am very pleased to see this government continuing to invest in Catholic and non-government education across the state — for example, we know that Catholic schools provide education to some 20 per cent of Victorian school children. Over the next four years \$151 million in extra funding has been allocated — that is \$115 million to help needy non-government schools to meet particular education targets around literacy, numeracy and retention rates, and \$36 million to fund enrolment growth. As I said, 75 per cent of this funding — or up to \$150 million — will flow to Catholic schools. We will also introduce a new funding model which will ensure that funding is directed to schools with students who are most in need of additional support. For the first time in the history of state funding to non-government schools, we will see funding that will be the subject of a four-year agreement. This will of course provide non-government schools with budget certainty and will allow them to plan ahead.

There is much in this budget to be proud of, without even mentioning the significant funding that has been allocated to promote A Fairer Victoria which delivers a whole bunch of particular actions. As part of A Fairer Victoria \$788 million will be used for 85 actions to create new opportunities for disadvantaged people right across Victoria. Regardless of where you live in the state of Victoria you will benefit from this budget. Victoria is a great place to live and to raise families. This is a government that is delivering great benefits. I commend the budget to the house.

Ms GARBUTT (Minister for Community Services) — I am very pleased to join this debate on the budget. I support the Treasurer's vision of the budget as

providing opportunity and prosperity. In my electorate of Bundoora that can be seen coming through very clearly and reinforcing the growth, development and opportunity that has been there over the past five years. If anything that was symbolised by the opening of Austin Hospital just recently. It is a completely redeveloped hospital and has been combined with the relocated Mercy Hospital for Women, which will remain a public hospital and not a privatised hospital.

My constituents certainly remember the fight they conducted under the previous government to prevent the Austin Hospital being sold off and privatised. It was a hard-fought campaign. People were extraordinarily concerned and worried about that. They were very passionate about making sure that the Austin Hospital remained in public hands. I am very proud that as a government we have delivered that. It was a \$376 million project and was the largest hospital project ever in Victoria's history. We now have a state-of-the-art, modern public hospital in Heidelberg that serves the entire north-east region.

I am also pleased to say that we have provided funding for an additional 64 beds at the Northern Hospital, which also serves part of my electorate. As well as that it will get an expanded emergency clinic and new outpatients clinics. The Plenty Valley Community Health Service, which is also located at that site, will be extended through the provision of improved podiatry, physiotherapy and multipurpose facilities. The budget allocation for that health facility is \$24.5 million. Wherever people look in the Bundoora electorate and wherever they choose to go for their public health services, they will find facilities being improved and expanded, with more proposed.

As well as the new Mercy Hospital for Women complex alongside the Austin Hospital there are plans for refurbishing the existing older parts of the Austin campus for administration and research purposes. The repatriation campus of the Austin Hospital will also be refurbished and redeveloped. That project has been allocated \$15 million. Not only will there be a brand new, magnificent tower building, but further funding will be provided to bring the older facilities up to scratch.

It was my great delight recently to officially open the Pauline Toner centre, which is the name for the relocated Banyule Community Health Service. The service was located on an old and very small site in Greensborough, but it has now relocated to a much bigger location on the former Diamond Valley Community Hospital site. The service bought that site, which has allowed it to expand its services. It is a much

more visible facility and it has enabled the provision of some services that were not available in the past. That site will be developed as a real community hub. Naming the facility after an outstanding woman who served the Greensborough area for many years is a great way of acknowledging her contribution and recognising the role and significance of community health services.

I turn to education and to the promise we made to the people of Bundoora and Victoria that we would improve education services. I am very pleased that Macleod College in my electorate has been granted up to \$550 000 from the Leading Schools Fund for the redevelopment of some existing school space. The school intends to redevelop that space as an open-plan learning area with an emphasis on information and communications technology. It will be fitted out with computers, laptops and other electronic equipment. This will also involve the provision of three extra teachers over three years to improve student learning outcomes. That is great news for the college, which has already had millions of dollars spent on it by this government, having been almost totally upgraded over the last few years. Many other schools around my electorate have received extensions and upgrades, and education is thriving in the Bundoora electorate.

I am also delighted with the announcement that the SmartONE fibre-optic broadband network is being expanded, making broadband facilities available to every school in the state. That is a wonderful outcome that links opportunities in the new technology and innovation economy to every state school student in this state. It will really open up great opportunities for students across the state, certainly in the Bundoora electorate. That builds on our great investment in education, having allocated more than \$4 billion since 1999. We have built 36 new and replacement schools, and we have recruited an extra 5300 teachers and staff for our schools. We have heavily invested in rebuilding and upgrading Victorian schools, and I can see the results around my electorate, with nearly every school benefiting from that program.

As well as health and education my electorate will benefit from the emphasis in this budget on infrastructure, and of course along with that will come jobs. There is a major project under way in my electorate, and that is the Greensborough bypass, which duplicates the bridge over the Plenty River. I am pleased to learn that that is going ahead and will be finished later this year. It is something that has been very much supported in my electorate, and people are looking forward to its completion.

There was also the big news that the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market will be moving to Epping in 2010, and there is a \$300 million allocation in this budget to fund that relocation and redevelopment. Although it is not in my electorate, it will certainly deliver great benefits to the entire north-eastern suburban region, and that includes the suburbs of Bundoora. With that development will come many jobs. The markets are currently home to 2700 registered business users and employ around 7000 people. With those sorts of numbers, the move to the northern suburbs will have an enormous impact on the availability of jobs and economic opportunities in the Bundoora electorate.

I am delighted with the budget. It delivers substantial prosperity and opportunity to the Bundoora electorate and, of course, to the rest of the state. I congratulate the Treasurer on his achievement.

Mr SEITZ (Keilor) — I am proud to get up and support the budget and the Treasurer. This is the first time that the budget has been very well accepted by the local media. In fact the front page of the *Advocate* community newspaper featured local members from the western region whose electorates are benefiting from this budget. The community has accepted the budget and so has the media, now that it has seen the funding that has been allocated to the area.

