

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

10 September 2002

(extract from Book 1)

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 and Minister for Health | The Hon. J. W. Thwaites, MP |
| Minister for Education Services and Minister for Youth Affairs | The Hon. M. M. Gould, MLC |
| Minister for Transport and Minister for Major Projects | The Hon. P. Batchelor, MP |
| Minister for Energy and Resources and Minister for Ports | The Hon. C. C. Broad, MLC |
| Minister for State and Regional Development, Treasurer and Minister for Innovation | The Hon. J. M. Brumby, MP |
| Minister for Local Government and Minister for Workcover | The Hon. R. G. Cameron, MP |
| Minister for Senior Victorians and Minister for Consumer Affairs | The Hon. C. M. Campbell, MP |
| Minister for Planning, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Women's Affairs | The Hon. M. E. Delahunty, MP |
| Minister for Environment and Conservation | The Hon. S. M. Garbutt, MP |
| Minister for Police and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrections | The Hon. A. Haermeyer, MP |
| Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs | The Hon. K. G. Hamilton, MP |
| Attorney-General, Minister for Manufacturing Industry and Minister for Racing | The Hon. R. J. Hulls, MP |
| Minister for Education and Training | The Hon. L. J. Kosky, MP |
| Minister for Finance and Minister for Industrial Relations | The Hon. J. J. J. Lenders, MP |
| Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Commonwealth Games | The Hon. J. M. Madden, MLC |
| Minister for Gaming, Minister for Tourism, Minister for Employment and Minister assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs | The Hon. J. Pandazopoulos, MP |
| Minister for Housing, Minister for Community Services and Minister assisting the Premier on Community Building | The Hon. B. J. Pike, MP |
| Minister for Small Business and Minister for Information and Communication Technology | The Hon. M. R. Thomson, MLC |
| Cabinet Secretary | The Hon. Gavin Jennings, MLC |

Legislative Assembly Committees

Privileges Committee — Mr Cooper, Mr Holding, Mr Hulls, Mr Loney, Mr Maclellan, Mr Maughan, Mr Nardella, Mr Plowman and Mr Thwaites.

Standing Orders Committee — Mr Speaker, Ms Barker, Mr Jasper, Mr Langdon, Mr McArthur, Mrs Maddigan and Mr Perton.

Joint Committees

Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee — (*Council*): The Honourables B. C. Boardman and S. M. Nguyen. (*Assembly*): Mr Cooper, Mr Jasper, Mr Lupton, Mr Mildenhall and Mr Wynne.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee — (*Council*): The Honourables R. F. Smith and E. G. Stoney. (*Assembly*): Mr Delahunty, Ms Duncan, Mrs Fyffe, Ms Lindell and Mr Seitz.

Family and Community Development Committee — (*Council*): The Honourables B. N. Atkinson, E. J. Powell and G. D. Romanes. (*Assembly*): Mr Hardman, Mr Lim, Mr Nardella and Mrs Peulich.

House Committee — (*Council*): The Honourables the President (*ex officio*), G. B. Ashman, R. A. Best, J. M. McQuilten, Jenny Mikakos and R. F. Smith. (*Assembly*): Mr Speaker (*ex officio*), Ms Beattie, Mr Kilgour, Ms McCall, Mr Rowe, Mr Savage and Mr Stensholt.

Law Reform Committee — (*Council*): The Honourables R. H. Bowden, D. G. Hadden and P. A. Katsambanis. (*Assembly*): Mr Languiller, Ms McCall, Mr Stensholt and Mr Thompson.

Library Committee — (*Council*): The Honourables the President, E. C. Carbines, M. T. Luckins, E. J. Powell and C. A. Strong. (*Assembly*): Mr Speaker, Ms Duncan, Mr Languiller, Mrs Peulich and Mr Seitz.

Printing Committee — (*Council*): The Honourables the President, Andrea Coote, Kaye Darveniza and E. J. Powell. (*Assembly*): Mr Speaker, Ms Gillett, Mr Nardella and Mr Richardson.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee — (*Council*): The Honourables D. McL. Davis, R. M. Hallam, G. K. Rich-Phillips and T. C. Theophanous. (*Assembly*): Ms Barker, Mr Clark, Ms Davies, Mr Holding, Mr Loney and Mrs Maddigan.

Road Safety Committee — (*Council*): The Honourables Andrew Brideson and E. C. Carbines. (*Assembly*): Mr Kilgour, Mr Langdon, Mr Plowman, Mr Spry and Mr Trezise.

Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee — (*Council*): The Honourables M. A. Birrell, Jenny Mikakos, A. P. Olexander and C. A. Strong. (*Assembly*): Ms Beattie, Mr Carli, Ms Gillett, Mr Maclellan and Mr Robinson.

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

Hansard — Chief Reporter: Ms C. J. Williams

Library — Librarian: Mr B. J. Davidson

Joint Services — Director, Corporate Services: Mr S. N. Aird
Director, Infrastructure Services: Mr G. C. Spurr

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

Speaker: The Hon. ALEX ANDRIANOPOULOS

Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees: Mrs J. M. MADDIGAN

Temporary Chairmen of Committees: Ms Barker, Ms Davies, Mr Jasper, Mr Kilgour, Mr Loney, Mr Lupton, Mr Nardella,
Mrs Peulich, Mr Phillips, Mr Plowman, Mr Richardson, Mr Savage, Mr Seitz

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 (from 20 August 2002)

The Hon. D. V. NAPHTHINE (to 20 August 2002)

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

The Hon. P. N. HONEYWOOD (from 20 August 2002)

The Hon. LOUISE ASHER (to 20 August 2002)

Leader of the Parliamentary National Party:

Mr P. J. RYAN

Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary National Party:

Mr B. E. H. STEGGALL

| Member | District | Party | Member | District | Party |
|--|----------------|-------|---|-----------------|-------|
| Allan, Ms Jacinta Marie | Bendigo East | ALP | Leighton, Mr Michael Andrew | Preston | ALP |
| Allen, Ms Denise Margaret ⁴ | Benalla | ALP | Lenders, Mr John Johannes Joseph | Dandenong North | ALP |
| Andrianopoulos, Mr Alex | Mill Park | ALP | Lim, Mr Hong Muy | Clayton | ALP |
| Asher, Ms Louise | Brighton | LP | Lindell, Ms Jennifer Margaret | Carrum | ALP |
| Ashley, Mr Gordon Wetzel | Bayswater | LP | Loney, Mr Peter James | Geelong North | ALP |
| Baillieu, Mr Edward Norman | Hawthorn | LP | Lupton, Mr Hurtle Reginald, OAM, JP | Knox | LP |
| Barker, Ms Ann Patricia | Oakleigh | ALP | McArthur, Mr Stephen James | Monbulk | LP |
| Batchelor, Mr Peter | Thomastown | ALP | McCall, Ms Andrea Lea | Frankston | LP |
| Beattie, Ms Elizabeth Jean | Tullamarine | ALP | McIntosh, Mr Andrew John | Kew | LP |
| Bracks, Mr Stephen Phillip | Williamstown | ALP | Maclellan, Mr Robert Roy Cameron | Pakenham | LP |
| Brumby, Mr John Mansfield | Broadmeadows | ALP | McNamara, Mr Patrick John ³ | Benalla | NP |
| Burke, Ms Leonie Therese | Prahran | LP | Maddigan, Mrs Judith Marilyn | Essendon | ALP |
| Cameron, Mr Robert Graham | Bendigo West | ALP | Maughan, Mr Noel John | Rodney | NP |
| Campbell, Ms Christine Mary | Pascoe Vale | ALP | Maxfield, Mr Ian John | Narracan | ALP |
| Carli, Mr Carlo | Coburg | ALP | Mildenhall, Mr Bruce Allan | Footscray | ALP |
| Clark, Mr Robert William | Box Hill | LP | Mulder, Mr Terence Wynn | Polwarth | LP |
| Cooper, Mr Robert Fitzgerald | Mornington | LP | Naphthine, Dr Denis Vincent | Portland | LP |
| Davies, Ms Susan Margaret | Gippsland West | Ind | Nardella, Mr Donato Antonio | Melton | ALP |
| Dean, Dr Robert Logan | Berwick | LP | Overington, Ms Karen Marie | Ballarat West | ALP |
| Delahunty, Mr Hugh Francis | Wimmera | NP | Pandazopoulos, Mr John | Dandenong | ALP |
| Delahunty, Ms Mary Elizabeth | Northcote | ALP | Paterson, Mr Alister Irvine | South Barwon | LP |
| Dixon, Mr Martin Francis | Dromana | LP | Perton, Mr Victor John | Doncaster | LP |
| Doyle, Robert Keith Bennett | Malvern | LP | Peulich, Mrs Inga | Bentleigh | LP |
| Duncan, Ms Joanne Therese | Gisborne | ALP | Phillips, Mr Wayne | Eltham | LP |
| Elliott, Mrs Lorraine Clare | Mooroolbark | LP | Pike, Ms Bronwyn Jane | Melbourne | ALP |
| Fyffe, Mrs Christine Ann | Evelyn | LP | Plowman, Mr Antony Fulton | Benambra | LP |
| Garbutt, Ms Sherryl Maree | Bundoora | ALP | Richardson, Mr John Ingles | Forest Hill | LP |
| Gillett, Ms Mary Jane | Werribee | ALP | Robinson, Mr Anthony Gerard Peter | Mitcham | ALP |
| Haermeyer, Mr André | Yan Yean | ALP | Rowe, Mr Gary James | Cranbourne | LP |
| Hamilton, Mr Keith Graeme | Morwell | ALP | Ryan, Mr Peter Julian | Gippsland South | NP |
| Hardman, Mr Benedict Paul | Seymour | ALP | Savage, Mr Russell Irwin | Mildura | Ind |
| Helper, Mr Jochen | Ripon | ALP | Seitz, Mr George | Keilor | ALP |
| Holding, Mr Timothy James | Springvale | ALP | Shardey, Mrs Helen Jean | Caulfield | LP |
| Honeywood, Mr Phillip Neville | Warrandyte | LP | Smith, Mr Ernest Ross | Glen Waverley | LP |
| Howard, Mr Geoffrey Kemp | Ballarat East | ALP | Spry, Mr Garry Howard | Bellarine | LP |
| Hulls, Mr Rob Justin | Niddrie | ALP | Steggall, Mr Barry Edward Hector | Swan Hill | NP |
| Ingram, Mr Craig | Gippsland East | Ind | Stensholt, Mr Robert Einar ² | Burwood | ALP |
| Jasper, Mr Kenneth Stephen | Murray Valley | NP | Thompson, Mr Murray Hamilton | Sandringham | LP |
| Kennett, Mr Jeffrey Gibb ¹ | Burwood | LP | Thwaites, Mr Johnstone William | Albert Park | ALP |
| Kilgour, Mr Donald | Shepparton | NP | Trezise, Mr Ian Douglas | Geelong | ALP |
| Kosky, Ms Lynne Janice | Altona | ALP | Viney, Mr Matthew Shaw | Frankston East | ALP |
| Kotsiras, Mr Nicholas | Bulleen | LP | Vogels, Mr John Adrian | Warrnambool | LP |
| Langdon, Mr Craig Anthony Cuffe | Ivanhoe | ALP | Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur | Wantirna | LP |
| Languiller, Mr Telmo | Sunshine | ALP | Wilson, Mr Ronald Charles | Bennettswood | LP |
| Leigh, Mr Geoffrey Graeme | Mordialloc | LP | Wynne, Mr Richard William | Richmond | ALP |

¹ Resigned 3 November 1999

² Elected 11 December 1999

³ Resigned 12 April 2000

⁴ Elected 13 May 2000

CONTENTS

TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2002

| | |
|--|----|
| SHADOW MINISTRY | 1 |
| CONDOLENCES | |
| <i>John Scrimgeour Lechte</i> | 1 |
| <i>Philip Martin Hudson</i> | 1 |
| <i>Hon. Thomas Leslie Austin</i> | 1 |
| <i>Hon. Ann Mary Henderson</i> | 12 |
| ADJOURNMENT..... | 34 |

Tuesday, 10 September 2002

The SPEAKER (Hon. Alex Andrianopoulos) took the chair at 2.06 p.m. and read the prayer.

SHADOW MINISTRY

Mr DOYLE (Leader of the Opposition) — Since we last met there have been some changes to the Liberal Party, and I will outline those to the house. I have been elected leader of the parliamentary Liberal Party, and the honourable member for Warrandyte has been elected deputy leader.

In other changes in responsibility the honourable member for Box Hill will be the shadow Minister for Finance and the shadow Minister for Gaming; the honourable member for Berwick will be shadow Treasurer and manager of opposition business in the house; and the honourable member for Warrandyte will add multicultural affairs to his existing responsibilities. The honourable member for Kew will be shadow Minister for Industrial Relations; the honourable member for Polwarth, shadow minister for water resources; the honourable member for Portland, shadow minister for rural and regional development; the honourable member for Doncaster, shadow Attorney-General, shadow Minister for Consumer Affairs and shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask government benches to come to order. The Leader of the Opposition is entitled to be heard.

Mr DOYLE — The honourable member for Bennettswood will be the shadow Minister for Health — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER — Order! I have asked government benches to come to order!

Mr DOYLE — What a rabble, fair dinkum!

In the other place the Honourable Andrea Coote will be secretary to the shadow cabinet; the Honourable David Davis, shadow minister for scrutiny of government; the Honourable Philip Davis, shadow Minister for Agriculture and shadow minister for rural Victoria; and the Honourable Bill Forwood, shadow minister for conservation and environment.

CONDOLENCES

John Scrimgeour Lechte

Philip Martin Hudson

The SPEAKER — Order! Pursuant to the practice set down in sessional orders, I wish to advise the house of the death of John Scrimgeour Lechte, a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Oakleigh from 1947 to 1950, and also the death of Philip Martin Hudson, a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Toorak from 1964 to 1967.

I ask all honourable members to rise in their places as a mark of respect to the memories of the deceased.

Honourable members stood in their places.

The SPEAKER — Order! I ask honourable members to take their seats.

I shall convey the messages of sympathy from the house to the relatives of the late John Scrimgeour Lechte and the late Philip Martin Hudson.

Hon. Thomas Leslie Austin

Mr BRACKS (Premier) — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death on 1 June 2002 of the Honourable Thomas Leslie Austin and places on record its acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Hampden from 1972 to 1976 and the electoral district of Ripon from 1976 to 1992, Minister of Public Works and Minister for Property and Services from 1978 to 1980, Minister of Agriculture from 1980 to 1982 and Minister for Forests from 1981 to 1982.

The Honourable Thomas Leslie Austin sadly passed away after a long illness on 1 June 2002. Mr Austin will be remembered for his considerable service to the Western District seat of Ripon and for his contribution to the Victorian Parliament during his 19 years as a member of this house, 5 of which were spent as a minister in several portfolios and 2 as deputy opposition leader.

He will also be remembered for his extraordinary ability to get on with people from all walks of life. As a farmer, an avid sportsman, a champion rabbit skinner, a crack-shot marksman and a political king-maker in some quarters, Tom Austin had a rich and very colourful life.

Tom Austin was born on 24 September 1923 and attended the Geelong Grammar School. In 1941 he

enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy, serving as a landing craft officer on board HMAS *Manoora* and being present for eight assault landings in various theatres of the south-west Pacific during World War II. After the war he returned to the land, working variously as a wool classer for Dalgetys, as a share farmer and then, since 1950, as a farmer and grazier in the district of Darlington.

Mr Austin was a full-time farmer until his election to Parliament in 1972, when the demands of political life meant that he had to employ a manager to work on the farm. He later succeeded former Premier Sir Henry Bolte in the seat of Ripon, once describing himself as a protégé of the former Victorian Premier.

Tom Austin's parliamentary career included being a member of the Osteopathy, Chiropractic and Naturopathy Committee from 1973 to 1975 and of the Public Works Committee from 1976 to 1978 and holding the positions of Minister of Public Works and Minister for Property and Services from 1978 to 1980; Minister of Agriculture from 1980 to 1982; Minister for Forests in 1981 and 1982; and shadow Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing in 1990 and 1991.

In the 1982 election that saw the Labor government elected Mr Austin retained his seat with a swing to the Liberals, which showed the strength of his personal following and that he was well acclaimed at that time. He served as opposition spokesman on agriculture until being elected by his party as deputy leader from 1985 to 1987.

On retirement from Parliament in 1991 Mr Austin said that his greatest satisfaction came from responsibility for building the World Trade Centre and helping the people of his electorate after disastrous bushfires in 1984 and 1997. At the time of his retirement he made the salient point that he was worried that politicians had lost touch with the bush, reflecting his ongoing concern for the interests and concerns of regional and rural Victoria.

After leaving Parliament Mr Austin served as chairman of the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority from 1992 to 2000 and chairman of the Racecourses Licences Board from 1992. He maintained a very active involvement in the Liberal Party branches until his death. On behalf of the government I extend condolences to Tom's family, including his wife, Joy, daughters Deborah, Vicky and Lisa and son Jonathan and their families, as well as his stepchildren Tiffany and Justin and their respective families.

