

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT**

**FIRST SESSION**

**9 November 2004**

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### FIFTY-FIFTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

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**Tuesday, 9 November 2004**

**The SPEAKER (Hon. Judy Maddigan) took the chair at 2.03 p.m. and read the prayer.**

**ABSENCE OF MINISTERS**

**The SPEAKER** — Order! Prior to the commencement of the condolence motion I have been asked by the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Planning to formally note their apologies. They are attending the funeral of a former member of the Department of Sustainability and Environment, Paul Jerome, who died very suddenly last week.

**CONDOLENCES**

**Hon. Marie Therese Tehan**

**Mr BRACKS (Premier)** — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of the Honourable Marie Therese Tehan 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 Council for the electoral province of Central Highlands from 1987 to 1992 and member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Seymour from 1992 to 1999, Minister for Community Services, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Services and Minister for Health Services from October to November 1992, Minister for Health from 1992 to 1996 and Minister for Conservation and Land Management from 1996 to 1999.

Much has been said and written about Marie Tehan since she passed away at her home in Nagambie nine days ago. Those words paint a picture of a person of substance and compassion; a person who contributed much to Victoria in terms of her work for the health system and her concern for the environment; a person who championed the rights of asylum seekers through her work on the refugee committee of the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre and the Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace; and a person who showed unflinching courage when confronted with a disease that had also taken the life of her sister.

A politician, a lawyer, a wife, a mother, a grandmother and a humanitarian — Marie Therese Tehan achieved much in her life. She was born in Melbourne on 19 June 1940, and was educated at Sacre Coeur and the University of Melbourne, graduating with a bachelor of laws degree in 1961. She worked as a tutor in law at Newman College and as an assistant examiner in Melbourne University's law faculty. She also worked

as a secondary school teacher at Sacred Heart College in Mansfield before opening a legal practice in 1970.

The years that followed must have been incredibly busy for Marie Tehan. She ran her growing law practice and served as a senior member of the Veterans Review Board, a board member of Foster Parents Plan of Australia, the secretary of Foster Parents Plan International and a member of the Goulburn/North East Regional TAFE board. And she raised six children.

In 1987 she became the first resident of Mansfield shire to be elected to state Parliament when she became the member for Central Highlands Province in another place. Between 1987 and 1992 Marie Tehan served as the shadow minister for conservation, forests and lands; industry, technology and resources; status of women; and health.

In 1992 she was elected as the member for Seymour in this chamber and became a minister of the Crown. Between 1992 and 1999 Marie Tehan served as the Minister for Health and the Minister for Conservation and Land Management. In health she oversaw the introduction of casemix funding — a method of funding that is now widely used across Australia. In conservation and land management she played a leading role in saving 13 000 hectares of old growth forest near Mount Hotham.

It was during that time — when Marie Tehan was Minister for Conservation and Land Management — that I had most of my dealings with her as a minister. I can remember as an opposition member — I was not leader at that time — taking a delegation of citizens from Williamstown to meet with her about the Point Gellibrand state park proposal. I have to say that Marie Tehan gave a lot of time, effort and support towards ensuring that part of Point Gellibrand was preserved and saved for the future — and I know that residents are grateful for her efforts in that regard. She was unfailingly generous with her time, and also a real professional in the way she dealt with that issue. I know that many members — whatever side of the house they are on and whatever the issue that concerned her portfolio — would have similar experiences of the way she has dealt with issues.

As members would be aware, our government was pleased to appoint Marie Tehan to the Goulburn-Murray Water board earlier this year. Water management is a key agenda item, a key issue, for our government, and we wanted the best available person to fill that role. Marie Therese Tehan was that person.

In conclusion I would like to recall one of the many stories that has been told about Marie Tehan. In an article published in the *Herald Sun* last week, her former press secretary, James Tonkin, told how she set out to learn more about her conservation and land management portfolio by camping in East Gippsland with her husband, Jim, and youngest son Patrick. A conservation group challenged the minister — conservation groups often do that — to join it on a climb of Mount Ellery. She accepted the challenge and, 300 metres from the summit, overcame a sheer rock face to complete the climb. This is indicative of the career and life of Marie Tehan. When confronted with life's obstacles, Marie Therese Tehan did not flinch.

She will be sorely missed by her community and by her family, many of whom are here with us today. I acknowledge on behalf of the Parliament their presence in the gallery today. I congratulate members of Marie's family for the moving tributes they offered her at her recent state funeral — I think all of us were moved by those fitting and appropriate tributes. To her husband, Jim, to her children Kathryn, James, Daniel, Rachael, David and Patrick, and to her grandchildren Tom, Sam, Lily, Isabelle, Alice, Oliver, Maya and Henry, we pass on our sincere condolences.