Some of the pre-budget announcements that were made in conjunction with the City of Brimbank have brought great benefits to the area. In June we had the announcement of the extension of our VicHealth program, which improved safety within the municipality through the running of a program for elderly people.

Also in this budget for my electorate is funding for upgrades of two primary schools, the extension of the bus service in Caroline Springs — we are sharing in the big money for that — and the extension of the Sunshine Hospital in Furlong Road. People are waiting for the federal government's commitment for the extra work there to set up the general medical practice at the Sunshine Hospital, because that is certainly needed. Half a million dollars will also be spent on the Sunshine youth precinct project, which will develop something that is needed for young people in the area. The state government has put in half a million dollars for a new library at Sydenham, which will be erected in partnership with the council. So all round the money provided by the government and matched by the council with the council and the government working in partnership will be of great benefit to the community.

There was the announcement earlier of extra money to assist our schools to pay award rate wages for cleaners. Their being paid award rates was long overdue, and it is welcome. In my area we are just about to complete the last stage of the Taylors Lakes Secondary College expansion, and we are starting on the master plan for the Keilor Downs Secondary College. We are going to have a meeting with the minister and his secretary next week to discuss the progress of that. The funding in last year's budget for a tunnel to go under the railway line at the Taylors Road interchange has been continued in this year's budget. It will eliminate some of the problems there. The state government's share of funding for the Kings Road and Calder Park Drive interchange has also been set aside, but we are waiting on the federal government to give its commitment so that we can start on that project.

This is a good budget for the area, and a number of schools will benefit from it. Our legal aid service has also been allocated extra money. Overall the budget can only be commended. It is particularly good for our region. Keilor is an interface seat in a growth area, and a lot of things are needed. Seeding grants to community groups and local government encourage the development of infrastructure and services that are needed in growth areas, and I welcome the funding. Copperfield Secondary College is also getting extra funding for its school program, and we have funding in the budget for the St Albans Primary School.

All in all I would say this is one the best budgets I have seen during my term in Parliament, particularly for the west, and it will be fantastic for my communities in general. Reducing the land tax will make a difference to a lot of people who have been caught out by being asset rich but cash poor. Many own weekend homes and things like that, and they got caught up in higher land tax payments. That relief will help those people in my electorate. With these few words I commend the budget to the house and wish it a speedy passage.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Consideration in detail

Clause 1

Mr LANGDON (Ivanhoe) — I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr PERTON (Doncaster) — I find this motion by the Government Whip extraordinary. We are moving into the consideration-in-detail stage of the budget, and

it is quite clear that the Treasurer has left the Parliament. We are in the midst of the budget debate. This is his most important legislation. He has left a relatively junior minister at the table, and it would be our expectation that the Treasurer would be here to wind up the budget debate and answer any questions in relation to the budget that arise during the consideration-in-detail stage. For this gutless motion to be moved by the Government Whip is to my mind totally inappropriate. Where is the Treasurer?

Mr Nardella — Where is your leader?

Mr PERTON — It is not my leader's bill, it is the Treasurer's bill. You can hear the anger and bluster from the member for Melton because I think he is embarrassed that the Treasurer is not here to wind up the budget debate and take any questions that Labor, Liberal or Nationals members may have in respect of the consideration-in-detail stage. I am sure the member for Forest Hill in taking her work seriously would have expected that the Treasurer would have been here to finalise the second-reading debate and take any questions that arise during the consideration-in-detail stage.

This is a motion that ought to be opposed. My party will oppose this adjournment motion because the budget debate will conclude at 4 o'clock and it is appropriate that the Treasurer should be here to answer any questions that members may have.

Mr NARDELLA (Melton) — On the motion before the house, we are attempting to adjourn this debate because the member for Mornington requested that the house come back to the Appropriation (Parliament 2005/2006) Bill. The government gave him its word that it would come back to the parliamentary appropriation bill before 4 o'clock today. What we have is a dishevelled opposition; opposition members do not talk to each other. A senior member of the opposition made a genuine request to the government, a request which the government is trying to honour, yet here we have the other side, which has been missing in action for the last five years, now wanting to go into detail on the budget against the wishes and contrary to the request of one of its senior members of Parliament.

The government is trying to make sure that it keeps its word, because that is what it is about. The Bracks Labor government is about keeping its word. It is about making sure that when it gives its word it does everything in its power to uphold it. Yet we have the honourable member for Doncaster, aided and abetted by the honourable member for Box Hill, taking this course of action seeking to go into the

consideration-in-detail stage of this budget discussion. I think that is just silly. They should talk to each other. It must be really hard in the Liberal Party, having a situation where one side of the Liberal Party does not talk to the other side of the Liberal Party, which has obviously happened in this case. There is also the even more ludicrous situation of the Liberal Party not sitting down and talking to The Nationals. We have never before come to that situation in this Parliament.

Mr Perton — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, the motion is that the debate be now adjourned. It is a pretty narrow debate. The member for Melton may fancy himself as a speaker who can range broadly, but I ask you to keep him to the pretty narrow debate we are having.

Mr Merlino — You are pompous, Victor. You are pompous.

Mr Perton — You are mentally deficient, so don't worry about it.

Ms Garbutt — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I ask the member for Doncaster to withdraw that slur about a member of the government.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Lindell) — Order! There is no point of order.

Mr Merlino — On the point of order, Acting Speaker, I ask the member to withdraw that comment.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Lindell) — Order! There is no point of order. The member for Melton continuing his remarks.