Mr DOYLE (Leader of the Opposition) — I am pleased to second the condolence motion of the Premier for the Honourable Thomas Leslie Austin. Tom Austin was born on 24 September 1923 and died on 1 June 2002. He was the member for Hampden from 1972 to 1976 and the member for Ripon from 1976 to 1992. He was Minister of Public Works from 1978 to 1980, Minister for Property and Services from 1978 to 1980, Minister of Agriculture from 1980 to 1982 and Minister for Forests in 1981 and 1982. He was Deputy Leader of the Opposition from March 1985 until October 1987. He was shadow Minister for Agriculture from 1982 to 1990 and shadow Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing in 1990 and 1991.

Tom was brought up at Darra, near Elaine, where his neighbour was Sir Henry Bolte. He was educated at Geelong Grammar School, where he lived up to the family tradition of being captain of the first XI, as were his father and grandfather before him. He was a classic, all-round sportsman. He excelled at football and tennis, captained the school team and won the school championship. Sport remained Tom's lifelong love and for him it included, as the Premier has mentioned, a unique activity — I am not sure if it qualifies as a sport — at which he was runner-up world champion: rabbit skinning!

At 17 he was too young to join the armed forces, but Tom and his best mate, Johnny Maslin, forged birth certificates. They spent one night in military camp at the Caulfield racecourse. The next day a sergeant major confronted them and sent them back home to their mothers.

Later, in 1941, Tom joined the Royal Australian Navy. He reached the rank of sublieutenant and saw active duty in the south-west Pacific, participating in landing craft operations with HMAS *Manoora*, which landed troops under fire in the attack on Borneo. After discharge from the navy Tom returned to sharefarming and doing general farm work at Darra, which included, as the Premier has said, wool classing.

This was the era of the rabbit plague, and his rabbit-skinning prowess was developed through his regular participation in the Moyston annual rabbit-skinning championships with another person well known to this chamber and the people of Victoria — his friend, Henry Bolte.

In 1947 he set up a branch of the Liberal Party in Meredith. Tom took the position of secretary and the more senior Henry Bolte was president. In 1947 they both stood for seats in Parliament. Henry won his seat

of Hampden, but Tom missed out on winning the neighbouring seat of Grant by 700 votes.

Tom married Judith Staughton on 27 October 1948, and they took a soldier settlement block near Darlington in 1950. Over many years, and with the support of Judy and his four children, Deborah, Vicky, Lisa and Jonathan, he turned Merida into a strong and profitable operation with his high-quality fine wool, sheep and lambs. These family and farming commitments kept him from public life for many years.

During his time as a farmer Tom continued his love of sport. He captained the local Derrinallum cricket club as well as regularly playing tennis and golf. Tom's other sporting love was duck hunting. For 47 years he hunted with varied success. He was in East Gippsland duck hunting with his friend Stewart McArthur, MP, only 10 days before he passed away.

In 1972, with the retirement of his great friend Sir Henry Bolte, he took the opportunity of entering public life, winning the seat of Hampden. In his inaugural speech in 1972 he outlined two issues of direct relevance to farmers today — the problems faced by the loss of population in small country towns and the farmers' need for certainty from the government when faced by drought.

In 1976 Tom faced a battle for a new seat. Never deterred, he fought hard for preselection for the nominally Labor Party seat of Ripon. His old friend Sir Henry Bolte warned that Labor would win Ripon in a canter. Tom worked hard, won the seat and held it for the next 16 years. He never took his election for granted, and he never took his constituents for granted. Tom's daughter Deborah has said that even at Sunday night family dinners he was on call to his constituents — and they did telephone him at home on Sunday evenings. Tom simply said, 'I'm available every day, 24 hours a day'.

Tom brought a farmer's work ethic and dedication to his role in public life. He was promoted by Premier Hamer to the positions of Minister of Public Works and Minister for Property and Services in 1978. Soon after, in 1980, he was again promoted to the position of Minister for Agriculture, and in 1981 responsibility for forests was added to his workload. Tom's affinity with rural people stood him in good stead in these roles. His foresight in the agriculture ministry laid the foundations that both sides of politics have built upon for both the export and domestic success of Victoria's agricultural industries 20 years later.

In 1982, with the victory of the Labor Party, Tom took on the role of elder statesman in the opposition. Despite being mentioned in the *Age* as a possible successor to Premier Hamer in late 1980, Tom knew that the Liberal Party needed a change of atmosphere and attitude following the election loss. In 1985 Tom's election as deputy leader underlined the respect the party had for his political judgment and work ethic. He helped create the climate of opinion that saw Jeff Kennett elected leader of the party. I'll say no more than that!

In 1991 Tom's political abilities and the respect the party's members had for his judgment played a central and crucial role in the re-election of Jeff Kennett to the leadership — and I'll say no more about that!

Tom was always a Liberal Party man. On 13 March 1985 he told the Ballarat *Courier*:

I know the Liberal Party is the party that truly represents both the rural and city interests ... I think that's healthy, whereas the Labor Party is obviously geared to city interests and the National Party completely to country interests.

In the same article he again illustrated his thorough understanding of the issues facing Victorian farmers when he outlined some of the changes he would like to see in the Department of Agriculture in the mid-1980s:

A revamping and shifting of resources in the Department of Agriculture which would assist and improve the overall performance of the department. The reverse is happening at the moment because they're downgrading agriculture and removing a lot of highly qualified people, particularly in the area of animal health.

Tom said this in 1985, and these concerns echo the concerns of many of Victoria's farmers today.

Following Tom's retirement from politics in 1991 he continued to play an active role in public life. He also came to live in Melbourne with his second wife, Joy. As chairman of the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority from 1992 to 2000 he oversaw changes that have seen our dairy industry become a world leader. As chairman of the Racecourses Licences Board he was trusted by all involved in the industry and played a key role in the Victorian racing industry becoming the strongest in the nation. He continued his love affair with cricket, serving as a Melbourne Cricket Ground trustee from 1992 to 1995.

His unique understanding and wise counsel on agricultural issues saw him made a life councillor of the Royal Agricultural Society and a life member of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. His lifelong passion for hunting saw him proudly hold the position of chairman of the hunting advisory committee from 1998 until he died.

Tom lived life to the full. He contributed to the Victorian community both in his public role as a minister and member of Parliament as well as in a less public community-building role through his sporting and voluntary activities. Tom embodied all those virtues that make our community strong. I can do no better than to conclude with the words of one of his old friends, Stewart McArthur, in saying that with the loss of Tom Austin Victoria has lost one of its favourite sons.

Mr RYAN (Leader of the National Party) — Together with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition and on behalf of the National Party I pay tribute to the late Tom Austin, who died aged 78 years on 1 June this year.

Tom was a man of many facets. He had the time of his life in the navy. He was a wool classer and a grazier and had a role as the chair of the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority for a period of about eight years from 1992. He was a Melbourne Cricket Ground trustee. He had various ministerial roles during a period of five years in the ministry as a component of the 19 years that he served as a member of Parliament.

The eulogies delivered on the occasion of his funeral were testimony to the many parts of this wonderful man. First and foremost he had a great love of his family, and on the day of his funeral his family members spoke eloquently of the involvement that he had with his wife and children and the enormous importance which he placed upon his associations with them.

In the course of his time with the Royal Australian Navy, he served his time in distinguished fashion. Like so many who ultimately came to the Parliament he had a background in the armed services. He had a great love for his nation, and he lived that out as a serving member of the navy. He had various other not-so-well-known attributes. On the day of his funeral we were told that he was a singer of absolutely no repute at all! He was a rabbit skinner of much fame in the district and, as the Leader of the Opposition indicated, one of his great disappointments in life was that he was the runner-up in that otherwise not so renowned competition on more than one occasion.

Tom Austin was a great raconteur. He was a sportsman of much repute, and again in that regard his record stands scrutiny in any company. In politics he served well within this chamber, but he also did much within the Liberal Party in terms of issues to do with its leadership over the years both in an administrative role and also within the political party. Indeed on the day of

the funeral Mr Stewart McArthur told the wonderful story of his election to high office in the administration of the Liberal Party when Tom Austin took over his election campaign and gave the strict instruction to Mr McArthur to say absolutely nothing and leave the rest to him — and Mr McArthur was duly elected.

Tom had a great empathy for people. He identified with people from all walks of life. He could have a conversation with anybody about any topic and he did it all so easily because it came so naturally to him.

In his maiden speech in October 1972 he talked about issues which illustrated that in some senses there are changes and on the other hand some things never change. He talked about his concerns about distribution of population, particularly in the context of country Victoria and the importance of being able to ensure that country Victorians had the dignity of employment — that jobs were available for them and their families.

He talked about decentralisation, particularly in the context of small towns, and the fact that they would need support of various types if they were to survive. He also spoke about the difficult seasonal conditions of that year and of the necessity for the government of the day of whatever political persuasion to make sure that country communities were supported in those difficult times when the seasonal conditions turned against them. He also spoke about the extraordinary resilience of country people, and in a sense Tom Austin was the absolute representation of that concept.

One of the areas where I came to know him pretty well was during what became colloquially known as the annual politicians shoot. I hasten to add it is not as it might seem at first blush. Rather the Victorian Field and Game Association annually hosts a forum in the city of Sale in Gippsland, where I live and where a number of those of all political persuasions come together with the field and game association to participate in an annual duck shoot at Dutson Downs, which is famous for perhaps other reasons at present. Hopefully those other reasons will come to pass with the passage of time.

Be that as it may, one of the features of Dutson Downs is that waters discharged from the swamps that occupy that area are derived from the offshore oil operations. In those waters there are what are called NORMS, which stands for 'normally occurring radioactive materials'. I absolutely emphasise that the quantity of this product is utterly minimal, so minimal as to be insignificant, but one of the features said to attract this annual shoot of these ducks on this pond is that they are luminous at night, which of course is a complete fabrication.

However, Tom used to speak about these and other issues when he came to Sale each year, and on the Friday night before the shoot took place we would gather at a local restaurant and the usual sorts of stories would be exchanged during this evening. He was an unflinching and great supporter of this annual event and a marvellous participant in it.

As has already been remarked and as was said on the day of his funeral, it was only about a week or 10 days prior to his death that Tom was in Sale to attend this annual forum. Stewart McArthur was later to say that over that weekend he, Stewart McArthur, shot no ducks, and Tom Austin shot seven. Some of the field and game representatives who were out there over those couple of days with Tom talked about his extraordinary resilience at a time when the weather was cold; he was obviously ill but nevertheless he persisted in the pursuit of one of the sports that he loved so much.

On behalf of the National Party I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in paying my condolences to the family of Tom Austin, a man who can truly be said to have been a great man in the whole of the Victorian political spectrum.

Mr HAMILTON (Minister for Agriculture) — I join with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party in paying my respects to Tom Austin and to recognise his service to this Parliament and indeed to the state of Victoria.

Perhaps the best way I can describe Tom Austin is as a true gentleman and a decent bloke. In my contacts with Tom from 1988 when I was first elected to this Parliament until the time of his death I found those descriptions to be most apt.

I am fortunate to have Tom Austin's handwritten curriculum vitae in front of me from when Tom was applying for a position he had been recommended for within the department. Indeed, the inevitable style of Tom Austin is recognised very much in this CV if we note that apart from his personal particulars he listed under 'Education and other skills', 'Leaving' in 1940, and 'wool classer' in 1946. Those two things are obviously stated with a great deal of pride — and deserved pride.

Tom Austin was a member of Parliament from 1972 until 1992, cabinet minister for five years, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, chairman of the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority (VDIA) from 1992 to 2000, chairman of the Racecourses Licences Board from 1992 to 1999, and served on the Dairy Food Safety

Authority. He performed in all of those positions with great distinction and care.

I had a lot to do with Tom when I was first elected as Minister for Agriculture. I want to recognise publicly the very wise counsel that he gave me in many private meetings.

Honourable members will recall that at that time the deregulation of the dairy industry was proceeding and Tom was chair of the VDIA. It was always a great pleasure to meet with Tom as chair of that board, and in many cases one on one. I certainly respected the confidences that were exchanged between us in endeavouring to get the best outcome for the dairy industry, and indeed it was that respect of confidences between two people, an ex-Minister for Agriculture and a very new Minister for Agriculture, that led me to a very great admiration of the late Tom Austin.

I guess the only bit that gave me any concern was when Tom and I were discussing what might be the eventual outcome from the sale of the brands and he was wisely suggesting to me that if we got somewhere between \$15 million and \$20 million we would have done particularly well. Either Tom was a great actor or he was as surprised as I was when something over \$62 million was the eventual price achieved. It was a great outcome not just for the dairy industry but for the work that Tom had done as chair of the VDIA, the negotiations he had gone through and the many challenges he dealt with.

I certainly appreciated his efforts to get all of the parties around the table and come to a sensible conclusion. Tom's great strength was his ability to get people around the table and come to a successful conclusion. There is no doubt in my mind that he had a great love for country Victoria, and during our many conversations he was able to impart to me some great advice on what should happen and in which direction. Tom was a very great supporter of the return of resources into agricultural research and development because he realised more than many the importance of science in leading the way for the future of agricultural industry.

I also want to make note of and publicly acknowledge the conversations Tom had with me, both of us being members for country electorates and both having a history of growing up in the country — although I reckon my technique for skinning a rabbit is far better than the technique Tom described to me. We did not ever get the chance to have a go at that, but I have skinned a few rabbits in my day, and no doubt may skin a few more!

As other speakers have noted, Tom had a great interest in hunting, but he also had a great respect for wildlife. Very few people have the distinction of being both a member of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and a member of a field and game association. I appreciated Tom's advice as chair of the hunting advisory committee. He would often come to me and say, 'Look, these are the issues as I see them', and what is more he would say, 'You know, you do not have to take my advice, but here it is. I think it would be useful if you asked the government to proceed in this particular direction or that particular direction'.

It is significant that even though we were on opposite sides of politics there was that willingness to say the end result really has to be in the interests of Victorians and not in the interests of one party or another. That respect for cross-party discussion and agreement is something I admire, and I certainly admired it greatly in the late Tom Austin. I very sincerely pay my condolences to Tom's family and friends, who will miss him, because he was a great character.

Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte) — Possibly because of the competitive nature of our profession as politicians we often pride ourselves on our ability to stand on our own two feet and not to seek support and wise counsel from our colleagues of long standing and experience.

While mentoring has come into its own in other walks of life, that does not seem to apply so much in our profession. I recall that when I was elected in 1988 two lower house elder statesmen gave me often unsolicited advice and support as a young member of Parliament — the first was Tom Austin and the other was Nipper Trezise. Ironically I did not know either of them at the time, but they certainly got to know me and assisted me.

Tom had a very gruff and down-to-earth manner and a way of taking you under his wing and giving you sound advice about life. Equally Nipper took me aside on many occasions and gave a blow-by-blow critique of my speeches, which at the time I was not entirely happy with, but I came to realise that it was done in the best spirit of an elder statesman assisting a younger bloke. The term 'two of nature's gentlemen' was made to order to describe Tom and Nipper. Theirs was a different generation. Perhaps they had a greater spirit of support for their colleagues or comrades because of wartime experiences; I am not certain.

During Tom's life he was not only a mentor to some younger members of Parliament but also an incredibly steadfast and loyal friend. He was one of the founders

of our party, and I recall him telling me that on many occasions he and the late Sir Henry Bolte would go off setting rabbit traps at night only to then front up to the local pub for the Meredith branch meetings where Tom would take the minutes. It was that incredible ability to relate to everyday life that made Tom such a natural when he eventually got elected to Parliament.

I recall Jeff Kennett saying that on every occasion he encountered a leadership challenge — which was usually when he was away on holidays on the Great Barrier Reef — Tom would be waiting steadfast and true at the airport gate when Jeff and Felicity exited the plane, and he would be the one to tell Jeff exactly how the numbers were and what to do about it. Tom was an incredibly reliable colleague of Jeff's and an incredible mentor for him as well.

Tom was well known at his favourite luncheon place not far from this Parliament for his seat of note alongside Malcolm Fraser. A number of members of the club where Tom lunched regularly found it difficult to reconcile Malcolm Fraser's philosophy as former Prime Minister with his latter-day ideas and views of the world, but Tom remained true. I can well recall sitting alongside Tom at last year's Royal Agricultural Society lunch and Tom telling me that Malcolm had only two friends left at that establishment, that he was one of them but that he had given up on knowing why that was so. As I said, Tom was incredibly loyal.

The last time I had occasion to have a long chat with Tom was at Tom Reynolds's annual Christmas drinks. Tom Austin — with stains all over whichever of his incredible cricket club or football club ties he was wearing, which were so evocative of the 1950s and which only his generation can and do wear — took me aside and, again in his own gruff manner, gave me sound and sage advice about the future of our party, about his involvement with it and about life in general. For that I owe Tom Austin a great personal debt. He was indeed one of nature's gentlemen. Vale, Tom Austin, mentor and friend.

Mr HELPER (Ripon) — It is with a sense of honour that I join the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the National Party, the Minister for Agriculture and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in paying my tribute to Tom Austin.