**Mr DOYLE** (Leader of the Opposition) — I am delighted to second the motion of condolence for Marie Therese Tehan who was born on 19 June 1940 and died on 1 November 2004. Her late father, Frank O'Brien, was a small businessman and publican and her family moved throughout Victoria, including East Kew, Shepparton and Dandenong. Her much-loved mother, Alice, is also deceased. Marie had two brothers, Paddy and Denis, who are both with us today, and a deceased older sister, Helen. It is a sad coincidence that Marie died on Denis's birthday and was buried on Paddy's birthday.

Marie was educated at Sacre Coeur, and one of the favourite stories that was told at her state funeral was that of a nun who asked Marie during year 12 what she would be doing in the next year because she would surely fail her matriculation. Of course she passed with honours, and as was remarked upon at the state funeral, 'Those nuns are some motivators'. She went on to complete a bachelor of laws degree at Melbourne University, was in the top four law students in her year and was president of St Mary's College.

In 1963 she married Jim and began a wonderful lifelong association. She started her married life on the Tehan family property, Wappan, at Lake Eildon. As the Premier has said, Marie is survived by her six children and their families: Kathryn, James, Daniel, Rachael,

David and Patrick and eight much-loved and cherished grandchildren.

Marie really had five careers. As the Premier pointed out, she first had a career as a schoolteacher at Sacred Heart College, Mansfield. She was then a solicitor. She started a very modest practice — I think in the back of a small shop — which flourished. She was a member of this Parliament between 1987 and 1999. As the Premier said, she was a member for Central Highlands Province in the other place from 1987 to 1992 and the member for Seymour from 1992 to 1999. She had ministerial responsibilities, including a brief stint in the caretaker period between October and November 1992 but then principally as Minister for Health from 1992 to 1996 and Minister for Conservation and Land Management from 1996 to 1999.

Those three careers would have been remarkable, but Marie also had a fourth career, which was both a lifelong and particularly a post-political career: she was a volunteer and an advocacy worker, particularly for refugees. She had a lifetime of service doing that, as the Premier has pointed out, including with Foster Parents Plan but even more recently with the Melbourne Cancerians Committee. As the Premier said, she also had the integrity and courage to publish and speak publicly against our federal party's policies on refugees, detention and the rights of women and children in particular, and she did so as recently as December 2003.

But I believe to Marie her first and foremost career was as a wife, a mother and a grandmother. She was the Tehan family fulcrum. I first met Marie years before I entered this Parliament — before I entered politics — because I taught one of her boys. If you thought Marie Tehan was tough and uncompromising as a health minister, try sitting across a table from her at a parent-teacher interview. I say to her family that she was realistic. If she had to be critical of one of her boys, she was, but that was certainly not an invitation for anybody else to take that liberty!

Marie was Minister for Health between 1992 and 1996, which was a period of great reform. The poor financial position inherited by the Kennett government required both a 10 per cent saving across the health portfolio and also better services. Marie Tehan was in the difficult position of implementing this policy while at the same time introducing significant reforms across the portfolio. Anyone who understands the problems and complexity of health policy will appreciate the dilemma that faced Marie. But she delivered the savings, and her reforms and stewardship of the portfolio were also

delivered within two years, including such things as a 10 per cent reduction in elective surgery waiting lists.

When I think of her greatest reforms in the health portfolio, three come readily to mind. The Premier has mentioned casemix funding, a funding formula that has now been adopted in a number of other jurisdictions. Marie's success in this area was recognised by Dr Neal Blewett, a former health minister in a Labor federal government. In his retirement speech to the federal Parliament Neal was very generous in his praise of Marie. Of her reforms he said:

The most imaginative set of reforms to deal with the hospital system in this country in the last half a dozen years.

That was an eloquent testament to Marie's efficiency in the health portfolio.

Marie also introduced the hospital network systems. They were changed a little after she left the portfolio, but that was an enormous shake-up, which I am delighted to say the present government has continued. We are better served by that reorganisation of our public hospitals.

A third that I mention is one she was perhaps not quite so well known for — that is, the mainstreaming of mental health. Marie was determined to remove the stigma attached to mental health and to provide better and more mental health services. That was not entirely fashionable in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but I know that she worked very hard with members on both sides of this house to achieve a better result for those with a mental illness. She also had a very strong commitment to better programs and research for heart disease and cancer. I refer particularly to breast cancer and BreastScreen. Post politics her commitment continued through the Melbourne Cancerians Committee.