Mr NARDELLA — Let us look at the comments made by the honourable member for Doncaster in his contribution to this debate. The Treasurer has presented the budget; he has come into this house to listen to the debate; and he has brought down an excellent budget on behalf of all Victorians, regardless of whether they are in the city, the outer suburbs or in rural and provincial areas. That is in stark contrast to the disunited situation on that side of the house. Even at this late hour we are still trying to maintain a position. We have a request from a very senior member of the opposition, and we are trying to keep to that. It will be very telling, because if somebody from the opposition stands up at 6 minutes to 4 they will be going against the wishes of one of the most senior members of Parliament, if not the most senior, in the member for Mornington.

Mr CLARK (Box Hill) — That is an appalling attempt by the Government Whip and the member for

Melton to gag debate on what should be a significant but limited opportunity to examine the budget in detail. To dismiss very quickly the appalling claim by the member for Melton about the member for Mornington, I can assure the house that I personally have spoken to the member for Mornington, and he is perfectly happy for our side of the house to move to the consideration in detail of the appropriation bill.

This is a limited opportunity to ask questions about the detail of the budget, which is not otherwise available. For the government to attempt to shut down even a brief, 15-minute opportunity for the opposition to raise those sorts of points just shows how scared it is of being open and accountable. The Treasurer has not come in to close the debate. Just as he was not available last night to defend his energy bill, he is not available now to defend his budget. I for one wanted to use even a 15-minute opportunity to consider this bill in detail to ask questions about clauses 7 and 8 of the bill and the associated schedules 2 and 3 of the bill, which relate to payments from advances pursuant to section 35 of the Financial Management Act and payment from advances to the Treasurer, and to call the government to account to explain some of those items in the bill as to what the reasoning and intentions were and what the justification for their urgency was.

I am sure the member for Doncaster was hoping that we would proceed to consider the estimates for the Department of Education and Training and again ask some detailed questions for which there would not otherwise have been an opportunity to obtain a response. It is an absolute disgrace for the Government Whip to move to gag this debate, when he could easily have allowed the consideration-in-detail stage to have continued for the 15 minutes or so through to the closure of the government business program at 4 o'clock. Instead, along with the member for Melton, he has attempted to filibuster and talk out this debate.

Ms GARBUTT (Minister for Community Services) — This is an extraordinarily silly stunt by the opposition. It is nothing more than a political stunt. There was an agreement that we would finish up the debate and move on to the parliamentary appropriation debate. That is what was in place; that was the arrangement we were working to. Now we see this sort of silly political stunt by the opposition trying to change it.

The member for Doncaster gave a very pompous speech about what was happening, but the reality was that the opposition was trying to — —

Mr Clark interjected.

Ms GARBUTT — The member for Box Hill has already given his appropriation speech. Why did he not talk about those issues then? Why did he not ask those questions then? Did he forget about it? Has he just thought about it now? It seems to me that these are things he could well have brought up in his contribution and did not.

Mr Perton — On a point of order, Acting Speaker, this is a pretty narrow debate about whether the debate should be adjourned. For this minister to demonstrate her lack of knowledge of the parliamentary process, a minister who runs away from every opportunity for a consideration-in-detail stage, who runs away from debate, who runs away from debate on the — —

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Lindell) — Order! The member for Doncaster is debating the point of order. The minister, continuing her remarks.

Ms GARBUTT — The member for Doncaster is pompously calling for extra discussion and debate, when the arrangement clearly was that we would move on to a different debate because we understood that the opposition actually wanted that to happen. That was the arrangement that we had come to with goodwill and good intention. We made those arrangements at the request of the opposition. Then we find that they pull this sort of extraordinary move. It probably demonstrates more disarray and confusion within the opposition, or perhaps even undermines one of its own senior members, whose expressed wish to us has just been sidelined while the opposition tries to move on this motion. The member for Box Hill has obviously thought of something else that he should have said, would have said or could have said previously. It is certainly too late for him now. It is fairly silly for us to now try to backtrack arrangements we made with the opposition.

Mr RYAN (Leader of The Nationals) — Acting Speaker, I am in the unenviable position of not having been party to any of these conversations. But suffice it to say there are many unanswered questions which arise from the whole of the budget debate and which occur as a result of the contributions that have been made by all members.

Business interrupted pursuant to standing orders.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Lindell) — Order! The time set down for consideration of items on the government business program has arrived and I am required to put the following question. The question is:

That the debate be now adjourned.

House divided on question:

Ayes, 58

Allan, Ms	Jenkins, Mr
Andrews, Mr	Kosky, Ms
Barker, Ms	Langdon, Mr
Batchelor, Mr	Languiller, Mr
Beard, Ms	Leighton, Mr
Beattie, Ms	Lim, Mr
Bracks, Mr	Lindell, Ms
Brumby, Mr	Lobato, Ms
Buchanan, Ms	Lockwood, Mr
Cameron, Mr	Lupton, Mr
Carli, Mr	McTaggart, Ms
Crutchfield, Mr	Marshall, Ms
D'Ambrosio, Ms	Maxfield, Mr
Delahunty, Ms	Merlino, Mr
Donnellan, Mr	Mildenhall, Mr
Duncan, Ms	Morand, Ms
Eckstein, Ms	Munt, Ms
Garbutt, Ms	Nardella, Mr
Green, Ms	Neville, Ms
Haermeyer, Mr	Overington, Ms
Hardman, Mr	Pandazopoulos, Mr
Harkness, Mr	Perera, Mr
Helper, Mr	Pike, Ms
Herbert, Mr	Robinson, Mr
Holding, Mr	Seitz, Mr
Howard, Mr	Thwaites, Mr
Hudson, Mr	Treize, Mr
Hulls, Mr	Wilson, Mr
Ingram, Mr	Wynne, Mr

Noes, 20

Baillieu, Mr	Maughan, Mr
Clark, Mr	Perton, Mr
Cooper, Mr	Plowman, Mr
Delahunty, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Dixon, Mr	Ryan, Mr
Doyle, Mr	Smith, Mr
Honeywood, Mr	Sykes, Dr
Jasper, Mr	Thompson, Mr
Kotsiras, Mr	Walsh, Mr
McIntosh, Mr	Wells, Mr

Question agreed to.