I am privileged to serve in this house as a successor to Tom Austin in the seat of Ripon, where Tom's memory is held in very high regard and where there is an enormous amount of respect for him in the community. What all previous speakers have highlighted is Tom's quality of being a real live person who engaged with

the community on a one-to-one basis, and it is that quality that is at the root of the respect with which he is still regarded in that community.

Although he was from a different political party, it is clear that Tom's shoes will be very difficult to fill. The expectation of having a local member who is accessible 24 hours a day is alive and well in the electorate of Ripon, and I am sure that is based on the precedent and the record set in place by Tom.

I differ a little from the Leader of the National Party, who questioned whether rabbit skinning should be considered a sport. I am sure Tom would have joined me in advocating that it be an Olympic sport and that Moyston, a community in the Ripon electorate, be considered the home of not only Australian Rules football, but rabbit skinning as well!

The service that Tom provided to the Ripon community and the people of Victoria during his long and distinguished term in this Parliament is something that all sides of this chamber can look up to and take as an example. He was a consummate politician; and as I said, although he was from another side of this chamber it is clear from the reflections of those who have preceded me that he was someone who played politics hard but in a fair and reasonable way. I think that is something we should also strive to do.

Without the slightest fear of contradiction I join the preceding speakers in passing on my sincere condolences and the warmest sentiments of the Ripon electorate to the family of the late Tom Austin.

Dr NAPHTHINE (Portland) — It was my honour and privilege to know and work with Tom Austin in several capacities. As somebody who grew up and lived all my life there, I can say that Tom was an institution in Western Victoria as a very successful farmer, as a famous and competitive sportsman, as a politician and as a Liberal powerbroker, right from the early days when he ran the Meredith branch with his friend Sir Henry Bolte.

I also knew Tom during his term as Minister for Agriculture, when as a government veterinarian I served under him. He was widely respected by the farming community during his term as minister, and he was equally respected and loved by the departmental staff. That is because both the farming community and his departmental staff knew that Tom understood country Victoria, that he had a practical knowledge of farming and agricultural issues and that he was prepared to listen to and act on the advice given to him. He had a big picture vision of where agriculture was

and where it was going. As other speakers have said, he understood the opportunities in value adding to agriculture and in growing jobs in regional and rural Victoria, which he saw as one of his roles as minister.

I then had the privilege of being his parliamentary colleague between 1988 and 1992. Tom Austin was very much an elder statesman within the Liberal Party at that time. His experience and wise, timely advice were important to many new members of Parliament on both sides of the house. Tom was ready with advice, and it was always sound. On a number of occasions when as a new member of Parliament you were being attacked by the Labor government at the time and you were getting hot under the collar and felt like jumping to your feet and taking points of order, Tom would tell you it was a sign of respect when the opposite side was attacking you because it meant you were getting under their skin. So when the Minister for Agriculture at the time, Mr Rowe, was having a go at Denis Naphthine, the Liberal member for Portland, it generally meant that Denis Naphthine was scoring some points! Tom's advice was very good.

The other thing that Tom was famous for between 1988 and 1992 — those of us who were here at the time would remember — was that he and Joy seemed to have a permanent booking in the dining room. It seemed to be a table for 2 that expanded to seat 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 or 20. As the evening wore on everybody congregated around Tom Austin's table. Many sound decisions were made and much great advice was given, and Tom certainly acted as a leader of the Liberal Party, and indeed of the house at the time.

While we all have great stories about him — he certainly was a person of great stories and a great character — one of the things that characterised Tom Austin that we sometimes forget is that Tom was also a hard worker, very competitive and a great achiever. He was great company and certainly enjoyed life, but he put a lot back into the community in which he lived and in which he was proud to live. Indeed, at a very early age he showed that he was competitive and was an achiever. He won a scholarship to Geelong Grammar School at the age of 13 years at a time when the family that he was a member of was suffering some financial difficulties coming through the Depression in the late 1920s and 1930s. Tom won a scholarship to Geelong Grammar and made the most of the opportunity.

He excelled at sport. People who play sport know that you do not excel at sport just on talent alone; you excel because you work hard, show commitment and are very competitive. Tom excelled at cricket, tennis, golf, shooting and fishing.

He was a very successful farmer, but he was not handed that successful farming legacy. He was provided with a soldier settlement block in 1950. Those who know western Victoria will realise that a soldier settlement block at Darlington was not a luxurious property to inherit or get. It was renowned for stones, it was rough country and you generally had an ordinary house on a big paddock. Tom worked hard to build that block into a very successful property. He was involved in many activities in farming — a whole range of different activities — but the thing he was most proud of was his fine wool Merino flock, which was certainly something to be very proud of.

Again speaking as a politician I know that many people see a politician who is a representative of the Liberal Party in western Victoria as having something of a comfortable existence. That was hardly the case with Tom Austin. When he took over from Sir Henry Bolte in the seat of Hampden it was hard enough for him to win the preselection and election even in that seat. After only four years Hampden was abolished in the redistribution — some of us know about our seats being abolished and redistributed — and Tom Austin took on the seat of Ripon — as the Leader of the Opposition said, a seat that Sir Henry Bolte told him he ‘didn’t have a snowflake’s chance in hell’ of winning, a seat that included significant Labor territory. But Tom Austin won it through hard work and absolutely fantastic electioneering such as doorknocking. There was not a pub in that electorate that did not know Tom Austin and where Tom was not a regular on a Thursday or Friday night. He went to many sporting events and certainly was very involved in the electorate.

People have spoken about his involvement with the Moyston world rabbit-skinning championships on Boxing Day each year. Indeed Tom was runner-up on several occasions. In fact some people said that he was runner-up more for diplomatic reasons, that as the local member it would be inappropriate to win and that you actually won more votes by participating than by winning. There were other people who protested about Tom Austin being allowed to enter a rabbit-skinning competition, given his long family history with rabbits. For those who do not know, the Austin family, Tom’s forebears, introduced rabbits to Australia on the *Lightning*, releasing them at Barwon Park, so the Austin family has a long history of involvement with rabbits.

It is to Tom’s credit that in the seat of Ripon he increased his majority at each and every election, and he certainly worked very hard as a very active local member. He made a positive contribution locally, and other honourable members have spoken about his

ministerial contributions, which have been outstanding, and his contribution to the Liberal Party.

Two things sum up Tom Austin, and the Leader of the Opposition referred to one of them. When Tom left school he was too young to join the army but he forged the date on his birth certificate and went to join the army because he saw that as his duty. When he was thrown out after 24 hours, he immediately went and joined the Royal Australian Navy, which accepted people at a younger age, because he saw that that was his community duty and his duty to his fellow citizens.

I think that says a lot about Tom Austin. His history goes through service to his local school community and his local community generally and, even after politics, an ongoing and positive contribution to the dairy industry, the racing industry and many other aspects of Victorian life. Tom loved life. He certainly lived it to the full and along the way he made an enormous number of friends and made a great and positive contribution to Victoria.

I pass on my sympathies to his children, Deborah, Vicky, Lisa and Jo, and their families and to his first wife, Judith, and his second wife, Joy.

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — I would like to contribute very briefly to this condolence motion for Tom Austin, one of the great characters of Victorian politics, one of the great characters of Victoria, and an all-round great bloke. He had many interests in the sporting field, in the political field and, as has already been commented on, in areas as diverse as rabbit skinning and duck shooting. Indeed, he was duck shooting 10 days prior to his death from cancer.

Tom could converse with anybody, be it a farmer in Meredith or a business leader in Melbourne. He had a natural ease with people and was most unpretentious. He always had content in what he said and was an outstanding communicator in all walks of life, both in the country and in the city.

His political achievements in his own career are many. He followed Sir Henry Bolte as the member for Hampden from 1972 and, as has already been commented on, became the member for Ripon through a very strong doorknocking campaign in some very tough Labor territory. I understand there is one booth that goes by the apt name of Paradise, where 80 votes were cast and where Tom Austin got all 80, which I have to say makes booths in Brighton and Toorak look pretty ordinary by way of comparison!

From 1978 to 1980 he was the Minister of Public Works and Minister for Property and Services, from

1980 to 1982 he was the Minister for Agriculture, and from 1981 to 1982 also the Minister for Forests. In opposition he was Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party from 1985 to 1987, and I have to say I think he was the perfect deputy. He was loyal, he gave sage advice and any points of difference between leader and deputy were unknown to the rest of the party. He was an absolutely outstanding deputy and I must say he often sought to advise me on the rigours of being deputy, particularly after the last race and over a few glasses of scotch. I appreciated that advice very much indeed. One of his great achievements was, of course, in conjunction with Rob Knowles, the reinstatement of Jeff Kennett as leader of the party in the run-up to the 1992 election victory for the Liberal Party.

He was very much an elder statesman of the Liberal Party. He retired from politics — in the parliamentary sense, that is — in 1992 and took on two chairmanships, roles that he fulfilled with great distinction: the chairmanships of the Racecourses Licences Board and the Victorian Dairy Industry Authority. He had very finely tuned political instincts in both the city and the country. He knew what people were thinking and the way the Liberal Party should tailor itself to pick up on that thinking.

There was no pretence at all about Tom Austin: no airs, no graces, no arrogance. He was one of the most down-to-earth people I have ever met, and I admired him for that. I enjoyed his company and I admired his political judgment, but most of all I respected and still respect to this day his political achievements.

I would like to pass on to Tom's family, especially to his wife Joy, my condolences.

Mr McARTHUR (Monbulk) — I would like to join with other honourable members in expressing my condolences on the death of Tom Austin.

Tom was a good friend to many people and certainly a significant contributor to Victoria over a very long period of time. I will not go through the details; they have all been canvassed very well by other speakers before me. I would like to talk a little bit about Tom Austin the man I knew, and knew quite well over the last 10 or 15 years or so.

A couple of stories about Tom might be illuminating. I first met Tom Austin in — surprise, surprise! — a pub in Hopetoun. It was in the course of a parliamentary visit organised by the former member for Mildura to look at an issue about Mallee public lands. At the time the Labor government of the day, under the leadership of John Cain and with urging along from Joan Kirner,

was madly trying to gather a few green votes in Melbourne electorates by running a national parks campaign in the Mallee.

The then member for Mildura organised a tour by parliamentary members of the Liberal Party to have a look through that country. We met the first night at the pub in Hopetoun, as I said. I got to meet Tom and talk about a few things. He said, 'Son, don't waste your time talking to me. You've already got my support. Go and talk to some of those city Libs. They're the ones that need education'. He was right. They were the ones that needed a bit of information and needed to see how things were from the bush perspective. That is still the case. Some things do not change a hell of a lot.

I suppose my friendship with Tom Austin developed from then. He was always a person very interested in what other people were doing and in their perspective on life, and he was very generous with his time. He was always willing to give advice, and it was generally very wise advice as well.

I remember — in 1991, I think it was — being at the annual general meeting of the Ripon electorate council. Again I think it was held in a pub in Avoca. We had a private room somewhere at the back of the pub for those electorate AGMs. This was to be Tom Austin's farewell AGM — it was a swan song for Tom. Of course there were lots of speeches about Tom the man and Tom's contributions to the electorate and to the Liberal Party. They went on a bit. Tom listened patiently. Eventually when it had all concluded and we were standing around having a chat towards the end of the evening, people said, 'Where's Tom?'. We looked around the room and Tom was nowhere to be seen. I took a bit of a wander around the pub and there in the front bar was Tom Austin with a couple of locals. He was having a good yak with them on a couple of issues they had asked for his help on, or something like that. I asked him afterwards, 'Tom, why did you leave the dinner? Why did you head out there to the bar?'. He said, 'Son, you've always got to remember where your votes come from', and he said, 'They're a couple of good local guys. One of them hands out how-to-vote cards for the ALP, but he votes for me'.

Tom was renowned for his capacity to change people's votes, and that example is a good illustration of that. He had the capacity to get people to vote in a way they would not naturally or normally vote. He became a very successful local member for Ripon, and held the seat against the predictions of Henry Bolte and the pundits for many years — and he built on his majority all the time. He also used that capacity internally a few times, I believe — again very successfully.

I suppose that had a lot to do with his quiet, calm, reassuring manner, and his ability to talk to people at all levels. It did not matter whether you were on the boards in the woolshed, working in a slaughterhouse, or in the committee room of the Victoria Racing Club — Tom Austin was relaxed around you and he was a person who was good to talk to.

His capacity as a sportsman has been mentioned a couple of times. As a sportsman, Tom was a very combative and fierce competitor — he never gave up and he never gave in. He never allowed somebody to win if he thought he could prevent it — and I presume sometimes to his detriment.

I remember a story after he had left Parliament in 1992 when he was working for a consulting firm during the privatisation of the electricity industry. Tom was working for a firm that was, I think, looking to represent some of the American companies bidding for some of the power industry segments. Some of the representatives of one of those companies expressed a wish to play golf at the Royal Melbourne golf course, which is well known, even in Texas, so Tom was appointed to squire them around Royal Melbourne, show them the sights and make sure they enjoyed their day of golf — the aim, of course, being to secure the account.

Everything went pretty well. They had a very successful day at golf, and the wise and judicious thing for a man as good at golf as Tom Austin was would have been to make sure the Americans won by a couple of strokes or by a hole — given that it was match play, it did not really matter. But competition and pragmatism sometimes do not meet well, and Tom was not going to give up for anybody. So the Americans went home having seen the full sights of the Royal Melbourne golf course, but sadly having been well beaten on the course.

The other thing about Tom was that he was a very fierce competitor in election campaigning. I remember him telling me a yarn one time about an early election meeting. I am not sure exactly where this was; I presume it was around Meredith somewhere. He said it was a little hall somewhere on a cold, wet, windy night. Tom turned up for the meeting — this was back in the days when he went to all these barnstorming meetings and people heckled and interjected — and it was fairly chilly. It was about minus 5 degrees, I suppose, the wind was blowing a gale from the south-west and the rain was pelting in horizontally.

Tom turned up and only one car was there. He thought, 'Well, this won't take long'. So he wandered in, getting

pretty wet in the process, and there was one old bloke at the back of the hall, rugged up in his overcoat with a scarf around his neck and his hat on, shivering away in this cold, draughty hall. Tom went over and had a bit of a chat to him, saying, 'Well, it looks like there's not much of a meeting. There's not much point in us hanging around here, is there? We might as well go somewhere warmer'. The bloke said, 'No, no, no. I came to hear you speak. I want to hear what you're about, Sonny. I came to hear your election speech — get up there and do it!'. So Tom had to stand up at the front of the hall and speak to an audience of one. But he did it, and of course he won the election and continued to improve his vote at every election. So perhaps there is a lesson or two for all of us here in the way that Tom Austin went about things.

Tom certainly left his mark on most of the people he met. I do not think I have ever heard a person say a bad word about Tom. Earlier the honourable member for Portland mentioned some of the famous dinners around here in the Strangers Corridor. In the period between 1988 and 1992 when I was often down here not as a member of this place but lobbying a fair bit, I took part in a few of those dinners, and that was a pretty fair description of that table: it got bigger as the night went on, more and more people joined the party and a lot of issues were discussed and sorted out around the table with Tom Austin over a glass of red or a scotch at some stage of the night.

He was a very warm, friendly, entertaining man. He had the capacity to guide and encourage people from all walks of life. And he had a sense of values and a vision which I think were to the benefit of the broader community. I join all honourable members in this place in expressing my condolences to Deb, Vicky, Lisa and Jo, and also to Joy. He will be sadly missed.

Mr PATERSON (South Barwon) — I want to add just one aspect to the memory of Tom Austin. Before I really got involved with politics at all I knew Tom Austin's name very well. In my teenage years I used to hear a lot about him from my brother Rowly, who was involved with the Young Liberals in Ararat. Tom had gathered around him quite a band of Young Liberals, and it was a very active branch. I think the social side was probably one of the attractions of the Ararat Young Liberals, but there was without any doubt a feeling among that band of Young Liberals that they wanted to help Tom Austin.

Tom Austin had the remarkable ability to enthuse people about politics and to gather around him people who genuinely wanted to help Tom Austin the man, and of course the Liberal Party as well, although you

cannot help feeling that it was more trying to help Tom Austin himself because of the respect they had for him and the way he was able to communicate with young people not only in the Liberal Party but also in the wider community.

People gathered around Tom to hear his pearls of wisdom, and as he grew older a lot of us who came into contact with Tom were delighted to be in his presence because he spoke with such wisdom about the history of politics in Victoria and with such passion about many issues.

When I came into this house in 1992 I joined the Liberal Party's agriculture committee. We used to meet occasionally with Tom. He was always very direct when discussing policy; he called a spade a shovel, as we all know, but it was usually laced with the delightful sense of humour he had. Tom will be very sadly missed. My condolences go to the Austin family.

Mr MACLELLAN (Pakenham) — I rise to join the debate on the condolence motion for Tom Austin. I was a member of Parliament briefly before Tom arrived here and then throughout his time as a member of this house, and I was a minister with him in government.