Between 1996 and 1999 Marie was the Minister for Conservation and Land Management. She presided over a number of very worthwhile reforms including, as the Premier said, the saving of over 13 000 hectares of old growth forests in the Wongungarra Valley near Mount Hotham. She also oversaw the establishment of Parks Victoria.

I must say that in thinking about Marie Tehan one judgment you always feared from her was to be called stupid. It was an adjective she could apply to a man, a woman, an idea or a decision. Marie could inflect that relatively innocuous insult with such dismissiveness — not venom or contempt; that was not her way — that you just hoped it was never used on you either in private or indeed to your face, which Marie was

perfectly capable of doing. She, like another, was 'a lady not for turning' when it came to the hard decisions.

After her retirement from Parliament Marie faced the burden of the Metropolitan Ambulance Service royal commission — what was to become known as the Intergraph affair. About that I will say just that the allegations were proved wrong. The royal commission vindicated Marie Tehan's consistent claims that she would be exonerated. The royal commissioner found her to be an honest and reliable witness and found her conduct was 'neither illegal nor improper'. The royal commissioner characterised Marie as a politician who told the truth. I take my cue from family members who mentioned the royal commission in their eulogies last Friday, and my words reinforce the view of the family, certainly of our party and indeed of the royal commission itself.

After Marie retired from politics, Jim and she enjoyed their new home and property at Dalhousie, near Nagambie. Marie continued her community work, including her strong commitment to improving the lot of refugees and asylum seekers. During her last few years Marie was happily surrounded by children and sons and daughters-in-law. Most importantly, she was surrounded by her grandchildren — all eight of them.

I read an interview with Marie that was conducted in 1993. She described herself as a 'true Gemini ... twins ... a bit of this and a bit of that'. I do not think she meant she was a person of contradictions, but she did mean she was a person of contrasts. That was brought home to me at the state funeral last Friday, in particular. When you consider one Marie, the health minister, you see her as tough, uncompromising, logical, intelligent and forthright. That is an accurate picture of the Honourable Marie Tehan. But then at her funeral Kathy told stories of Marie the grandmother going into the bedroom of sleeping grandchildren and then emerging with some sleepy, drowsy, blinking child and saying, 'Look! She's just woken up!'. 'Yes, sure, Marie!'. A better picture, and it is a memorable one, is of Sunday mornings at Dalhousie, with Jim and Marie in bed surrounded by grandchildren, where there was tea, toast, songs and games. That too was Marie Tehan.

Marie died of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD). The chances of being affected by that disease are miniscule — one in a million. Marie's older sister, Helen, died of the disease 20 years earlier. The chances of two siblings attracting this disease must be billions to one. Those who attended Marie's funeral could only have been struck by the courage of her family's speaking about the nature of this disease, particularly

her brother, Paddy O'Brien, who, along with Denis, has now lost both of his sisters to CJD.

The family spoke of the courage Marie showed when she was told that she had CJD and of the dignity that surrounded her final weeks. One could only have been struck by the strength and love of Marie's family, so evident at the requiem mass held at St Malachy's Catholic Church in Nagambie. The church was full; the two marquees outside were both full; there was standing room only. The music was wonderful and the readings were beautiful. The mass was celebrated by the Bishop of Sandhurst, the Very Reverend Joe Grech, and a number of priests, including the provincials of the Society of Jesus and the Blessed Sacrament Order. The principal celebrant was Fr Graeme Duro, who had also worked for Marie in her ministerial office while on sabbatical from his priestly duties.

I found the tributes to Marie very moving: the eulogies by Jim Tehan and by Paddy O'Brien, and the contributions by James Tehan, Rachael Kemp, Kathryn Cameron and Daniel Tehan, and the readings by Patrick and David. During the funeral, as I mentioned, Paddy O'Brien told the story of Marie's telling him about the fact that she had been diagnosed with CJD. When he asked her how she felt about that, her reply was extraordinary: she said she felt remarkably calm. We should remember that 20 years before she had seen Helen die of this aggressive, cruel disease. Marie knew the prognosis.

This is a matter of great sadness to me. Marie must have known — she did know — that CJD was a death sentence. She must have known that she would lose her independence. She must have known that she would lose that fine, sharp mind. She must have feared that her dear family would slip away from her as that terrible, dark curtain came down. The reality of course is that she could never lose that extended family — the Tehans, O'Briens, Arthurs, Camerons and Kemps. All who were at the service felt the love and the faith that infuse and sustain them all.