Debate adjourned until later this day.

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT 2005/06)
BILL**

Second reading

Debate resumed from 25 May; motion of Mr BRACKS (Premier).

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

APPROPRIATION (2005/2006) BILL

Consideration in detail

Debate resumed from earlier this day; further discussion of clause 1.

Clause agreed to; clauses 2 to 8 agreed to; schedules 1 to 3 agreed to.

Bill agreed to without amendment.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

Remaining business postponed on motion of Mr BATCHELOR (Minister for Transport).

ADJOURNMENT

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The question is:

That the house do now adjourn.

Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary: management plan

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Environment in relation to the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary draft management plan, and more specifically I ask if the minister would meet with a deputation. I believe it is imperative for a community outcome to be achieved which recognises the juxtaposition of the sanctuary and coastal reserve and the heavily populated adjacent residential hinterland. The interests of all stakeholders should be respected, comprehended and accommodated, and councillors from the City of Bayside have sought to achieve this outcome. There needs to be an understanding of the following factors:

the processes and compromises which led to the establishment of the current sanctuary;

the volume of sporting and recreational boating activities [in the area];

the evidence submitted in relation to the draft management plan by bird experts;

the context of existing environmental challenges, including the presence and impact of the half dozen or so stormwater outlets;

the importance of community ownership of and responsibility for the sanctuary and coastal reserve area;

the reasonable aspirations of civic-minded long-term residents and responsible dog walkers such as Gai Humphris and Robbie Robertson —

and many others.

It is ludicrous to apply the same management framework across the state without taking into account local variations that are supported across the spectrum by local councillors, international bird experts, members of Parliament and over 1400 petitioners. Based on my present understanding I strongly advocate that off-leash areas be made available to dog owners at certain times, even if this means an amendment to the act, a readjustment of a section of the shoreline boundary of the park or the drafting of new regulations.

The proposed management plan emanating from Parks Victoria shows a lack of understanding of the local area, does not reflect community aspirations and is set to deny local elderly and disabled dog owners and their pets access to an area which has been enjoyed by such people for over 150 years. On Parks Victoria's own assessment, dogs are rated eighth on a list of risks, well below trampling by people, pollution from storm drainage or shore-based litter, and the uninformed and excessive use of the sanctuary by visitors.

I believe it is imperative that a constructive outcome be achieved for all stakeholders in this particular matter so that the marine sanctuary can be owned by the community and the interests of people who have had a long-term, constructive and strategic involvement in the area and who care for the coast, the bird life and the marine life are not jettisoned owing to a short-sighted plan and the overbureaucratisation of a process that has failed to ensure all stakeholders in the area have been fully consulted. I believe that a constructive outcome can be achieved. Numbers of local people such as Gai Humphris and Robbie Robertson have worked extraordinarily hard to bring together all the stakeholders so there can be community ownership of this wonderful stretch of Victoria's coastline.

Sri Lanka: tsunami victims

Mr PERERA (Cranbourne) — I call upon the Premier to take action to inform the Victorian Sri Lankan community of the progress made so far and of future plans to achieve the objectives of the Victorian government's response to the Sri Lankan Boxing Day tsunami victims. The objectives include rebuilding capabilities and facilities in tsunami-affected communities, responding to identified priority needs,

restoring self-sufficiency, building the capacity of and strengthening institutions, creating sustainable outcomes and using Victorian expertise.

I congratulate the Treasurer for making a special visit to Sri Lanka to explore the possibilities of contributing to the rebuilding tasks over there. I understand that during his stay in Sri Lanka he met with the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, the Minister for Finance and Planning, the Minister for Urban Development and Water Supply and members of the task force for rebuilding the nation, non-government organisations and local community groups and that he also signed a memorandum of understanding. I also thank the Premier and the Bracks government for allocating a major part of the \$10 million tsunami victims fund to victims in Sri Lanka.

Kyabram and District Health Services: capital works

Mr MAUGHAN (Rodney) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Health concerning capital works at Kyabram and District Health Services. The Kyabram hospital is a great hospital. I was there last week and met with the chief executive officer and the chairman of the board. Currently they are looking at plans to redevelop their community health section. The Kyabram hospital has a fantastic record of operating profitably over many years and of financing its own developments. The health service has spent about \$10 million, largely from accumulated profits and fundraising in the community, to build the current hospital, of which the government contributed only about 20 per cent. The previous Minister for Health, the current Deputy Premier, acknowledged when he was opening the hospital that the government had been rather tardy in making only a relatively minor contribution to Kyabram.

Now Kyabram is redeveloping its aged care facilities, but it has been unable to get any funding from the government for that. It is now looking to redevelop its community health section, which is currently in premises that are off-campus. There are problems there, because the landlord wants the buildings back for its own purposes. The hospital wants to get people back on site. If it does not do that, and do it fairly quickly, it will run into occupational health and safety problems and is likely to lose staff — and if that happens, the community will lose some of its very important community health services.

So the board has commissioned Vincent, Crisp and Adams to develop a concept plan for the full development, which is expected to cost of the order of

\$5.5 million. The board is looking at staging this development, and it is currently aiming to come up with a workable stage 1 solution that can be achieved for approximately \$1.3 million, which means it might then be able to self-fund that stage. It is looking for a capital contribution from the government, including a fifty-fifty contribution for the stage 1 development, so that it then has the funds to go on with stage 2 and ultimately stage 3.

I conclude by pointing out to the minister that Kyabram hospital has certainly been short changed over the years in terms of capital funding. It has done a great job of looking after itself, and it is now about time that the government put some capital into Kyabram and District Health Services.