Inadvertently I may have been responsible for Tom being made Minister of Public Works and Minister for Property and Services, a distinguished role I had for the previous five days. I think I disqualified myself from continuing in the role by advising my Premier that I was not able to introduce legislation for the World Trade Centre because I thought it was a bad decision. At that stage it made something of a certainty of the fact that I was about to become the Minister for Transport and Tom would replace me as Minister of Public Works and Minister for Property and Services, where he served with enormous distinction.

I think all members of the house knew that it was only a preliminary to his being eventually Minister of Agriculture, because that is where his heart and soul was — in country Victoria, with the rest of metropolitan Melbourne. It was about quality food, it was about profitable enterprises in the country and it was about well-managed properties — a whole range of things.

Other honourable members have said quite rightly that Tom had this enormous ability to attract people into supporting him. He would have made an excellent diplomat. He could win people across to a point of view, even one that was not in an area with which they were greatly familiar. They could understand when Tom talked about the difficulties of life in the country.

We ought also to pay enormous tribute to the part that his first wife, Judy, and his later wife, Joy, played in his career. They worked as partners with Tom in his political career. I do not think he would ever have been elected or re-elected in the difficult electorate he represented if he had not had the support of, firstly, Judy and, in later years, Joy in his career.

We had a great minister. We had a great man. He was like a character from the *Boys' Own Annual* — the one who could play cricket, tennis or skin rabbits or shoot or drink or stay up late or argue. He was in almost every respect larger than life, and I think that explains why we were all so shaken by the possibility that a life like that could come to an end. Yet even in its end he did it with such style, grace and in a gentlemanly way. All of us are the poorer for being separated from Tom but the richer for having known him.

Mr LEIGH (Mordialloc) — I had the pleasure of meeting Tom Austin when I first entered this Parliament. As the honourable member for Warrandyte said, Tom was one of those people who took over what you were doing and had chats to you about what you should and should not do. He was one of those who did that for me; I suppose the other one was Frank Wilkes, a former Leader of the Labor Party. There were a couple of other people on both sides who used to encourage or discourage me.

Honourable members interjecting.

Mr LEIGH — I will not tell you who! The thing I noticed most about Tom Austin as a person came out when he was deputy leader and I was the whip. Tom was one of those people who used his experience to harness the enthusiasm of younger members. There were nights in this chamber when I was encouraged to ensure that 27 quorums took place. The government of the day, the Cain government, used to arrogantly not listen to what the opposition said, and under the then opposition leader, Mr Kennett, Mr Austin and later Mr Brown, a former opposition leader, these sorts of things used to take place.

I always marvelled at Tom's shooting ability. He allegedly had this fridge full of ducks, but I have to say that I never saw any of them. I hope many others did! It was only in later years that I learnt of Tom's role in the Second World War. A lot of politicians who do the sorts of things that Tom did make known what they have done, but Tom was not someone who talked about it to any great degree.

The thing about Tom that will always stand out in my mind is that often of an evening when *Countrywide* was

on he would make me, as a city member, come in and watch it with him on the ABC so I could find out what was going on in country Victoria.

Mr Pandazopoulos interjected.

Mr LEIGH — Maybe you just think that! On one of those occasions I became even more enthralled because I had not known of the Austin family's alleged contribution to the rabbit stock in Australia. That particular program has stuck in my mind to this day. The first issue concerned what had happened with rabbits, and then they had a gentleman who had this idea about how to get rid of the rabbits, including blowing them up. Two-thirds of the program talked about the contribution of the Austin hereditary family, if you like, over the years. I sat through this *Countrywide* program watching what was going on. As a result of that I joined the agriculture committee as its only city member. I guess you can learn a lot about the other side of life and things you have never been involved in personally.

I offer my condolences to Joy and the family. Tom was one of those members of Parliament, like the Don McKellars and the Bill Fogartys, who will never be replaced. There are people on both sides of this chamber who will go down in history as being great Victorians above and beyond being simply politicians. To Tom I pay my humble respects.

Mr BAILLIEU (Hawthorn) — Tom Austin was above all a decent bloke, a man of western Victorian origins, a passionate Geelong supporter and a fiercely loyal friend. He was a Liberal, and he always put the party first, above his own interests. He was a community-spirited individual. He was a lover of East Melbourne and the pleasures of Melbourne, but he was also a lover of the simple pleasures. In my view, above all he was an unpretentious fellow. Like so many others I felt very comfortable in Tom's presence and with his involvement in the Liberal Party.

I became close to Tom Austin as party vice-president and president for many years. He became a friend and, in recent years, a neighbour. In the Liberal Party Tom Austin was a rock, and he was a confidante to many, as we have heard. In sporting parlance Tom Austin was a 'go to' man. He was the one whom you went to for advice, because he gave good advice and he had great judgment — and above all, you could always trust Tom Austin. He made an extraordinary contribution to the party, to his electorate and to Victoria.

Tom always took a quiet pride in his life, his achievements, his family and his friends, and it was a much deserved pride.

In recent years I had the pleasure of sharing Tom and Joy's company locally at a variety of get-togethers and we saw each other quite often. Just a couple of weeks before Tom passed away, I had a drink with him and some of his very close friends — Gary and Genevieve, Peter and Mary and others — and Tom was propped up in the corner of a familiar room with a glass of wine, needless to say, dispensing good advice, wise counsel and being very involved.

In those recent years Tom and I also shared at many times that most wonderful walk, that brisk, expectant, cheerful trip you make through the elms from this place and others to the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Tom loved that walk: he engaged everybody along the way, as he did throughout his life.

For me and many others, I am sure — and if I dare steal a line from a more famous Australian — when it comes to Tom Austin, his ghost will be heard in so many places around Victoria, be it the G, be it this Parliament, be it the electorate of Ripon, be it past the many achievements to which Tom contributed over many years. My condolences go to Joy and to Tom's family.

The SPEAKER — I join with others in expressing my sorrow at the passing of Thomas Leslie Austin and extend my condolences to his wife, Joy, and to his family members.

Motion agreed to in silence, honourable members showing unanimous agreement by standing in their places.

Hon. Ann Mary Henderson

Mr BRACKS (Premier) — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death on 4 June 2002 of the Honourable Ann Mary Henderson and places on record its acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by her to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Geelong from 1992 to 1999 and Minister for Housing and Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs from 1996 to 1999.

Sadly the Honourable Ann Henderson passed away on 4 June 2002 after a long and courageous fight with cancer. She will be remembered for her dedicated service to the people of Geelong, whom she represented in this house from 1992 to 1999, and for her contribution to the Victorian Parliament as Minister for Housing and Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs.

Ann Henderson was born in Melbourne on 31 December 1941 and educated at Kilbreda College and Mandeville Hall. Her career reflects her passion for advancing Geelong and the wider region and a concern for the welfare of others. As well as having an interest in the arts, Ann Henderson was a welfare officer and director of Do Care, an administration and welfare officer for Geelong Legacy, an alumni development officer at Deakin University, and from 1992 to 1996 a member of the Deakin University council.

She was administrator of the Port Fairy Folk Festival, executive officer of the Geelong branch of the National Trust, and executive officer of the Geelong Art Gallery Foundation. She also held the office of mayoress of the City of Newtown.

In 1992 Ann Henderson was elected to this house as the member for Geelong. Her parliamentary career included being the chair of the aged care committee and a member of the local government community services and tourism committees from 1992 to 1996.

In 1994 Ann Henderson chaired the International Year of the Family ministerial council and served as a board member of the National Ageing Research Institute from 1994 to 1996. After leaving the Victorian Parliament in 1999 she became the presiding member of the board of the Australian Institute of Family Studies, a position I understand she held until her death.

I wish to acknowledge that Ann Henderson also made a significant contribution to the Liberal Party. She worked on election campaign committees, was a state council delegate from 1987 to 1991, and the endorsed candidate for Geelong in 1988. She was also vice-president of the party's Newtown branch from 1987 to 1989, and its president for the following two years.

In her inaugural speech to this house on 30 October 1992 Ann Henderson highlighted her concerns. They included access to further education and meaningful jobs, especially for younger people, and youth homelessness. These policy interests and her commitment to making a difference were recognised when in 1996 she was appointed Minister for Housing and Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. In a media interview at the time she described these areas as the human face of service delivery, and added, 'and that sits very nicely with how I see myself'. This is how Ann Henderson will be remembered by honourable members, by the people of Geelong, and by the many people with whom she worked. She worked in areas that have made a difference and she did it with a human face.

On behalf of the government I extend condolences to the family of Ann Henderson: her children, Sarah, Jodie and Andrew, son-in-law Rob, and grandchildren, Angus and Marcus.

Mr DOYLE (Leader of the Opposition) — I am honoured to second the Premier's condolence motion for the honourable Ann Mary Henderson, who was born on 31 December 1941 and died on 4 June 2002. Ann was member for Geelong from 1992 to 1999, Minister for Housing from 1996 to 1999, and Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs from 1996 to 1999.

I first met Ann Henderson in 1978 in my previous career as a teacher. I taught Ann's daughters, and Ann and I first met at the dreaded parent-teacher interviews. Either because of or perhaps despite what I had to say about her girls, we developed a close friendship. Years later we became colleagues when we were both elected to Parliament as part of the class of 1992. Ann almost joined the earlier intake in 1988 when she narrowly lost the seat of Geelong. She came back to take her place and represent the people of Geelong in this place four years later.

Through the late nights in those first three consecutive weeks of parliamentary sittings we new MPs got to know each other quite well. We got to know Ann's stamina and her humour. She was great company and great fun — and could she talk! And I mean that in the nicest sense of course; she was a great and real conversationalist.

Ann represented and was proud of Geelong, and few areas in Victoria felt the impact of the economic woes that had hit Victoria worse than Geelong. I think that Geelong experience was why Ann understood the impact of government policies on people's lives, particularly those who were in need of help or assistance. In her inaugural speech she outlined the values and priorities that would guide her through her public life. She said:

I have had access to education, a career, and an opportunity to contribute to the community, an opportunity to provide a good education for my children and the ability to give them a sense of family and the challenge to be responsible for themselves ...

So many young people today are denied these opportunities. They do not have access to further education. They do not have access to meaningful jobs. The pressures on families caused by unemployment prevent many of our young people from sharing in the sense of challenge and adventure that should be their right.

In my electorate of Geelong youth unemployment is a tragedy in which the whole community must share. Youth homelessness is very real ...

I can still hear her voice vibrating with her commitment to helping people, and see her bright blue eyes shining as she said that.

Ann worked hard and took advantage of her opportunities. This was the key to a successful career and a fulfilling life. Ann was one of four children born to Alan and Marion Corben. She was raised in Beaumaris. Throughout her life Ann knew the importance of the community, and made substantial contributions of her own time and effort.

After marrying Michael in June 1963, Ann moved down to Geelong and threw herself into family and community life. In her adopted home town of Geelong the organisations that benefited from her time were wide and varied. They included the Geelong College council, the Geelong National Trust, Friends of Bethany, Mercy Family Care, Newtown Senior Citizens, Deakin University, and Do Care.

In Ann's first entrance to public life she was mayoress to the City of Newtown when Michael was mayor. Ann was driven by compassion. She wanted to make the lives of her fellow citizens better. I can think of few members who embody the sense of community responsibility more than Ann did. That is why she stood as a Liberal candidate for Geelong in 1988 — when, as I have said, she narrowly lost. When the Geelong region was hit hard by the recession and the collapse of the Pyramid Building Society, Ann stood for office again, and of course won.

In her first term as member for Geelong I believe Ann earned the respect of both sides of the house through her diligence and work, her ability to see through the bluster of politics, and her innate courtesy. However, as I have said before, we all knew that beneath that charm and affability there was a core of steel.

Despite her workload as a local member in a marginal seat, Ann relished hard work and taking on extra responsibilities. In her first term she assisted Rob Knowles with his work in aged care. This formed the basis of a strong friendship and working relationship between them. Ann also chaired a broad-based community committee considering family policy, a role in which she brought all her skills and experience in the welfare sector to bear.

Ann never forgot Geelong. She was one of its greatest champions and never missed an opportunity to promote the city and its people and to ensure it was always considered in policy making. Geelong still shows the hallmarks of Ann's vision, particularly her longstanding support of the Geelong waterfront.

As the 1996 election approached, Ann was diagnosed with breast cancer. But this did not stop her from once again standing for the seat of Geelong, and winning, with a swing to her. Her efforts and abilities were rewarded when she was offered the ministries of housing and Aboriginal affairs in the new government. Upon her appointment, her compassion and work ethic came through clearly. I amplify what the Premier said before by saying that in 1996 she told the *Herald Sun*:

I think they are portfolios that don't attract the excitement that some of the other portfolios do.

But it is a great privilege to get these portfolios because they're very much the human face of service delivery, and that certainly sits very nicely with how I see myself.

I was lucky enough to work closely with Ann in the previous government. Ann was held in high regard by her departmental officers for her mind, her work, and her determination to do something for people. To her portfolios she brought new perspectives and a willingness to try new strategies.

For instance, early in her term Ann determined to refocus government housing policy to make need the first priority. Rather than continuing to simply manage the housing list and provide assistance to people as their names came up, Ann segmented the list in order to ensure that those most in need were supported as a priority. This policy has saved unknown numbers from the hardships of homelessness, and I am pleased the Labor government today still uses the policy.

Ann also knew the importance of speaking to people working at the coalface, visiting all the major Aboriginal organisations and settlements in her time as minister. For this and for the institution of the Aboriginal Young Achievers Award, as part of the national Aborigine and Islanders Day of Celebration Week, Ann was widely admired and respected throughout the Aboriginal communities. She had a genuine understanding of and empathy for the needs of our indigenous people.

In 1999 Ann was to face her greatest test. Known only to herself and a few of us, Ann's cancer had recurred. Ann fought for the seat of Geelong, and in one of the closest election results ever in Victoria, lost by 16 votes. Typically Ann was philosophical about her disappointment. Following the change of government the commonwealth decided to use Ann's expertise, and Senator Jocelyn Newman appointed her as chair of the Australian Institute of Family Studies. However, following the further recurrence of her cancer, Ann regularly entered hospital.

I want to put on the record Rob Knowles's comment about that time in Ann's life: 'She was one gutsy woman'.

Ann loved politics and loved public life, not for the political gains, but for the interaction with people, the ability to make a difference, and the opportunity to improve people's lives. Yet despite all she gave to public life, her first love was her family. To her daughters, Sarah and Jodie, her son, Andrew, her son-in-law, Rob, and her beloved grandchildren, Angus and Marcus, I offer my deepest sympathies.

For her efforts and the legacy left by Ann Henderson, on behalf of all Victorians I simply say thank you. I believe I am a better person because I knew you, Ann. Goodbye my dear friend.

Mr RYAN (Leader of the National Party) — I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in this motion of condolence recognising the passing of Ann Mary Henderson.

Ann Henderson was a truly beautiful person. She enriched all with whom she came into contact. I met her when we both came to this Parliament in 1992, and we became great friends over the succeeding years. She came to the Parliament with a distinguished history of public service, and she very proudly continued that role during her time of service in this place.

She was an absolute joy to meet. She had a wonderful, open face, more often than not smiling, and she was absolutely genuine in any greeting to you or to those around her. She had a complete commitment to conversation with you when she spoke with you — she was a great conversationalist on a wide range of topics — and she had a wonderful sense of fun.

Back in those days of 1992 — those heady days, as some would say — the important issues of government tended to take up a number of hours in this place. For the preservation of one's sanity in some senses it became necessary to seek solace at odd hours of the day and night in establishments not far from here. Many were the instances when many of us had the opportunity of conversing with Ann in very enjoyable circumstances, often for extended periods. As I said, she had a wonderful sense of fun.

She had an absolute commitment to her electorate and to the people of Geelong. She was a very caring individual. In her maiden speech she emphasised her concern, particularly for young people and those less fortunate in our community, and most particularly for the underprivileged. She was an extraordinarily compassionate person.

Her appointment as Minister for Housing and Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs was inspired, because it enabled her to bring to bear the natural traits of her personality in areas that necessarily involved people who did not enjoy the best fortunes of life. She earned the respect of the Aboriginal communities. In the course of Ann's visits to my electorate I had occasion to witness first hand how those communities came to recognise in her a great friend and ally and someone who was genuinely committed to the issues of concern to them.

On the other hand she was a person of absolutely iron will. She had enormous strength of character and a great inner strength. Subsequent to 1992, when many of us were elected to this place, an annual function has been held for conservative politicians elected in that year. That function, which historically has been championed by the honourable member for Benambra, is held in the latter part of each year.

Last year, at a time when her illness was upon her and was evident to all of those present, Ann Henderson joined us on that day. I am sure the many of us who were there will have a lasting memory of the way she conducted herself in the face of absolute adversity. Her illness meant nothing to her in the sense of stilling her capacity to enjoy herself and assist in the enjoyment of others. From my perspective that is a lasting memory.

Her greatest commitment, of course, was to her family. The passing of her husband, Michael, was a terrible blow to her. We were not to know that only a few years later she would be subject to the same tragic events that would ultimately claim her life.