Women: domestic violence

Ms MARSHALL (Forest Hill) — I rise this evening to raise a matter with the Minister for Women's Affairs. Violence against women is something that too many Victorian women experience first hand. I call on the minister to make the development of a national plan of action to eliminate violence against women an agenda item at the upcoming commonwealth and state ministers conference on the status of women and to work closely with other state governments to encourage the development of this much-needed national plan. One in three Australian women experiences violence or serious threats of violence. Amnesty International estimates that 1 in 10 Australian women experiences violence in any 12-month period. Domestic violence contributes to more ill health and premature death than any other single cause for women aged from 15 to 44 years.

I congratulate the Bracks government for the steps it has taken so far to stop violence against Victorian women. The five-year women's safety strategy, released in 2002, is an outstanding policy commitment. One initiative stemming from the strategy is the allocation of \$35.1 million over the next four years to develop a new approach to combat family violence. This will eliminate the current fragmentation and inconsistencies across the state and make Victoria an even better place in which to raise a family. However, in order to comprehensively tackle the immense problem of violence against women it is essential that Australia eradicate the current fragmentation and inconsistencies at a national level.

Sadly the federal government is yet to develop a national plan of action to stop violence against women. This failure by the federal government is an ongoing breach of Australia's international obligations. By

signing the United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action the federal government committed to developing a national plan of action to eliminate violence against women. This declaration was signed 10 years ago, and still no plan has been developed.

Unfortunately our local federal Liberal Party members, Philip Barresi and Chris Pearce, have remained silent on this issue, despite the eastern region having one of the state's highest rates of domestic violence. Too many Victorian women continue to be abused. In order to reduce the shocking statistics, the Bracks government must continue to lead the campaign to stop violence against women. By working with other state governments at the upcoming commonwealth and state ministers conference on the status of women to encourage the commonwealth government to develop a national plan of action to eliminate violence against women, it will be possible for all governments to work together to combat national fragmentation and make this country a safer place for all women.

Planning: Kyneton Bowling Club

Mr BAILLIEU (Hawthorn) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Planning concerning the proposed development of the Kyneton Bowling Club and the mechanics institute. This development is proposed in the Shire of Macedon Ranges. I call on the minister to make a statement to the members of the Kyneton community, advising them of the status of this project, whether a revocation of Crown land is necessary for it to proceed and whether the revocation of a Crown land reservation for the purposes of developing a gaming facility is appropriate.

The shire has approved a project which will redevelop the Kyneton Mechanics Institute and the Kyneton Bowling Club. I understand the project is set to include a relocated library and an increase in the size of the bowling club facility, which will include the relocation to the new premises of 25 electronic gaming machines, for which it is currently licensed. The land involved in this current proposal includes Crown land which is reserved under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act. In the case of the bowling club, the land was reserved in 1862 and re-reserved in 1963 as 'a site for public hall, library and public recreation'. The second parcel, where there is currently a playground, was reserved as 'a site for a soldiers memorial and children's playground'.

The shire has requested the removal of the children's playground reservation. The land will then be added to the reserved land occupied by the bowling club. It is my understanding that the minister has not yet responded to this request, and clearly there are those who wish that

response to come as soon as possible. Some locals have expressed their concern that such a revocation would mean that a Crown land reservation would be converted from a children's playground to a gaming facility.

It is also my understanding that there may be already existing gaming facilities that occupy Crown land reservations, but I would be interested to know where those occur. However, I am unaware of reservations that have been revoked or altered to facilitate the development of a gaming facility. In April this year the Premier opened a new problem gaming facility in Kyneton but declined to meet those expressing concern at the prospect of setting aside such a facility. The site shares a boundary with the Kyneton Primary School —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Greensborough bypass: emergency telephone

Mr HERBERT (Eltham) — My request is to the Minister for Transport. I ask that the minister provide a much-needed emergency telephone on the Greensborough bypass as part of the new Plenty River bridge duplication project. The need for an emergency phone on the Greensborough bypass was first raised with me by a constituent, Ms Sheridan Pantalleresco. On two occasions she has stopped to assist elderly people who have been stranded on the bridge at night when their vehicles have broken down. To reach the nearest publicly accessible phone is a 2 to 2½-kilometre walk in either direction along the very dark and busy bypass. The stretch between the bypass bridge and the roundabout at Diamond Creek Road is fairly isolated from residential houses or shops.

I have discussed the issue with Mr Rob Freemantle, the manager of the metropolitan north-west region, with a view to installing an emergency telephone in the vicinity of the new duplicated bridge. Mr Freemantle has advised that whilst it is not usual practice to place emergency phones on roads such as bypasses, the isolation of this site and the difficulty in accessing assistance warrants consideration of an emergency telephone being installed at the location. It is possible to install a solar-powered emergency phone, but Mr Freemantle noted that it is not within the scope of the original Greensborough bypass project, so no funding has been set aside for this purpose.

As the lack of access to an emergency telephone on such a major part of the Western Ring Road network is a huge safety concern, I ask that the scope of works be reviewed with a view to including an emergency

telephone as part of the current Greensborough bypass upgrade.

Snowy River: rehabilitation

Mr INGRAM (Gippsland East) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Environment. The action I seek is for the minister to approve the plan of works for the Snowy River rehabilitation and implement it. The plan of works has been held up for about six months. The catchment management authority (CMA) has done extensive consultation and work. It is quite a lengthy document which draws together all the proposed actions on the lower flood plain and the river. As I said, the community has had an enormous amount of input, and the CMA has consulted with relevant groups, such as farmer organisations, community associations and others.

A range of works is proposed within this plan, including revegetation and fencing, off-stream watering systems, willow control, native fish stocking and rehabilitation, and the reintroduction of large woody debris. This plan of works is an important document, and it is essential that the government ensures that it is approved by the Department of Sustainability and Environment. As I said, the CMA has gone about doing this, but it is impossible to get the funding required to implement some of the strategies that are included in the plan of works until it is approved and launched by the minister. The CMA has attempted through the normal channels to make sure that it is approved, and considering the amount of time the authority has put into it and how important this project is for the local Orbost community and the improvement of the lower flood plain, it is essential that the government take that opportunity.