She was universally admired in this place. I cannot help but recall instances where, in the absolute depths of her illness, people of all political persuasions, and particularly the ladies of this Parliament, were always around her to offer solace and assist her through what was a very difficult time.

She passed away aged 61 years, and her passing was a tragedy for all concerned. On behalf of the National Party I offer my condolences to the family of the late Ann Henderson.

Mr THWAITES (Minister for Health) — I am pleased to join with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the National Party in expressing my sorrow at the death of Ann Henderson. Ann Henderson was widely admired on all sides of politics and more broadly in the community. Certainly she was always a friendly face and someone who had

an open and bubbly personality, and that is one thing that endeared her to many people.

Ann Henderson had a very close family and, as other speakers have mentioned, suffered the tragedy of losing her husband, who was also involved in politics, but she was always close to her three children.

She was one of those people who, as well as having a close family, had an amazing amount of energy to contribute to the community. The number of community organisations that she was involved with over many years was quite extraordinary. She was involved in numerous charitable, educational and artistic organisations in Geelong. As well as her work which saw her take on positions such as executive officer of the Port Fairy Folk Festival she also had personal artistic and cultural involvements which were very fulfilling for her.

As other speakers have said, Ann Henderson was proud of her role as a minister and of the importance of housing and Aboriginal affairs. Right up to the time of her death she looked back on Aboriginal affairs as perhaps her greatest contribution, something that she learned a lot from and that she believed she was able to give back to.

I attended her funeral and was amazed at how many people there were to whom she had been able to give something as a member of the community and as a member of Parliament. In Ann Henderson the people of Geelong had someone who was always very committed to advancing their interests and those of the various organisations, whether they were educational, artistic or other cultural bodies in Geelong.

It is with sadness that I join the other speakers in expressing my condolences to her family, particularly to her children Sarah, Jodie and Andrew, who were very close to their mother, and to acknowledge the great contribution she made over many years.

Mr HONEYWOOD (Warrandyte) — My favourite memory of the late Ann Henderson, bright and fun loving as she was, was at Borders book shop not many months before she passed away. I was in the company of my children and Ann bumped into me. She was in the company of a family member. She had on one of those incredible felt hats that she used to wear turned up at the front and she was clicking her heels and fingers to a jazz quartet that were playing in the midst of that book shop. I received a big hug. She had wonderful inquiries to make of my two children. She was full of life and confidence. She was a wonderful human being.

I first knew Ann from her time at Deakin University where she was a consummate public relations professional. She single-handedly put together the alumni association for that university, which was going through a major growth phase. She was committed to bringing the various regional campuses of Deakin University into the one entity, and she was sorely missed when she was preselected for the then Labor seat of Geelong for the 1992 election.

She became a cabinet colleague, but prior to her becoming a cabinet colleague we shared an office of sorts down in the basement. The honourable member for Bentleigh, Ann Henderson and I had partitions between us. I recall that cigarette smoke would waft over from one corner and hair spray and other interesting smells and conversation would waft over in the other direction. It was a great — —

An honourable member interjected.

Mr HONEYWOOD — I am not sure what the single bloke's cubicle added to that interesting mixture, but certainly we had a lot of fun together in the three and a half years we shared that office in the basement!

Ann was a wonderful support as a cabinet colleague and was totally committed to her portfolios. I will never forget her strong advocacy for a cabinet decision to demolish a public housing tower in Flemington. She was utterly determined to engage with all the tenants to ensure that each of those tenant families had their particular non-English-speaking backgrounds dealt with and that they all took on board the moves that they had to face.

One of Ann's proudest moments in this place was moving her motion on reconciliation. She was totally committed to bringing together Koori people and other Australians under the banner of reconciliation.

Above and beyond all that she had an overwhelming love for Geelong, its people and the community. She was passionate about her work on the Geelong waterfront, about expanding Deakin University's Woolstores campus and about being involved in her community. Ann showed an equal and overwhelming loyalty and support to Jeff Kennett. She admired him for what he achieved. Ann was one of his closest political friends, one of his closest personal friends, and a great supporter of his through many difficult times.

Immediately after the 1999 state election Ann felt the loss of her seat personally. As we battled to come to terms with the election that seemed to be unlosable she would give us daily bulletins in cabinet about what had happened, about how one day her votes were up and

one day they were down. She felt the loss of that seat very keenly. She gave us her very best. She fought hard for the people of Geelong, and she fought hard for the Liberal Party. She really was the consummate local member.

In my 14 years in this place I have witnessed three great ladies succumb to cancer. The first was Pauline Toner, the second was Beth Gleeson and the third was bright, bubbly Ann; and each of those ladies was a courageous fighter and a wonderful human being. Farewell, Ann.

Mr HAMILTON (Minister for Agriculture) — I join with the previous speakers in recognising the life of Ann Henderson, a former Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. I want today to show recognition for the work she did.

Ann Henderson was one of many ministers for Aboriginal affairs who did not allow this very sensitive, very important and delicate area to become one in which political football was played. Indeed following her appointment as the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, succeeding the Honourable Michael Johns, I was fortunate as a shadow minister to find I could work with Ann with a great deal of confidence. One of the aspects I greatly admired about her was the confidence she had in her staff and her advisers, because it was not typical of the then Kennett government that a shadow minister was encouraged to meet with a senior adviser to discuss issues. The confidence she had in her staff was very much part of her own character.

Ann inadvertently — I suppose it happens to all new ministers — caused me some recent personal embarrassment. Ministers get to open all sorts of projects, which in most cases have been initiated by a previous minister. I have had the pleasure of opening a number of projects which were initiated by Ann when she was the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, and it has been my privilege to recognise her contribution in initiating those projects. Probably one of the outstanding among many was the refurbishment of the Aboriginal Advancement League premises at Thornbury, because that project was one in which she had great personal involvement and for which she had a great affinity. I was fortunate to be present at the opening of that and to see her great contribution recognised. Hers was a great contribution.

Ann managed to work with Aboriginal communities with a great deal of understanding. Those of us who have been involved in working with Aboriginal communities will know that they are a bit like the Labor Party or, with some unknowns about it, the

Liberal Party: they are a broad church. Aboriginal communities throughout this state are quite different and have quite different challenges. Ann was able to work with a great cross-section of people in Aboriginal affairs, and in doing so earned a great deal of respect without becoming involved in what is sometimes colloquially called Aboriginal politics.

When as a new minister one starts working with a department it is not long before the staff of that department say, 'Ministers come and go but the bureaucrats stay' — but there was a great deal of respect in Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) for former minister Ann Henderson. All the officers within that department who worked with her, some of them for the whole of her ministry and prior to that, respected her greatly. Indeed throughout AAV there has never been a derogatory remark made about her. That is something she could be proud of, and certainly I know her family is very proud of the fact that she handled a delicate ministry with great sensitivity and expertise.

As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition indicated, we have seen in our time in this Parliament three great women taken by cancer. That is something I feel particularly sad about, because apart from question time and other debates that may or may not go on at various times, you get to know people in this place on a personal note, and I consider it a great privilege to have known Ann Henderson and to have worked with her. I extend my very sincere condolences to her family.

Dr NAPHTHINE (Portland) — It is my honour and privilege to have known Ann Henderson and particularly to have served with her both here in this Parliament and in the cabinet. Many others will speak today of Ann, of their personal knowledge of her and her role in the community. I want to speak very briefly about some of the things I remember very well about Ann.

Some of the adjectives that I would use to describe Ann Henderson are enthusiastic, caring, considerate, compassionate, committed, constructive, courageous, cheerful and happy. Ann Henderson was all those things. She was a very good friend and a strong cabinet colleague, and she was a very positive member for her local community.

I want to highlight a couple of things that I believe epitomise the sort of work Ann Henderson did. As the minister said, Aboriginal affairs is one of the areas which Ann took on with great enthusiasm and in which she earned great respect — and I say that very earnestly, because she earned the respect of Aboriginal communities. In my own electorate in western Victoria

the local Aboriginal communities have been around a long time and they have seen a lot of politicians come and go — and they have seen a lot of politicians involved in Aboriginal affairs. With Ann Henderson they saw a politician come who sat down and listened, who was genuinely interested and concerned and who genuinely tried to act upon those concerns. Through that she genuinely earned their respect. It was interesting that the Aboriginal communities were strongly represented at her funeral, and that respect only comes from having earned it, as Ann did.

Ann made a very positive contribution to the debate in this Parliament on Aboriginal reconciliation. Although we do not disclose what goes on in cabinet, those who were involved in cabinet discussions about whether we should have a debate on reconciliation in the Parliament would know how passionately Ann fought to have that debate, and she never gave up. That was a very important debate and it was a great tribute to Ann that it was held here in this Parliament.

It is interesting to note that after the change of government when we had subsequent debates on Aboriginal issues, including the issue of saying sorry, Ann was regularly seated in the public gallery with the Aboriginal community, which was another great mark of the respect in which she was held.

I had the privilege of growing up near Geelong and going to school in Geelong, and I know that Ann Henderson was an institution in Geelong long before she was elected to Parliament for her long and very successful track record in a wide variety of community activities, which I will not go into now. She became the member for Geelong in November 1992, when it could be said colloquially that Geelong was on its knees through the collapse of the Pyramid Building Society and the general economic conditions and when questions were being asked about the very future of Geelong as a regional centre and the second city in Victoria.

Ann, as part of the new government, drove positive change for Geelong. There are landmarks in Geelong that are tributes to the hard work of Ann Henderson. Every time I drive along the waterfront of Geelong I see the vision and work of Ann Henderson. Every time I see the success of Deakin University in the old wool stores in the central business district I am reminded of the drive and vision of Ann Henderson. She certainly was a positive advocate for the community of Geelong and she did much to turn around the attitude in Geelong, to make it a more positive place and to revitalise Geelong for the future.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, when Ann was the Minister for Housing I had the privilege of being a fellow minister in the Human Services department. Ann was one of those people who looked at things and said, ‘What can be done to make them better and how can we do it?’, rather than just doing things the way they were done traditionally. The segmented waiting lists for housing on a needs basis was a great tribute to her drive.

Ann also made significant changes to the area of transitional housing and worked with me on the supported accommodation assistance programs to make them more effective in the delivery of services for homeless and potentially homeless people. It is interesting to reflect on the time when Ann Henderson was involved in housing. A significant number of changes were made to the traditional night shelter arrangements at places such as the Gill Memorial Home and Ozanam House, with very positive outcomes.

I also want to mention briefly the way Ann dealt with her own illness. She was courageous in the extreme. When Ann was sworn in as Minister for Housing, the Premier at the time, Jeff Kennett, and Rob Knowles, the former housing minister and then senior minister in the Human Services department, knew she was suffering from cancer and advised her to have a few months off to get herself well. But Ann would have none of that. She insisted on coming to work and on being heavily involved as minister, and she really put that responsibility first.

Ann was very positive about dealing with her illness. She did it with dignity and she was always thinking of others. Many times from her hospital bed she would send flowers or a note or card to somebody else who had suffered a setback or some illness — at a time when she herself was suffering a very severe illness. Her courage in dealing with her cancer, her positive approach and her cheerfulness will always be remembered.

I pass on my sympathy to the members of her family. They can be very proud of Ann’s achievements not only in Geelong and in her parliamentary career as a minister but most importantly as a person. She was a great person who made a great deal of difference to the people around her and certainly made a significant contribution to Geelong and to Victoria.

Mr MAUGHAN (Rodney) — I am pleased to follow the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the National Party and other honourable

members in paying a personal tribute to Ann Henderson, a lady whom I very much admired.

I first met Ann when she was elected as the honourable member for Geelong in 1992. For the next four years Ann was a member of the community services committee, which I had the privilege to chair at that time, so I had an opportunity to get to know her very well. Over those four years I appreciated her capacity, sincerity and compassion, all of which have been commented on by previous speakers.

I think it was around 1994 that my youngest daughter's flatmate from London visited Melbourne to attend his brother's wedding. Over lunch in the parliamentary dining room he asked whether I knew Ann Henderson. I said I did and took him to meet her. This very fine young man, who now happens to be my son-in-law, was Andrew Emmett. His brother Rob is married to Jodie Henderson. So my daughter and Ann's daughter are sisters-in-law. That strengthened the link that my wife Dorothy, who is in the gallery today, and I had with Ann Henderson. This gave Dorothy the opportunity on a number of occasions to care for Ann's grandchildren to allow Jodie to spend more time with her mother during her illness.

Ann subsequently became Minister for Housing and Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, and I had many dealings with her. I remember on one occasion she came to Echuca to open a fine ministry of housing village of some 23 very nice homes only 500 metres from where I live. Ann opened those homes with a great deal of grace on that day.

I met Ann's husband Michael on I think two occasions prior to his untimely death from cancer and felt very much for Ann as she dealt first with her husband's illness and then her own. I share the views expressed by honourable members here today that she dealt with that illness with a great deal of courage and dignity. As I said, my wife Dorothy was pleased to be able to assist at times to help Jodie spend more time with Ann.

The very high regard in which Ann Henderson was held by her colleagues, by the community and by the wide circle of people that she came into contact with over her years as a minister and an activist in her own community was demonstrated in no uncertain terms at the funeral which was a celebration of a life well lived as a wife, a mother, a community activist, a member of Parliament and a cabinet minister.

Dorothy and I extend our condolences to Sarah, Jodie and Rob and Andrew on this very sad loss for them and the community generally.

Ms DELAHUNTY (Minister for Planning) — I am pleased to join the leader of this house to pay tribute and salute the life and public service of Ann Henderson.

I remember when the news was passed to the Labor caucus of Ann's death on 4 June this year. There was a palpable sense of sadness in the room and a palpable sense of 'too soon' — that a great person had gone too soon. Another woman was lost to that hideous disease of breast cancer. I know there is a sniff of political combat in the air as we go into the spring sitting, but it is appropriate that we pause and reflect on the values that we share and the affection we feel for people across the chamber and it is appropriate to reflect on the public service performed by them all.

In looking at Ann's career as a member of Parliament, as a minister and her pre-political career, it strikes me that women have a very different journey to this place. During her life she had her own catering and gifts business. She was a director and welfare officer of Do Care and an administrator of the Port Fairy music festival, which has already been mentioned. Ann was an officer of Deakin University and an executive officer of the Geelong branch of the National Trust and the Geelong Art Gallery Foundation.

I knew Ann when I was a journalist and she was a minister of the Crown. I knew of her contribution to the arts in Geelong and how much that contribution was valued. I also worked with Ann's daughter Sarah at the ABC, and I have discovered today that Ann and I are both old Loreto girls.

I rise to speak today not only to salute Ann's life and to express our sadness at its being cut so short but also to share with the house a wonderful note she sent to me earlier this year. Ann was suffering from cancer and obviously struggling with life, but she took time out to write a very moving letter to me at the time of the death of my husband Jock.

It was a letter about courage; it was a letter about moving on; and it was a letter about the support she had received from her colleagues on that side of the house when her husband had died, but she also mentioned colleagues on this side of the house. It was a very timely note from a woman who knew exactly what I was going through. I am immensely grateful to her for that note.

Let me talk briefly about her courage, which has been mentioned. She showed extraordinary courage. She continued as a mother and a minister after the death of her husband, Michael. One month before the 1996

election she was fighting for her life. Three days before that election was called she had surgery for cancer, but she won the election and became a minister of the Crown. In 1999, although she was still battling her own personal health challenges, she involved herself in a very hard-fought election and lived through that nerve-racking count when she eventually lost by, I think, 20 votes.

While that result was very good for this side of the house, I hope Ann came to see that perhaps it was valuable for her as well, because it may have given her that time to smell the roses and to be with her family — her daughters and her grandchildren — and her many friends. At least she could spend the time that was left to her in the way she chose.

I send my sympathies and my condolences to her children, particularly to Sarah, who made a wonderful comment at the funeral. She said that her mother instilled in her the belief that lacking the right education or the right gender or the right background, however we determine that, should be no barrier to achieving your life's goals. Sarah said that Ann instilled those values in all her children. While Ann might have gone, those values remain in her children and in those she met and affected and worked for as a minister in this place. I salute her courage, and I thank her for her letter to me some seven months ago.

Mrs SHARDEY (Caulfield) — It is certainly a great honour to make a contribution to the condolence motion for Ann Henderson, who lived from 31 December 1941 to 4 June this year and was the member for Geelong from 1992 to 1999 and, significantly, the Minister for Housing and the Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs from 1996 to 1999. Ann died after a long fight with breast cancer at the very early age of 60 years. Of course many in this place supported her strongly as friends through that time.

Very sadly for the Liberal Party she lost her seat in 1999 by some 16 votes. Her brother David Corben described Ann as a person with a strong will to lead, and friends have described her as jet propelled. I think we all recognised both those qualities in Ann Henderson and appreciated and loved her for them. She was a truly amazing woman. At times she ran her own catering and gift business, was director and welfare officer for Do Care, mayoress of the City of Newtown, administrator of the Port Fairy music festival and was executive officer of the Geelong branch of the National Trust and the Geelong Art Gallery Foundation as well as being a member of Parliament, a minister of the Crown, a wife, a mother and someone we all admired enormously.