As members would know, a significant amount of money has been put into the rehabilitation of the lower Snowy flood plain and into providing environmental flows. The works we are talking about will complement the environmental flows in the lower end of the river and improve the environmental health of that section of the river, which is degraded and sanded up and has significant environmental problems. It is a barrier to native fish migration. In the long term these works will replace the current non-indigenous vegetation and eventually improve the riparian vegetation along that lower end of the river.

The action I seek is for the minister and the Department of Sustainability and Environment to approve the plan of works and implement those works and ensure that the money that has been set aside in the budget can be put into that most important work.

Pyrenees: community-building project

Mr HELPER (Ripon) — I wish to raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Victorian Communities. The action I ask of him is that he note the success of the state government and Pyrenees shire's community-building project and facilitate any possible continuation of it. By way of background, I am sure members present will be aware that the state government and local government became partners in a number of community-building projects to facilitate greater community engagement and greater understanding by both local and state government of the dynamics of working with communities to meet their aspirations. The Pyrenees project was one of those partnerships, and it is coming to its end. What I am seeking from the minister is that he consider any possible avenues for the continuation of the project.

For the interest of members present, the Pyrenees shire is a very small shire with a population of 6600 spread across some 20 communities. Members would understand the difficulties of engaging so many communities with such small populations to encourage an integrated sense of belonging and of taking the shire forward.

There has been a great deal of achievement by the pilot project to date in a whole range of areas, such as the community building that has occurred through the celebration of the Tom Quilty Gold Cup at Landsborough. The Moonambel Events Committee was formed, and it has an annual event and has developed some considerable community pride in the Moonambel area. Importantly the project has also led to the development of 12 community action plans in close consultation with the community. Of course the community is very keen to see those action plans put into reality to further build the resilience of the community to exploit opportunities that may come along at various times from various tiers of government to meet the priorities and carry out the projects identified in the action plans so that those already great communities can grow to be even greater.

There is community input into projects such as the Snake Valley Hall, and from time to time the Snake Valley ladies auxiliary puts on some magnificent plays and magnificent functions at Snake Valley, all made possible through the community — —

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Kew Residential Services: site development

Mr McINTOSH (Kew) — I have a matter I wish to raise with the Minister for Community Services. The matter relates to Kew Residential Services and the complete lack of information on what is being proposed in relation to its redevelopment. The action I seek from the minister is to immediately release information about the final development plans and what is in store for each and every resident and their families. Currently the residents and their families are living in limbo. They are trapped by government inaction, and because of the refusal to make a decision they are being shuffled from temporary accommodation to temporary accommodation.

For more than four years the Bracks government has been talking about the redevelopment of Kew Residential Services and fluctuating between different planning proposals, announcements or launches and ignoring the strong community, resident and family concerns about what the future holds. Many families and friends of Kew Residential Services have contacted my office and told me harrowing tales about the constant state of flux. On 12 May I received an email from Ms Louise Godwin, the secretary of the Kew Cottages Parents Association. She wrote:

... the continuing postponement of the announcement of the developer and release of the development plan is creating uncertainty, stress and a deterioration in the lives and wellbeing of the residents here at KRS.

Ms Godwin went on further to say:

... the government must disclose to families the real time frame for the redevelopment, in order to give residents and their families certainty that the delivery of the commitments made as part of the redevelopment (improved housing, higher staff ratios, full-time quality day programs) will not be delayed.

The suggestion by some of the government's barrackers that the recent heritage listing of historic buildings at KRS is the reason for the delay is disingenuous. Heritage is being used as a general-purpose scapegoat by the government. My community was promised a plan in October of last year. At a recent meeting of elected representatives hosted by the Boroondara City Council we were informed by the council that it was expecting plans in March this year. We have learnt to expect delays in government action, which are now predictable, endemic and inevitable. Again I ask the minister to immediately put people out of their misery and announce the final plans the government has for Kew Residential Services — to do otherwise is completely inhumane.

Carrum Bowling Club: funding

Ms LINDELL (Carrum) — I have a matter to raise this evening with the Minister for Sport and Recreation in the other place to do with the Carrum Bowling Club. The action I seek is for him to support a funding application that has been submitted by the Frankston City Council for a synthetic green at the bowling club.

Members may be familiar with the Carrum Bowling Club. It starred in the wonderful movie *Crackerjack*. The president, Ron Rae, and a number of the bowlers of the club featured in *Crackerjack*. The movie makers used the wonderful location down on the coast, where you saw the beautiful view of Port Phillip Bay and the very picturesque Carrum Bowling Club right on the beach at Carrum.

One of the reasons that this synthetic green is very important to the club is because of its very sensitive location right on the sand dune itself. The advantages of the synthetic green will mean that the chemicals that need to be used for the maintenance of the lawn green will not need to be used, and that will certainly improve the environmental outcomes of the surrounds, with no chemicals in the run-off from the watering or maintenance of the green.

The club, its president, Ron Rae, and the committee have worked very hard with the Frankston City Council in developing a master plan for Keast Park, which is the overall location of the Carrum Bowling Club. They have all worked very hard and a fabulous application has been submitted to Sport and Recreation Victoria for funding. I urge the minister to look favourably on this application. There has been a lot of community input into the preparation, with meetings ongoing between the other occupants of Keast Park and the bowling club, the Friends of the Seaford Foreshore Reserve and the council, of course. What has resulted is a fabulous way forward for the entire area. The funding for the synthetic green is a very important part of the overall strategy and management plan for the area.

Responses

Mr HAERMEYER (Minister for Manufacturing and Export) — The member for Sandringham raised a matter for the Minister for Environment, asking him to review the continuing rights of dog-walkers in relation to the Ricketts Point management plan. I will refer that to the minister.