Sadly Ann lost her husband in 1995. She is survived by three children, Sarah, Jodie, Andrew, and two grandchildren, Angus and Marcus.

Ann said the following in her maiden speech:

The principles and ethos by which I live are a result of the values that have been handed down to me from a family that based its successes and failures on hard work, adventure, challenge and opportunity.

Certainly Ann Henderson embraced all these principles throughout her life.

She was a role model to all women in this Parliament, particularly those on this side of the house but quite obviously to those on both sides. She successfully combined her roles as loving wife and mother, super grandmother and highly successful member of Parliament. If I could be half the things that Ann Henderson was I think I would be a very happy woman.

Ann was a woman of great ability and great compassion. She was also one of the bravest women I have ever known. She was a passionate fighter for her beloved Geelong. Through her work with Do Care she fought for those in our community who are disadvantaged, and she showed great empathy and understanding in her portfolios of Aboriginal affairs and housing.

I recall many conversations with her, particularly about the Aboriginal affairs portfolio — it is an area I have worked in for a number of years at a federal level — and certainly appreciated the exchange of ideas I had with Ann Henderson. She was proud of what she was able to achieve on behalf of the Aboriginal community. For example, the health outcomes agreements brought together, as I recall, Aboriginal organisations, the state government and the federal government and achieved a great deal for the Aboriginal community in the health area. I remember clearly the apology given in this place in relation to the stolen generation. That day was one of great pride for Ann Henderson.

She had many friends in the Aboriginal community. On her passing the staff of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria wrote of her:

She was a delight to work for, a person who showed leadership and compassion in her dealings with the Aboriginal community, a deep understanding of the issues and a minister who achieved a number of outstanding successes in Aboriginal affairs.

Ann was also an outstanding Minister for Housing and will be long remembered for her achievements in this area. In May 1999 she was responsible for the establishment of the first crisis shelter for homeless

single women. She was also responsible, as has previously been said, for the redevelopment of some of Victoria's older housing estates such as the Long Gully estate in Bendigo, the Thompson estate in Geelong, the Parkside estate in Shepparton and, of course, the Kensington estate. The Victorian public housing sector will be greatly enhanced once the redevelopment of these estates is complete.

Ann Henderson was responsible for the significant improvement in the provision of services to the homeless and the restructuring of medium-term crisis accommodation through the transitional housing initiative — one of the most successful programs in this area offering support and accommodation. That has been mentioned previously.

Also mentioned has been the introduction of the segmented waiting list, which was a great achievement bringing assistance to those most in need.

Ann died at the relatively young age of 60. I spoke with her on many occasions once she had left Parliament. No matter how sick she was, she maintained her interest and her passion. The enormous number of people who attended her funeral were obviously a testament to the way the community felt about Ann Henderson. I will miss her greatly, and I convey my sincere condolences to her family, Sarah, Jodie, Andrew and her two grandchildren, Angus and Marcus.

Ms KOSKY (Minister for Education and Training) — I too wish to pay tribute to Ann Henderson and to pass on my condolences to her family. Ann Henderson was a terrific minister, a committed member for Geelong and a fantastic family person.

Like the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I had the opportunity to get to know Ann Henderson as her opposite number within this house between 1996 and 1999. Very early on Ann and I developed a clear understanding that when there were personal matters for people who needed urgent places in housing, we would deal with those privately. My office had the opportunity to ring her office and always get a very thorough and quick response so that we could deal with those housing matters in a personal way without playing politics. I truly appreciated the fact that she and her office always honoured that understanding and treated our phone calls, and of course the people who were behind the phone calls, with that respect.

Obviously on some policy issues Ann and I did not always publicly agree, but we understood that that was part of politics. However, when it came to personal matters we understood that we wanted to deal with

those in a very sympathetic way. It is an absolute credit to Ann that I believe she never broke that understanding — not once — and always responded quickly to my calls. As the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs indicated, she trusted her staff to the point where they would also deal with matters very quickly. We developed a very close friendship with Ann's office — as close as you can from opposite sides of the house — and we really appreciated that. I still enjoy catching up with John Baring, who worked for Ann. We enjoy a drink or two and a few stories.

The sector also regarded Ann very highly, making it difficult for me to get stories, I must say. While those in the sector did not always agree with what Ann may have been doing — and it is very difficult for any minister in this house to get full agreement — they had enormous respect for her and refused to share information with me. That was a demonstration of the way she worked with those in the sector and the respect they held for her.

Ann never played personal politics, and I always very much appreciated that. She always focused on the issue and the argument at hand, rather than playing personal politics.

I will mention three of her key achievements; two have been mentioned previously, and I want to touch on those as well. There was a commitment by the Kennett government at the 1996 election to demolish one high-rise tower. That was always going to be a bit of a difficult task because of the controversy around it. Ann not only handled that matter incredibly well, I believe, and probably to my upset because I would have liked to have played some politics with it, but she handled it so well that it really was not about the demolition of a high-rise tower but about the complete refurbishment of a Kensington high-rise tower. The people who reside there now enjoy the benefit of the way in which she dealt with that matter. She got the support of the Premier of the day in meeting the election commitment, but I think she very cleverly turned the election commitment into her own personal commitment to provide better housing for the people who were living in that high-rise tower in Kensington.

It has already been mentioned in this house that Ann introduced segmented waiting lists and transitional housing. I know that was mentioned by her daughter Sarah on the radio the day following her death. I believe that was a very important shift at the time in housing, and it is one that has been maintained by this government.

At one time, and I know I talked with Ann quite a bit about this, there was a decision to move people who had been living in housing in Port Melbourne to other housing. I think at the time — it happens to all of us: you get advice from a department and on its face it looks okay until you get to know the people behind it — I had the opportunity to talk through some of those cases with Ann, and to Ann's absolute credit she moved from that position. It is always hard for ministers to say, 'Maybe it was not correct and I am prepared to admit that and to shift from that'. I know that the people living in Port Melbourne very much appreciated Ann's understanding of that matter and her preparedness to understand their plight.

I also share something else in common with Ann Henderson, and that is her driver — now my driver, but it is a shared driver, as we all know — Bryan Temple. Bryan regarded Ann very highly and only ever spoke very fondly but proudly of her, having known her and her family. I hope one day I might enjoy the same respect from Bryan in the way he very much respects Ann and her family.

I knew Ann was unwell through other members of this house. But in Ann's proud and focused way she did not want many to know and therefore to dwell on her illness. When Bryan Temple got the opportunity to visit her only shortly before she died, Ann said at that point that it was okay that Bryan let me know. I appreciated that, because it gave me the opportunity to send my best wishes to her before she passed away.

I want to pass on my sincere condolences to Ann's children, Sarah, Jodie and Andrew, her extended family and close friends. It was a joy to know her.

Mr MACLELLAN (Pakenham) — Ann Henderson was an inspiring colleague. I think we have all heard of how she inspired members of the house. I sat next to her at the cabinet table, and she was certainly an inspiration to me.

She inspired her Premier, Jeff Kennett, to fund and have a continuing interest in Freshwater Place, the Geelong waterfront project. It was really because of the situation in Geelong as we saw it, after the Pyramid collapse, that it was decided that we must do things that would rebuild the spirit of Geelong and give residents a sense of future. And so out of something as strange as the Better Cities program, which was a commonwealth project and where there were some federal funds not yet committed, Ann argued forcefully and strongly with me that the Geelong Woolstores, and Deakin University moving into the Geelong Woolstores, would make a positive contribution to her Geelong, the Geelong she

loved so dearly. It would bring students; it would bring faculty; it would bring hope; it would bring future; it would lift the spirits. And so much of my coming into contact with Ann, as I say, lifted the spirits: she was inspiring. The funeral was inspiring; it was a celebration of a great life. The Mercy Hospital visit was inspiring; I saw an institution caring for her against the odds, I suppose, in a way.

I nicked off from Parliament, Mr Speaker, while you were all about your duties — I went across to the Mercy to visit Ann. She still had that sense of hope, of future, of humour. We reminisced together and told tales about you all until I had to leave and she had to resume her treatment.

As I said, she was an inspiring person. She had a great sense of humour and a great compassion, and was someone who could get the best out of other people. I think we should celebrate her life and her work as we are doing, and remember how much she meant to all of us.

Mr TREZISE (Geelong) — In contributing to the condolence motion for the Honourable Ann Henderson I say at the outset that I did not know her personally. The very nature of political campaigns, especially in a marginal seat such as Geelong, where one person is pitted against another in a very adversarial way, meant unfortunately that friendships are not forged and thus my only real contact with Ann Henderson was in the political environment during the prolonged 1999 election campaign.

As a political opponent Ann was a very tenacious, tireless person who campaigned hard despite the personal battle that she was having at the time with her health and wellbeing, a personal battle that she kept to herself but no doubt shared with her family. In recognising that, in hindsight one cannot help but admire her courage through a local campaign that was drawn out and, as I know personally, was both physically and emotionally very wearing.

As we have already heard today, Ann Henderson was a much respected person in this Parliament. She was a very hardworking and talented minister in the Kennett government who was dedicated to her portfolios of housing and Aboriginal affairs, as she was to her electorate and her beloved home of Geelong. I extend my sincere condolences to her family.

Mr PLOWMAN (Benambra) — I express my personal condolences on the death of Ann Henderson, but I want to speak about the joy I have of having known her and having had her as a friend. I had the

privilege of coming into this place with Ann in 1992. They were heady and exciting days, particularly for those of us who were new members. Three of us went across the road to the Windsor Hotel and did a deal with the management about the accommodation opportunities, and we managed to get accommodation at the hotel for the first four months of our term as members.

Honourable members may remember that during that period we had very many late nights, and those nights were much later over there over a nightcap. I think we were so stirred up with what was happening, by the changes being made, that we could not resist the opportunity to sit up and talk about it to try to get our heads around it, and having each other at the hotel gave us the opportunity to discuss the changes and better understand what was happening. My friendship with Ann developed at that time and it grew over the next nine years during the period I knew her.

My past association with Ann was during one of her first jobs with Ted Best and Co. Ted Best later became the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and also my father-in-law. Ted and Joan Best remember Ann with a great level of fondness. They remember Ann for her extraordinary diligence in the work she did — her hard work — for her extraordinary loyalty to Ted Best for all the time that she worked with him and for her obvious leadership. Those qualities stayed with Ann for the rest of her life and developed and we were lucky enough to see the development of that leadership until the time of her death. I am sure had she not died we would have seen her go on to greater things.

In her role as minister I had the great good fortune to work with her with the Aboriginal community in north-east Victoria and, as was mentioned earlier, her desire to see some level of reconciliation was one of her driving forces. She gained respect among the Aboriginal community which I think epitomised her ability to get on with everyone. She was a very loving and respectful person. In her role as a minister I had the opportunity to work with her with Group Self Build, a program that allows people with no money to put the deposit of their own work into building their own homes. Wodonga has the proud claim of having the greatest number of Group Self Build houses in Victoria. During her period as a minister Ann was instrumental in pushing that very hard.

I was also lucky enough to be involved in one of the housing developments where she announced and planned the change of a large area of public housing. Some housing commission houses that had outlived their time were demolished and in their place it was

planned to build a mix of public and private housing. Unfortunately that had not occurred before Ann's death, so she was unable to see the fruits of that project, but I think those programs will lead to far better public housing in Victoria.

Ann was a strong Liberal but not so strong that she could not include members from all sides of this Parliament among her friends. Again I use that word 'respect'; she gained respect in this place from members of all parties. She was a great community person. She was a great friend to us all. She was a great listener. She was great at getting people together. The Leader of the National Party mentioned the Christmas parties that Ann organised from the very first year she was a member of Parliament until the year she left. She had that charming ability to make you want to be part of it, and I was very proud, along with the honourable member for Mooroolbark, to be part of the little team that helped to organise those Christmas functions.

Ann had a compelling love for her family. It was an enormous loss to Ann and her family when Michael died, but Ann was a fighter. It was her strength that helped her family overcome that tragic loss and helped her fight the cancer until the very day before she died, when she said to her daughter Sarah, 'I don't know why all these people are coming to see me — I'm not going to die just yet'. She had that fighting spirit right to the end.

Ann's love of Geelong and the people of Geelong was probably epitomised by that lovely New Year's Eve party she put on to celebrate her 60th birthday. I was very proud to be there. So many friends of Ann's came from all around Australia, but what she concentrated on was the joy she had in being a member of the Geelong community and in her friends in Geelong, and again in the respect she had for the people of Geelong and their endeavours to make Geelong one of the best cities in Australia.

We will all miss Ann, but we are much the richer for having known her. I take this opportunity, as I did at her funeral, to say goodbye to a friend and a magnificent lady. My condolences go to Ann's family and to all the friends who loved her and who miss her.

Mr LONEY (Geelong North) — I was elected in the same election as Ann Henderson in 1992. I say the same election rather than the same day because in some senses Ann bookended her political career with close elections. It was not quite as close as the 1999 one, but it was one that went on for some days with recount, postal vote count and absentee count before finally

being declared. Ann was no stranger to the drawn-out election.

At that election we were elected in quite different circumstances. I was the only Labor member elected in Geelong and Ann was one of a new team of Liberals, completely reversing the result of the previous election. Ann went on to the government benches and I was over on the other side. In those circumstances and for most of the time Ann was in this place we were regularly publicly opposed — me putting the Labor view of things in Geelong and Ann putting the Liberal view of things in Geelong. In the public sense we were often adversaries and engaged in frequent quite fierce political debate.

However, there was never any doubt in my mind or the minds of others in Geelong about the commitment of Ann Henderson to Geelong. That commitment actually went beyond Ann; it was a Henderson family commitment to the region. Michael also made a significant commitment, having served as mayor of Newtown and having been involved in various other bodies. The Henderson family commitment to the region shone through in Ann. As honourable members have said, she was involved with a range of organisations such as the National Trust and Do Care.

It has also been said that her time in this place was not without its own periods of difficulty. During her first term Michael unfortunately died of cancer, and that placed a great strain on Ann. A fairly short time thereafter she was diagnosed with cancer. We try but cannot really imagine what the emotional effect of that would be. But Ann went on from that not only to be re-elected to this place but to become a minister. People have commented on her courage and strength in this place, and I am sure she gained a lot of that from what I observed as the strength of the Henderson family in being able to support Ann through those times.

The last time I saw Ann was early this year. My wife, Judy, and I were having a cup of coffee in a shop not far from here. I had not noticed Ann in the shop, but she had obviously noticed me. On leaving she came over to have a chat. This happened on a particular day when a minister was under attack from the opposition and the media, and Ann stopped to express her empathy with and sympathy for that minister and the circumstances the minister was in. We chatted about that for a little while before she went away. Afterwards I remarked to my wife that Ann seemed to be looking well and full of life. We expressed the hope that she had overcome her health problems, but unfortunately that was not to be.

Ann was proud of her family. I remember standing with her on the back balcony of this place in one of those quiet moments you occasionally get here when she pointed out the steeple of St Patrick's Cathedral and expressed her pride in the fact that her grandfather had been involved as a stonemason in building the steeple. Ann was certainly proud of her family, and she was proud of the Liberal Party, which she represented well. Both her family and the Liberal Party have good reason to be proud of her.

I pay my respects to Ann and offer to her family my and Judy's sympathies and those of the people of Geelong North.

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — I too would like to make a brief contribution to the condolence motion for Ann Henderson.

I first met Ann in 1991 at a Liberal Party preselection training program. Preselection procedures in the Liberal Party are so vigorous that in 1991, obviously with an eye to a landslide victory, the party decided that it was going to train candidates for the rigours of preselection. Indeed, the honourable member for Malvern was in the same mock preselection as Ann and I. Will I tell the result? Doyle first, Asher second — that's the story of my life! Annie did extremely well in a dignified manner.

I remember Annie being incredibly nervous and saying to me, 'How could you have just spoken like that? Everyone is sitting in there judging. I am really nervous about this'. Here was a woman who had contested an election for a marginal seat in 1988, gone through the whole election campaign and obviously gone through preselection being nervous. At that moment of meeting Ann it struck me that she was far more at home in her own community, where she knew the people and the issues, than in some contrived political circumstance to give us a bit of training to try to shunt us through a preselection. To me that was the hallmark of the woman.

Ann was elected as the member for Geelong in 1992. She was promoted to cabinet in 1996 as Minister for Housing and Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and held that position at the cabinet table until 1999. Jeff Kennett, who was particularly fond of Ann Henderson, was responsible for that promotion. At that stage Jeffrey had four women in his cabinet, which equalled Joan Kirner's record at that time. Society and politics have changed substantially since then. Jan Wade, Marie Tehan, Ann and I were Kennett's women at that cabinet table.

Without wanting to disclose cabinet discussions, it would not be beyond the realms of the thinking of those in this chamber that sometimes Jeffrey gave his ministers a bit of a shellacking. He was generally milder on the four women, but Ann had a distinction — I never once heard the former Premier tackle her. I never once heard the former Premier unload on her and I never once heard the former Premier angry with her. That was a mark of Ann Henderson's political skill, judgment and capacity to handle issues sensitively on all occasions. Jeffrey had a very close working relationship with all his ministers, and a very close working relationship with his female ministers, but with Ann most of all. It was to her credit that she was able to be such a peacemaker in that cabinet and in the party room, and be such a good influence on liberalism throughout the 1990s.

She had a number of significant achievements, and in a political sense they have been discussed, certainly in terms of her portfolios. Much has been made of the demolition of the high-rise towers. Indeed, it was a promise made by a young Jeff Kennett when he was Minister for Housing in the Hamer era that he would demolish one of those towers and provide better accommodation. Because he was so fond of Ann it was a genuine source of pride to him that she was the minister who effected the promise that he had made many years beforehand.

She also — and I know this will have been touched on — had a particular passion for the development of Geelong, specifically the Geelong waterfront, and spent many hours guiding and assisting in that, with a terrific result for Geelong. Her involvement in her own community was substantial. Again a number of people have mentioned her involvement on the Geelong College council; with the Geelong branch of the National Trust of Australia as an executive officer; with Friends of Bethany, Mercy Family Care and Newtown senior citizens; as mayoress of Newtown and welfare officer at Do Care; and with Geelong Art Gallery Foundation and so on. Her success as a businesswoman in a very successful small business has also been mentioned.

It strikes me that these are the credentials of an ideal political candidate: somebody with skill, tact, compassion, local community experience and business experience — the range. In this modern era, where people are looking to local candidates, she was an ideal member of Parliament. She was guided by the values of liberalism and of hard work. I, too, want to refer to the first speech she made in this place on 30 October 1992, when she is reported as saying:

The principles and ethos by which I live are a result of the values that have been handed down to me from a family that has based its successes and failures on hard work, adventure, challenge, and opportunity.

That is Ann Henderson — no privilege, no taking things for granted, but simply hard work and challenge and her response to that. It is those values and ethics which are so fundamental to the Liberal culture that I admire substantially.

I wish to pass on my condolences to Ann's family, in particular Sarah. Ann was a wonderful colleague and a wonderful person.

Mr BAILLIEU (Hawthorn) — The Henderson family is an extraordinary bunch and Ann Henderson was an extraordinary woman. She was an extraordinary Liberal, an extraordinary community worker, an extraordinary member of Parliament and an extraordinary minister.

I came to know Ann as party vice-president and then as party president for a number of years. We went through preselections, and I am partly responsible for organising those very candidate training sessions —

Mr Doyle — Thanks for nothing!

Mr BAILLIEU — Together we worked through campaigns and attended branch and electorate functions and endless meetings.

Ann Henderson was great for the Liberal Party. You can get lucky, and as party president and somebody actively involved in preselections I can say that we got exceptionally lucky with Ann Henderson.

Like so many in the Geelong region and elsewhere in Victoria and in this place, I liked Ann. I admired her and respected her enormously, and I was very much looking forward to joining her in this place in 1999. It was certainly a cause of great sorrow for me that she was unsuccessful.

It has been a day for Geelong supporters to express their sorrow at Ann's passing. Ann and her family were great Geelong supporters, and I enjoyed nothing more than seeing Ann, Michael and the rest of the family at Geelong functions at Kardinia Park and elsewhere. We often saw them there.

It has been mentioned that Ann's husband, Michael, also passed away from this dreadful illness. Perhaps it has not been mentioned that Michael's brother also passed away in that short time frame from a similar illness. The courage of the Henderson family has been extraordinary through all of that.

Ann loved Geelong. I am very fond of and have been a regular visitor to Geelong myself, and I know how much the Hendersons have meant to Geelong over the years.

I will never forget Michael's funeral. We drove through the city and looked up at St Mary's, the towering cathedral on the top of the hill. It was a very black day. It was freezing cold and there were storms about. There was rain in the air and a very strong wind. In a way it was as if forces greater than those we will ever know were wrestling with the emotions of the day. I can remember being in the cathedral. I had never seen it happen before, but the wind blew in a stained glass window, that day of Michael's funeral. The rain came in, and those of us who were sitting in the pews were getting wet from the rain coming through the window. It was the most emotional experience I have had for a long, long time, and I will remember it always.

Geelong turned out for Michael's funeral, and it turned out equally for Ann's funeral. It was as if everybody in Geelong was there. It was another very grey, cold and windy day, and during the service a burst of sunshine came through the north transept as an amber light. There was truly a glow that day on the whole family and everybody in the place. Those two experiences will stay with me forever, as I am sure they will stay with the whole of Geelong.

There is plenty of good reason to believe that when Ann became the honourable member for Geelong, Geelong was a broken place down on its knees. That is what Ann inherited as a member. She left in 1999, leaving behind an extraordinary legacy. To see that you only have to look at the waterfront, which is just a joy to see and be a part of, the developments at Deakin University and the fibre centre — which, sadly, has now departed — the improvements at Kardinia Park, the hospital improvements, the work on the Geelong council reconstruction, the Geelong community in general and the art gallery and art community work that Ann did.

As I said, it is an extraordinary legacy. I am not sure what hand Ann had in it, but whenever I see those tall, lean, very friendly, colourful bollards that now dot the Geelong waterfront and have spread down to Barwon Heads and beyond, I always think of Ann. In their own way they are a reminder of someone who made a great contribution, cheered so many people along the way and encouraged so many others.

Politics is often a cruel business, as many in this chamber know. Ann did not deserve to lose in 1999. She had done a remarkable job for Geelong. Since 1999

I have not met anyone who thought that she deserved to lose and I have met only a very few people who voted the other way. I am not quite sure how you got up, Ian!

Ann had a really good crack at winning under extraordinary duress. Had 10 people in the electorate of Geelong voted the other way in 1999 how different things would have been. Ann played a straight bat in that election; there were no games. It was only the well-engineered preferences of some so-called Independents, who might be described as committed Independents, that conspired to defeat her. Because it was such a pivotal result at the time, had she won perhaps the future of Victoria may have been quite different. For Ann and her family, and equally for all on this side of the house, it was an extraordinarily emotional time.

Ann never let go but fought right to the end of that campaign. She was an inspiration in the way she dealt with the result of that election and the campaign leading up to it. In my view she won in so many other ways and we are so much the better for having enjoyed her friendship, her leadership, her commitment and the achievements that she so soundly registered in Geelong and Victoria. I offer my best wishes and condolences to her family.

Ms GILLETT (Werribee) — I too would like to pay tribute to Ann Henderson and pass on my sincere sympathies and condolences to her family.

I became the member for Werribee in 1996. They were difficult times. The Labor Party was in opposition and had not seemed to make too much progress between 1992 — that awesome defeat — and 1996. It was with some trepidation that I walked into the chamber on the opposition side and realised there were so few Labor Party members and so many members of the then government. It could have been a little intimidating, but as an old storeman and packer I fronted up, counted double and reckoned that we were an even match for the government any day.

Two ministers stood out as still holding on to what I suppose some people might say are old-fashioned values about treating their peers — meaning MPs — no matter whether they are on the government or opposition side, with respect and dignity. Unfailingly Ann Henderson was one of those ministers.

I hope I share with Ann a belief in the absolute importance of serving and being a passionate advocate for my community. At the time Werribee did not have a lot of public housing and many people were in great need. In the first three or four months of my being a

member of Parliament a young woman with small children came to me in desperate circumstances. Calls to the Office of Housing were not making much progress, and the young woman and her little ones were in desperate need. This was my first direct contact with Ann. I was a little concerned about telephoning her office because I felt I would just get the ‘Go away, you are a completely irrelevant member of the opposition’ type of thing.

You can imagine the restorative effect it had on my self-esteem and self-confidence when I was put through directly to Ann. She said, ‘Hello, Mary, how are you going? I haven’t had time to catch up with you. Congratulations. Now, what is the problem?’. I spoke with Ann for about 20 minutes. I had the young woman and her family in my office. Ann wanted to speak to her, and I was able to put the two of them on the phone to each other. Then Ann said to me, ‘Give me a couple of hours and I will see what I can do’. That night the young woman and her children were safely housed for the first time in three months. That act alone — although it was not the only act of care, concern, respect, generosity and straightforwardness — was enough for me to owe Ann Henderson a great deal.

People often say, ‘What difference does it make having women in politics?’. There have been a lot of good women in politics, and Ann was right up there with the absolute best of them. The difference they make is the Ann Henderson difference: to treat your colleagues and peers with respect no matter what side of the fence you come from. Ann could do that because she understood that we all serve our communities with passion and commitment and hopefully with a great deal of integrity and care. The way Ann treated me — and just about all my colleagues — stood out as something to emulate.

I hope the continuing difference that women can make in politics is the sort of difference that Ann Henderson made. The power of having a vast majority in the lower house and a majority in the upper house did not seem to affect her wanting to be a decent, straightforward offerer of service to her community and to the wider community of Victoria as well.

I am glad people feel they learnt lessons from Ann. As members of Parliament the challenge for us now is to make sure that the example Ann showed and the legacy she left lives on in the way we treat one another, understanding that our communities all deserve to be served well and remembering that we should treat one another with the dignity and respect with which Ann treated all of us.

I pay most sincere respects to her family, but congratulate them on having spent time with a great mother and I think great grandmother — in a lot of ways in families you cannot have much better than that.

Mrs ELLIOTT (Mooroolbark) — The life of Ann Henderson was characterised by strength and passion and by unflinching courage, but overall by a gift for friendship. First of all the strength of passion was for her family: for her husband Michael and her three children Jodie, Sarah and Andrew, for Rob, her grandchildren, Angus and Marcus, for her own brothers and sisters and for her in-laws. Ann had the most amazing blue eyes, which have been inherited by Sarah. When she was talking about her family those eyes would light up. She was so proud of their achievements.

Her next great passion was for Geelong. She and Michael were Geelong in many senses, and Geelong came first with Ann. During her entire parliamentary career she worked for Geelong — and other honourable members have detailed her achievements in that great provincial city.

Her next passion was for the Liberal Party and liberalism. In her own life the striving and achieving were characteristic of the basic philosophy of liberalism. As other honourable members have pointed out, she was so at home with herself and so strong that she could extend that tolerance and strength to honourable members who thought differently from her — and so many members of the government benches today have described that.

Her next passion was for her ministries — housing and Aboriginal affairs — and again previous speakers have talked about her achievements in those areas. My personal experience was in housing. Ann instituted an annual art competition entitled My Home for children who lived in public housing. She was kind enough to ask me, on the thin basis of my involvement with the arts, to judge that competition for the time that she was the minister. She would always come in and talk to the competitors who were there and look at the works herself. I could see that she was instilling a sense of pride in people who lived in public housing, and that was well shown by that annual art competition.

In Aboriginal affairs Ann was colour blind. She believed passionately in the Aboriginal cause, and after the *Bringing Them Home* report she spoke both in the house and outside it about Aboriginal reconciliation. Whenever I met Jim Berg from the Koori Heritage Trust we would always talk about Ann, and he would say how much she had done for him and his people.

Ann faced her illness and her final months with the most enormous courage. She spoke to me several times in the early days about the diagnosis of her illness, but she was essentially private about that and always put on a very courageous front and got on with life. In that she was a lesson to me. When I was diagnosed with the same disease one of the first calls I had from was from Ann, offering encouragement and practical strategies to deal with it. At the time she herself was in hospital having palliative care for the illness which ultimately killed her. I will always remember the hand she held out to me at that time, and if I can deal with it with as much strength as she did I will be fortunate and will be doing well.

The thing I would like to stress most about Ann is her gift for friendship, and one of her closest friends is in the gallery today. Ann loved a party. She came in with us in 1992, and I remember the day we were all sworn in. We went as a group to have dinner at Florentino's, thinking we were going to change the world, and I thought at that time that Ann was one of those people who just might change the world. She would always be the one to say, 'Feel like a cup of coffee?'. She was always fun in the bar, and we had some hysterical nights when a chance comment turned into something that had us all doubled with up with laughter. She would always call the honourable member for Benambra 'Tony Plowperson' rather than 'Tony Plowman'! She just made a difference in whichever social gathering she was involved in.

The penultimate big party for Ann was her 60th birthday on New Year's Eve, when she looked marvellous and spoke not about herself but about her friends and her family. That was her gift to those of us who were there and those who could not come on that evening. That great celebration of her 60th birthday was so sadly to be her last.

The last great celebration was her wonderful funeral in the cathedral at Geelong. So many people from so many walks of life in Geelong and wider afield packed the place out to pay tribute to someone who, unlike most of us, left an enduring legacy of achievements that people can look at and say, 'Ann Henderson did this' or 'Ann Henderson was responsible for that'. I was speaking just yesterday to the executive officer of Breast Cancer Network Australia about Ann and about the fact that another federal parliamentarian has just been diagnosed with the same disease. Lyn Swinburne said to me, 'What is so terrible about it is the waste of amazing women and the fact that they are not left with those years when they could still give to the community but also enjoy family and friends in a more relaxed

way'. We are all the poorer for Ann's passing. She was a truly remarkable woman.

To her family, to her three children, Sarah, Andrew and Jodie, to Rob, to Angus and to Marcus and her more extended family I send my condolences on behalf of my husband and myself. I miss a friend.

Mr WILSON (Bennettswood) — It is with a heavy heart but with many wonderful memories that I rise to speak to this condolence motion for the late Ann Henderson. Other honourable members have adequately covered Ann's parliamentary career and touched on her ministerial career. I wish to concentrate my brief remarks to the latter and from the viewpoint of a ministerial staffer who was in a position to observe Ann's very great style and her many achievements.

When Ann Henderson was first appointed as Minister for Housing in 1996, Rob Knowles, who had preceded her in the housing portfolio, asked me to assist Ann in her new portfolio until she settled in. It was a very brief tour of duty because Ann Henderson took to her ministerial responsibilities, duties and challenges with great ease. Ann Henderson's ministerial term will be long remembered for her very personal commitment to issues, projects and people, and the details and successes of those were outlined in the contribution by the Leader of the Opposition.

Ann quickly gained the respect of the bureaucrats in the Office of Housing and within the public housing sector, and that is no easy task for a Liberal. The same respect developed with officers of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and with Victorian Aboriginal communities.

I have many wonderful memories of Ann Henderson, but the lasting memory will be a meeting of the Human Services cabinet subcommittee some time, I think, in late 1996. Each Monday after cabinet the subcommittee would meet in Rob Knowles's conference room at level 22, 555 Collins Street. On that particular day I walked into the conference room with Rob Knowles — the current Leader of the Opposition was in the room, as was the honourable member for Portland — to see Ann for the first time with her severely cropped hair. Ann's fight with breast cancer had become a very public battle, and I had only admiration for her courage, her strength and her dignity. It was after that meeting that Rob Knowles made the comment to the Leader of the Opposition and me: 'That is one gutsy lady'.

Ann Henderson was much loved and respected by her ministerial and electorate staff during her parliamentary career, and I thank the Minister for Education for her generous tribute to Ann's staff during her contribution

earlier. Today June Ford, John Baring, Fiona Nield, Pat Terranova, Dean Sterling, Bryan Temple, Felicity Johnston, Jenny Howie, Jenny Turner, Emma Merrigan and Jane Thomas would join me in paying tribute to a great lady, a great Liberal and a great Victorian.

Dr DEAN (Berwick) — Ann Henderson and I used to sit up there where the honourable members for Ripon and Bendigo East sit. We sat there together for three and a half years from 1992 to 1996. It is a good spot up there; you get a terrific view of what is going on, particularly if it is the first time you have been in Parliament. It was important for me to be able to sit next to Ann Henderson in 1992 because you would have to say that I was an absolute greenhorn in this place.

I had led a fairly focused life elsewhere and probably did not have a huge amount of knowledge of life's affairs when it came to politics, particularly grassroots politics and a lot of the things you have to learn in this place. We came in as a big mob in 1992 and we had an enormous amount of fun, probably because it was a very exciting time. Jeff Kennett was an amazing character who ploughed a furrow through Victorian politics leaving the little backbenchers swimming behind gasping for air and wondering what on earth had hit them.

That experience brought us all together, and Ann Henderson was very much a part of it. We basically took over the bar. Things have changed a little and that area is not used quite so much now, but I can tell you that from 1992 to 1996 the '92ers' were in that bar for a lot of the time, and Ann Henderson was the absolute centre of stories and a great raconteur. If you were walking through the Strangers Corridor and heard Ann's voice in the bar you would usually do a U-turn and go in because you knew there would be a good story, a terrific joke or just a lot of camaraderie.

During that period my wife Helen and I faced a fairly difficult personal situation, and apart from the Premier there was only one person in the whole of Parliament who knew about it, and that was Ann Henderson. Ann gave me enormous support at that time, and when I look back now and recall that she was still giving me support and assisting me when she had problems of her own which made mine pale into insignificance, I can only reflect on what sort of a special person she was.

We became firm friends, and you do not make a lot of those sorts of friends in politics. One thing I have learnt is that, as someone mentioned, there is a lot of cruelty in politics and it can bring out the worst in some people, but there was not an ounce of cruelty in Ann

Henderson. No matter what happened and no matter what the personal conflicts were, Ann rose above them, and she was a person of extraordinary quality to be able to do so.