Mr Baillieu interjected.

Mr HAERMEYER — Exactly — don't know how you put that in *Hansard*?

The member for Cranbourne raised a matter for the Premier, asking the Premier to report progress on the rebuilding plan coming out of the government's \$10 million tsunami aid to Sri Lanka. I will pass that on to the Premier.

The member for Rodney referred a matter to the Minister for Health, seeking capital works for Kyabram and District Health Services. I will pass that on to the Minister for Health.

The member for Forest Hill addressed a matter to the Minister for Women's Affairs, asking her to encourage the development of a national plan to complement the Victorian plan in relation to preventing violence against women. I will pass that on to the Minister for Women's Affairs.

The member for Hawthorn raised a matter for the Minister for Planning, asking him to make a statement in relation to the Kyneton community regarding the status of a project to redevelop the Kyneton Mechanics Institute and to relocate the Kyneton Bowling Club, if I have that right?

Mr Baillieu — Including the Kyneton Bowling Club.

Mr HAERMEYER — Including the Kyneton Bowling Club.

The member for Eltham raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Transport, asking him to consider providing an emergency telephone as part of the reconstruction works taking place on the Greensborough bypass near the duplication of the crossing of the Plenty River. I will refer that to the Minister for Transport.

The member for Gippsland East asked the Minister for Environment to approve and implement a plan of works for the Snowy River rehabilitation. I will pass that on to the minister.

The member for Ripon referred a matter to the Minister for Victorian Communities, asking him to note the success of the state government's Pyrenees community-building project. I understand it is a ripping good project, and I will pass that on to the Minister for Victorian Communities.

The member for Kew asked the Minister for Community Services to release information about the

redevelopment plans for Kew Residential Services. I will pass that on to — —

Mr McIntosh — What about the Kew police station?

Mr HAERMEYER — Do not get me going or we will be here all night.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! Only one matter can be raised by the member for Kew.

Mr HAERMEYER — The member for Carrum raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Sport and Recreation in the other place, asking him to support the Frankston City Council's application for funding for a synthetic bowling green at the Carrum Bowling Club. I will make sure that that is passed on to the Minister for Sport and Recreation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER — Order! The house is now adjourned.

House adjourned 4.37 p.m. until Tuesday, 14 June.

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, 24 May 2005

Police and emergency services: Elwood drag racing

434. Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services with reference to drag racing on Ormond Esplanade, Elwood —

- (1) What measures have police taken to reduce this activity.
- (2) How many people have been fined for such activity in 2002, 2003 and 2004.

ANSWER:

I am advised as follows:

With reference to drag racing on Ormond Esplanade, Elwood —

- (1) Victoria Police has employed the following strategies in resolving the issues of speed and other inappropriate driver behaviour in this area:
 - significant increases in Safety Camera Hours are being used to target this area during both day and night time hours; and
 - regular tasking of members, in the way of general patrols and large joint operations are being undertaken, specifically targeting this type of driver behaviour.

Further to these measures, Victoria Police has developed Standing Operational Plans, specific to this area, to provide local members with information on known ‘hot spots’ and specific operational guidance on how to effectively respond to incidents of drag racing and related antisocial behaviours.

In addition, Victoria Police has developed partnerships with the City of Port Phillip, in order to develop traffic management alternatives to enforcement processes. As a result, the following action has been undertaken:

- the installation of concrete barriers, restricting the ability to drive unlawfully;
 - the installation of parking restrictions between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m., restricting the ability of youths to gather after hours;
 - the installation of turning restriction signs;
 - the installation of speed humps along Head Street, restricting the ability of offenders to speed or drive unlawfully;
 - the use of security staff services to close gates at high risk times, ensuring minimal ability for persons to gather.
- (2) As there is no code for ‘drag racing’ relative to penalty notices, a request was made of the Traffic Camera Office to supply data regarding the following offences:
 - fail to have full and proper control of a vehicle;

- disobey no right, no left and no entry signs for the car park area;
- drive a vehicle that is unroadworthy; and
- speeding along Ormond Esplanade, Elwood.

However, due to the complexity in identifying the specific offences, obtaining the information regarding the number of drivers fined for such activity in 2002, 2003 and 2004, would be an onerous imposition on police resources.

Victoria Police have advised that local members have undergone additional training, leading to an increase in the number of vehicles detected for unroadworthy or EPA. type offences.

Victoria Police continues to monitor the situation in this area, and will continue to work with local authorities to target this type of behaviour.

Premier: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(a). Ms ASHER to ask the Premier with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that, with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd, the answers to the questions are as follows:

- (1) Nil
- (2) Not applicable
- (3) Not applicable

Agriculture: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(b). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Agriculture with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

There have been no payments made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd by the Department of Primary Industries, my private office or any agency or statutory body under the administration of the Minister for Agriculture since 26 August 2003.

Corrections: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(h). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Corrections with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

No payment has been made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

Employment and youth affairs: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(k). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Environment: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(l). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No payments have been made by the Department of Sustainability and Environment or my Private Office to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd since 26 August 2003.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental resources.

Aboriginal affairs: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(m). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment for the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Sport and recreation: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(p). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment for the Minister for Sport and Recreation with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The answer for the period 26 August 2003 to the date of the question, 30 November 2004, is nil

Multicultural affairs: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(z). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Multicultural Affairs with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Planning: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(aa). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Planning with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No payments have been made by the Department of Sustainability and Environment or my Private Office to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd since 26 August 2003.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental resources.

Police and emergency services: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(ab). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

No payment has been made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

Water: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(am). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Water with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No payments have been made by the Department of Sustainability and Environment or my Private Office to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd since 26 August 2003.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental resources.