Ann took me under her wing, and I suspect the Premier may have put us together up there on the back bench for that purpose. Jeff Kennett had met me only a couple of times and that was on the campaign trail, and I do not think I impressed him very much. I remember the first time we met was at Fountain Gate shopping centre. Ken Smith and Jeff Kennett were going through the centre and meeting people and I thought, 'I'll go on my own and meet other people'. Ken came up to me and said, 'You idiot! When the Leader of the Opposition is there, you should be there with him and not off talking to other people'.

Maybe it was a good idea to put Ann up there with me because she took me under her wing. She even used to comment on my dress. I had a habit of wearing ties with stains all over them and various other things, and she sorted me out on that too. Not much has changed!

We had many serious conversations as well as many light-hearted ones. We used to look down at the ministers wondering whether one day we would ever make it, and we used to judge them out of 10 on their performance at answering questions. Ann was an enormous supporter of Jeff Kennett. I came from a legal background, and basically lawyers criticise everybody and everything all the time — it is just part of the deal — but if I started criticising Jeff Kennett she would put her fingers in her ears and say, 'I'm not listening'.

Ann had a huge loyalty towards Jeff. They had a special bond, and I can tell you how it came about because she told me and I do not think she would mind me telling you now. When she was running for preselection in the 1992 campaign she did something or said something — I have forgotten what it was — that raised his ire. He was absolutely furious with her and he rang her up and gave her a total blast. Ann just listened to the blast and then stood up for herself and said, 'No, I did it for this reason and I did it for that reason', and she did not let him get away with it. If there was one thing Jeff Kennett respected it was people who did not get blown away by the blast that quite often came — and I remember I got blown away by it many times. Ann stood up to him and a real bond was formed. That is a very rare thing in politics, and it went on after that.

In 1996 we were all ambitious little backbenchers hoping we would get a spot on the front bench. I did not get one — I got a parliamentary secretary's job — but

Ann did. You might think that in the competitive area of politics others might hold a bit of resentment in those circumstances and say, ‘Damn it, what does she have that I haven’t got?’.

The amazing thing was that amongst my colleagues and me there was absolutely no resentment whatever about Ann getting that job because we knew why she got it. When she came into this place she had a level of maturity which she displayed all through her time in Parliament which automatically qualified her for that job, which she did very well indeed.

She really looked after me. She never stopped asking how I was and what was happening in my life. She knew I had a passion for indigenous affairs. At the time this house had the debate on reconciliation she knew I desperately wanted to speak. The only three members who spoke on behalf of the government in that debate were Jeff Kennett, Ann and me, and I am fairly certain that Ann made sure I got to speak.

I think Ann did quite a few things behind the scenes which were never revealed. When her brother-in-law, I think it was, passed away I remember it being a very hard time for her. When her husband, Michael, passed away — we have heard about the funeral and I will never forget that day as long as I live — I never thought I would be going back into that cathedral to mourn Ann.

There was something about Ann that made you think she was going to go on forever. No matter what problems she had, nobody had any concept that she would finally be overcome by that disease. It was a terrible thing to see it happen, and I do not think I could ever handle something so difficult in the way she handled it. What style, what maturity, what kindness! Caring for other people even when she herself was dying was an amazing thing.

Ann, I miss you terribly. I wish you were here now, because we are going through all sorts of hard times and it would be terrific if you were here. Do remember us, and I will always remember you.

Mr PATERSON (South Barwon) — I pay tribute to my former colleague and friend, Ann Henderson, who died tragically in June. Ann loved her family, and she was passionate about Geelong — before, during and after her parliamentary career. She gave great service to the people of Geelong in a variety of roles, serving as a member of the National Trust, Legacy, Deakin University, Do Care, the Port Fairy music festival, the Geelong Art Gallery Foundation and many other groups. She also showed extraordinary leadership in the

development of Geelong’s waterfront. Her interest in Geelong lasted well after she left Parliament, and I often received phone calls from her about local issues.

In her maiden speech to Parliament in 1992 she spoke about how she often looked up at the spire of St Patrick’s Cathedral, which is situated behind Parliament House, which she said had been built by members of her family. Two brothers, both masonry craftsmen, came to Australia many generations ago to lay their own foundations for a large and diverse family. She said that the principles and ethos by which she lived were the result of the values that had been handed down to her from a family that based its success and failures on hard work, adventure, challenge and opportunity.

Ann’s death prompted a headline ‘Passionate fighter for beloved Geelong’ in the *Geelong Advertiser*. Ann was certainly passionate, and she was certainly a fighter. She herself was certainly loved, and she certainly loved Geelong. I say at this juncture that I know her colleague Garry Spry would have dearly loved to have been here today but he is ill and cannot join in debate on this condolence motion.

Ann was brave to the end, and I will miss her deeply. I will miss her compassion, I will miss her often wicked sense of fun and I will miss her laughter. My sympathy goes to her children, Sarah, Jodie and Andrew, and their families.

Mr SMITH (Glen Waverley) — I would like to bring another perspective to the debate on the sad passing of Ann Henderson. I was Government Whip during the period when she was seriously ill and then recuperating. Jeff Kennett and I agreed that she should be away as often as possible, and it was my chore to make sure that she did go home early. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that a number of people would be up for unbelievable excuses to try to get away for whatever nefarious activities that might have been going on at the time, or whatever else they wanted, but Ann Henderson had to be forced almost on a nightly basis to go home.

She was a team player par excellence. She felt that by going early in the delicate medical state she was in she was letting down the side. As whip it was an extraordinarily hard daily chore to ensure that Ann went home to get the proper rest she should have been getting. In fact she should not have been in here at all some of the time, but because of her dedication and her passionate devotion to her portfolio she was here all the time to ensure that she could give to the best of her ability. It was a tremendously hard job to convince her. On a nightly basis I would say, ‘Go home, Ann, get a

good night's rest and don't bother coming in until you are feeling better in the morning'. She did, but it was a hard chore.

Another thing about her as a great team player and a person dedicated to her portfolio was the fact that it seemed that at that stage I had a lot of housing problems, with many public housing constituents who needed assistance. There was one extraordinary case that I will not go into. Her close adviser, John Baring, whose name has come up in the debate, kept me informed on almost a daily basis on what was going on. It was amazing that a woman who had that illness at that stage and who you would think would have other things on her mind would slip past in the corridor and say, 'We are doing such and such about this particular case'. It was absolute dedication to a degree that I found quite amazing — 'inspirational' was the word used by the honourable member for Pakenham.

Another thing that comes to mind about that time is the adage, proverb or whatever: I complained because I had no shoes until I saw a man who had no feet. When talking to people who had excuses in trying to get away for whatever reasons they wanted to get away for, I used Ann Henderson as the example. It was amazing the inspiration it brought to those people, who would then realise that they were complaining about things that were of such triviality while she had something that she was carrying with such dignity and with such bravery. She was one of the bravest persons I have met and a woman who will go down with all of us as being an inspiration.

I also pass on condolences of my wife Sarah to her family: Sarah, Jodie and Andrew.

Mr ROWE (Cranbourne) — It is with a degree of sadness that I join the condolence debate today but also with some happiness that I at least had the pleasure of knowing Ann Henderson.

As my colleagues from 1992 have all attested, certainly a good time was had by all in those early days from 1992 to 1996. I am sure a lot of those good times, as the honourable member for Berwick alluded to, were brought about by the shock factor, and certainly that back bench will never be the same.

It is a credit to the woman Ann Henderson was that we find out today she was Robert's mother confessor and mine as well — a woman of great compassion, a woman of —

Mr Doyle — Great capacity.

Mr ROWE — A woman of great capacity, as the Leader of the Opposition says.

She had a great understanding of life and would offer sensible, caring, sincere advice that some of us may have needed from time to time.

As Minister for Housing she was, as others have said, a great minister and a great person. The ministry certainly had its problems — problems inherited from the shared home ownership scheme and the home opportunity loans scheme. As a minister she met with those people who had been affected by taking on those government loans and she did not shirk for one moment from a meeting with an angry person in those circumstances. Such a person would leave the meeting speaking volumes about how kind, compassionate and caring the minister was.

The Christmas parties were most enjoyable, and there were nights in the dining room where we would be sitting having talks after a long day going into a long evening — and we would break into song!

I remember that on my wedding day all the guests were talking about the table of politicians, who were being led a merry dance by Ann Henderson. I remember Ann and the Leader of the Opposition dancing the night away. To have her there on that day was very special, because she had certainly helped me through difficult times prior to the day. I would love to have been able to give her more support in her time of need. The whole community will miss her.

On behalf of myself and my wife, Maria, I place on the record our sincere thanks for and appreciation of having known a wonderful lady, Ann Henderson. We offer our condolences to her family. She was a great lady.

Mr WELLS (Wantirna) — The recent passing of Ann Henderson was a sad day for me, not only from the perspective that I had lost a respected former colleague but because of the close association I had with Ann in my capacity as the immediate past chairman of the Victorian Homeless Fund. Ann provided great support to the Victorian Homeless Fund as the Victorian Minister for Housing between 1996 and 1999 and was integral to the VHF undertaking a bold new direction culminating in the commencement of an innovative and exciting new project back in 1996.

The fund's houses project involved the renovation of surplus and run-down public housing stock, with the assistance of the fund's project partner, the Housing Industry Association, back to an appropriate standard, allowing it to be used for emergency transitional housing for homeless families and young people. When

I first became chairman of the VHF in 1995 the fund required an overhaul and a new direction for the future. Like most charitable organisations the fund was finding it increasingly difficult to raise public funds for homeless causes, particularly from the corporate sector.

The economic recession of the early 1990s in Victoria had made the corporate sector much more demanding in terms of wanting to see some return for its donated dollar. In light of the changing times the VHF embarked on developing an ambitious project that would see the fund directing its focus to expending donated moneys on bricks and mortar projects where donors could see a result for their contribution. The VHF and I, as its chairman, were very fortunate that Ann Henderson had the vision and foresight to see that the fund's cooperative partnership with the houses project, involving the government, corporate and charitable sectors, could make a real difference.

The significant difference this particular project made was that surplus public housing declared to be no longer viable could be renovated back to a standard which would keep it as emergency public housing for a further five years or more, whereas if it had not been for the homeless fund project it would have been lost altogether as emergency transitional housing stock. Ann Henderson sincerely believed in the worthwhile benefits of the homeless fund's project, and in June 1996 she initiated a search for surplus properties within Office of Housing stock suitable for renovation and for use as transitional housing.

The first two houses to be completed under the project, the HIA Foundation House and Kingston House, which were opened by Ann on 9 December 1996, were located in Doveton and Dandenong North. Since then the project has grown to five renovated properties, with the first two followed by Pitcher Partners House, Tattersalls House and the latest, Helen Macpherson Smith Trust House, just recently completed and opened on 5 July this year in Burwood.

The Victorian Homeless Fund is greatly appreciative of the fact that the houses project, first commenced with the kind assistance of Ann Henderson, continues to be supported by the current government and the Minister for Housing, who is also the Minister for Community Services. Everyone involved in the houses project is very grateful that the good work of Ann Henderson continues to receive widespread support and recognition as a worthwhile initiative to assist Victoria's homeless families and young people. The fund's houses project would never have got off the ground without Ann Henderson's extraordinary kindness and encouragement, and it will remain as a

continuing legacy of the great work of a caring and remarkable person.

Ann spoke at many of our fundraising events, and it is terrific that her Geelong colleague, the Honourable Ian Cover in another place, continues to work hard for the valuable corporate dollars.

On behalf of the Victorian Homeless Fund, and as the former chairman and current honorary patron, it is with great sadness that I support this condolence motion for the passing of a very special lady in Ann Henderson, who will remain in our memories forever. She will be sadly missed.

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — Following a number of suicides and deaths in a short space of time on a Sandringham electorate housing estate I had occasion to speak with Ann Henderson in the chamber as I wanted to raise a matter on the adjournment debate. She indicated that the adjournment debate may not be the best forum for that, and said rather she would like to make an appointment to travel to the Sandringham electorate at the earliest opportunity to meet with residents on the estate to discuss the issues of concern to them.

She was decisive, principled and innovative in her approach to this particular problem, and she won the affection of the people on the estate as she talked through the issues with them and engaged, through her chief of staff, John Baring, with them on subsequent occasions to ensure that their concerns about the estate were being addressed.

As has already been said in the chamber today, her family motto in effect was 'Hard work, adventure, challenge and opportunity'. But to those words I think I would choose to add a few more. Her staff, upon the occasion of her death, noted that vitality, integrity and compassion were also virtues Ann possessed. Throughout her illness she was a resilient and courageous woman. She was both brave and bold as she confronted the challenges of her medical treatment. She had a vitality for life and an epicurean appreciation of dining with family and friends.

My parliamentary colleague the honourable member for Bellarine unfortunately has not been able to attend to contribute to this condolence motion, but just a few moments ago by phone he asked for these remarks to be passed on in the debate: firstly, that he regarded Ann as an outstanding leader in Geelong; and secondly, that one of her greatest achievements in public life was a change in the waiting list for public housing according to need and not just chronological order.

There is a Latin expression, *si quaeris monumentum circumspice*, which generally translated to apply to the chamber today is, 'If you seek a memorial to Ann's life, look around' — look from the spire of St Patrick's Cathedral to her family in the chamber today.

Mrs PEULICH (Bentleigh) — I would like to say a few words in honour of Ann. Having known Ann from 1992 to 1999 and for part of that time having shared a room with her — the partitioned room to which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred — I was able to observe her at fairly close quarters. Although Ann and I did not move in the same social circles and our backgrounds were fairly different, let me say that it made no difference to her or to me.

In the contributions today there were some common themes about Ann's character, which were verified by all who spoke. I place on record and extend my condolences to Ann's family, including her children and grandchildren.

Ann was the darling of the Liberal Party. I remember when we were elected in 1992 she was much admired for her tenacity and her hard work in the community. She was, and always remained, a team player who was committed to her community and to liberalism. She earned the respect and admiration of everyone who came in contact with her.

I think the most admirable of Ann's qualities was her optimism, which she clearly retained to the end. She was a highly organised person. Never a moment was wasted; it was always put to some good and constructive use. Watching the way she managed her very busy office was something that made me green with envy, and I must confess I did take a few pages out of her book. She was not only highly organised but always worked at driving change and at driving resolutions to problems, even if she was only playing the role of a facilitator.

Apart from that she was a darned nice person. In this fairly fickle profession the nastiest comment I ever heard Ann make about anybody, including of course political opponents, was, 'He's a bit of a nasty person'. That was about as harsh as it got from Ann, which I must confess made the rest of us feel a little bit inadequate.

She certainly was passionate about Geelong. She was absolutely devoted to her husband, who predeceased her. I know how much they adored each other. She was enormously proud of all three of her children. Of course, being a fairly clucky mother myself, I was able to share in the delight that Ann experienced when she

became a grandmother. She was absolutely filled with adoration for her grandchildren.

As a local MP she was a community builder with very extensive community networks, and she obviously earned enormous respect in and left a permanent mark on Geelong. As a minister she was hardworking, compassionate and genuine about making a difference — and she did make a difference in both of her portfolios of housing and Aboriginal affairs. As a colleague she was friendly, much liked and respected.

In closing, I would like to extend the condolences not only of those MPs who are here but those who are no longer here and had the privilege of serving with Ann. Her good work, her achievements and her incredible civic sense of duty are an example to all politicians on all sides of politics.

Ms BURKE (Pahran) — Much has been said on the Honourable Ann Henderson, but I would like to make a small contribution.

I first heard of Ann when she was the new candidate for Geelong. I heard from the community the great excitement about this woman with passion, commitment and energy. We certainly saw the results of that. The second time I came across Ann Henderson was in the time of the council amalgamations. All she wanted was the best outcome for Geelong. She never interfered in any way, she just wanted the best outcome for Geelong. Then there was my time in Parliament with Ann in her role as Minister for Housing and Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. Anybody who has a high proportion of ministry of housing properties in their electorate really understands the importance of a good minister for housing, and Ann certainly was that.

On a personal note, we used to walk around the Tan before Parliament sat on Parliament mornings. They were very energetic walks, revving us up for the day, and there were many interesting conversations as we went around. But I suppose the most memorable thing for me was being at the funeral and seeing all of the people there from her life, from the very beginning to the very end. I could not help but remember what a woman who was a close friend of Ann's said to me. She said, 'When Ann died, I couldn't understand why the world did not stand still'. I guess we can be pleased today that this Parliament has stood still to remember Ann and her achievements, not only in Parliament but in life and for the Victorian people. My condolences go to her friends and family.

The SPEAKER — I join the house in expressing my sincere sorrow at the passing of Ann Henderson, and I express my sincere condolences to her three children and family members at the very sad loss they have incurred as a result of her passing.

Motion agreed to in silence, honourable members showing unanimous agreement by standing in their places.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr BRACKS (Premier) — I move:

That, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honourable Thomas Leslie Austin and the late Honourable Ann Mary Henderson, the house do now adjourn until tomorrow.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 5.39 p.m.