Attorney-General: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

596(e). Ms ASHER to ask the Attorney-General with reference to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No payment has been made to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

Corrections: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

596(h). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Corrections with reference to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

No payment has been made to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

Employment and youth affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

596(k). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs with reference to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.

- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Environment: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

596(l). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment with reference to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Neither the Department of Sustainability and Environment nor my Private Office have engaged Shannon's Way Pty Ltd for any environment portfolio related projects since 28 October 2003.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental resources.

Aboriginal affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

596(m). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment for the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs with reference to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Commonwealth Games: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

596(n). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment for the Minister for Commonwealth Games with reference to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.

- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Sport and recreation: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

596(p). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment for the Minister for Sport and Recreation with reference to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The answer for the period 28 October 2003 to the date of the question, 30 November 2004, is nil.

Multicultural affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

596(z). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Multicultural Affairs with reference to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Planning: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

596(aa). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Planning with reference to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Neither the Department of Sustainability and Environment nor my Private Office have engaged Shannon's Way Pty Ltd for any planning portfolio related projects since 28 October 2003.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental resources.

Premier: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(a). Ms ASHER to ask the Premier with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that, with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd, the answers to the questions are as follows:

- (1) Nil
- (2) Not Applicable
- (3) Not Applicable

Agriculture: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(b). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Agriculture with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

There have been no payments made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by the Department of Primary Industries, my private office or any agency or statutory body under the administration of the Minister for Agriculture since 26 August 2003.

Energy industries and resources: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(c). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Agriculture for the Minister for Energy Industries and Resources with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.

- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

There have been no payments made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by the Department of Primary Industries, my private office or any agency or statutory body under the administration of the Minister for Resources since 26 August 2003.

Employment and youth affairs: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(k). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Environment: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(l). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No payments have been made by the Department of Sustainability and Environment or my Private Office to Social Shift Pty Ltd since 26 August 2003.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental resources.

Water: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(am). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Water with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.

- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No payments have been made by the Department of Sustainability and Environment or my Private Office to Social Shift Pty Ltd since 26 August 2003.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental 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.*

Wednesday, 25 May 2005

Commonwealth Games: Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd

595(n). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment for the Minister for Commonwealth Games with reference to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 26 August 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No payments have been made to Haystac Public Affairs Pty Ltd, except for:

- (1) Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Corporation made a payment of \$8,250 (inc. GST).
- (2) The payment was made on 26 April 2004.
- (3) The project for which the payment was made was preparation of the "Two Years To Go" photo shoot and the Games Mascot media launch.

Agriculture: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd

596(b). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Agriculture with reference to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

There have been no payments made to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd by my private office or any agency or statutory body under the administration of the Minister for Agriculture since 28 October 2003.

However, there have been five payments made to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd by the Department of Primary Industries since 28 October 2003. The details are as follow:

Date	Payment	Project Details
4 March 2004	\$6,985.00	Internal staff workshop, DPI stakeholder engagement program (strategy workshop and follow up meetings)
14 July 2004	\$5,500.00	Internal staff workshop, DPI stakeholder engagement program (development of recommendations for project scope and components)
30 July 2004	\$10,450.00	Development of strategic positioning for the new department, including key message development
30 June 2003	\$770.00	Copies of broadcast quality footage for distribution to the media
31 August 2004	\$189.20	Copies of broadcast quality footage for distribution to the media

Energy industries and resources: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd

596(c). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Agriculture for the Minister for Energy Industries and Resources with reference to Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister’s department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister’s administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

There have been no payments made to Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd by my private office or any agency or statutory body under the administration of the minister for resources since 28 October 2003.

However, there have been five payments made to Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd. by the Department of Primary Industries since 28 October 2003. The details are as follow:

Date	Payment	Project Details
4 March 2004	\$6,985.00	Internal staff workshop, DPI stakeholder engagement program (strategy workshop and follow up meetings)
14 July 2004	\$5,500.00	Internal staff workshop, DPI stakeholder engagement program (development of recommendations for project scope and components)
30 July 2004	\$10,450.00	Development of strategic positioning for the new department, including key message development
30 June 2003	\$770.00	Copies of broadcast quality footage for distribution to the media
31 August 2004	\$189.20	Copies of broadcast quality footage for distribution to the media

Water: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd

596(am). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Water with reference to Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Between 28 October 2003 and 10 December 2004, the Department of Sustainability and Environment made 23 separate payments to Shannon's Way Pty Ltd for costs associated with the "Our Water, Our Future" campaign. The total cost of these payments was \$668,583.23.

No payments were made by my Private Office during this period.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental resources.

Attorney-General: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(e). Ms ASHER to ask the Attorney-General with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No payment has been made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

Corrections: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(h). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Corrections with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

No payment has been made to Social Shift Pty Ltd by my Department or my private office.

To provide details of payments made by agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would be an unreasonable diversion of my department's resources. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a more specific question outlining in which particular agency or statutory body they are interested.

Aboriginal affairs: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(m). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment for the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Commonwealth Games: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(n). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment for the Minister for Commonwealth Games with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Sport and recreation: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(p). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Environment for the Minister for Sport and Recreation with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The answer for the period 26 August 2003 to the date of the question, 30 November 2004, is nil.

Multicultural affairs: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(z). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Multicultural Affairs with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The response is nil.

Planning: Social Shift Pty Ltd

597(aa). Ms ASHER to ask the Minister for Planning with reference to Social Shift Pty Ltd —

- (1) What payments have been made to the company by the Minister's department or private office or any agency or statutory body under the Minister's administration since 28 October 2003.
- (2) On what dates were the payments made.
- (3) Briefly describe the project for which payment was made.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No payments have been made by the Department of Sustainability and Environment or my Private Office to Social Shift Pty Ltd since 26 August 2003.

To obtain details of payments made by all agencies and statutory bodies under my administration would place an unreasonable burden on Departmental resources.