In the eulogies last Friday and the obituaries published since, Marie was variously described as highly principled, forthright and humane, loyal, compassionate, articulate and charming, intelligent and hardworking, tough, the essence of intellectual feminism, and loving and caring. From all of my personal and professional experience of Marie, these descriptions and sentiments are all true. In saying goodbye to Ann Henderson in this place, I farewelled a dear friend. In saying goodbye to Marie Tehan, I farewell a dear friend and mentor.

**Mr RYAN** (Leader of The Nationals) — I rise on behalf of The Nationals to join in this condolence motion in company with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. With due respect to her, Marie Tehan was a class act. She had many facets and aspects, and we have heard some of them recited today by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. First and foremost, she was a wonderful wife to Jim for 41 years and the mother of their six children. Apart from those wonderful traits and tributes, she had a superb intellect.

She defied the odds set out to her by a doubting nun and passed her matriculation, passed her legal exams with honours, coming fourth in her class, and went on to conduct her own practice. She started on a two-day-a-week basis and it flourished almost inevitably, turning into a full-time practice. She then took her intellect forward into this place, becoming renowned as a very able, competent and capable member of this Parliament. She served in two portfolios — Minister for Health and Minister for Conservation and Land Management. She then took that intellect and her commitment to things at large and life in general into her advocacy, particularly on behalf of asylum seekers.

Last week I, my wife, Trish, and about 500 others attended the requiem mass at Nagambie. It truly was an extraordinary day. Jim Tehan stood up and spoke so eloquently and lovingly of his wife. Each of the children contributed something of their own to the day, putting a different persuasion on the things that were said. I thought their contributions were wonderful. What about my mate Paddy O'Brien? We have been good friends for more than 20 years. I thought his contribution on the day was fantastic. As is his wont, Paddy managed to snap an Achilles tendon a couple of weeks before Marie's tragic passing, so Paddy's wife, Julia, and I had to help him to his feet on Friday. We propped him over the crutches and he was able to hobble up to the altar and eventually take his place at the rostrum. What a great speech, what a wonderful contribution he made.

I pause to say that Paddy O'Brien's abilities as a speechmaker are far greater than his abilities on the tennis court. I felt he made a fantastic contribution, not only in its own right but also for his sister in circumstances where his other sister, Helen, had passed away those 20 years earlier. Just imagine the sorts of things that were swirling around in Jim's mind and the minds of the children.

There were subsets to the day which perhaps were not so evident. Vin Arthur spoke; he delivered one of the prayers of the faithful. Vin Arthur is a prince of a man.

He was married to Helen but he lost her 20 years ago, when he was left widowed as the father of five young children. Here it was again being brought back to him. Vin Arthur has seen tragedy in his life, but he has been smiled upon twice by his God, because having lost a wonderful lady in Helen he years later married Dianne, who was with him at the church on Friday. To see that interaction among those people, many of whom I know so well, added to an extraordinary day.

The requiem mass itself was a fantastic celebration of Marie's life. I thought the way Fr Graeme Duro concelebrated it with Bishop Grech and the other priests in attendance was a pointer to one of the great standpoints in Marie's life — namely, her Catholic faith. She always stood by it and it always stood by her. It was on display on Friday and I thought it added to the occasion immensely.

I suppose that for most of us the legacy Marie leaves she left in this place and in this chamber. I was a part of the government when she was fulfilling those ministerial roles. Of course she was subjected to a deal of attention in the latter part of her time as a minister. It is Marie and the family's day today so we are not going to dwell on those issues. Suffice it to say, I think it is instructive to reflect upon the commentary by Jim and Daniel on Friday and by the Leader of the Opposition today as to the findings of the royal commission. They in themselves were extraordinary. Not only was this lady not found guilty of any misdemeanour, but she was absolutely cleared and found innocent. It was a commentary upon her. However, that aspect did not finish there.

In the middle of this year the government appointed Marie to the board of Goulburn-Murray Water. I thought at the time that in its own way it was a pretty courageous appointment. These appointments are made by the minister, but they are cabinet appointments. I know Marie was deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve on that board; tragically she was robbed of that opportunity as fate took its hand. I also know that Jim and the children and Paddy and Denis share that point of view. I think on this of all days it is important to reflect on that.

My mother, Marie Ryan, was a Tehan. Her married name is Ryan, but she has worn both names as badges of honour all her life. I rang her last night to try to get some instruction from her as to the relationship between Marie and me. I am afraid I can shed little light on the topic; being just a simple country boy it is all too complex for me. Suffice it to say that somehow by marriage we were related. It is said around the hills of Dookie that Ryans, rabbits and Moylans are all of the

same proportion! Certainly the Tehans would hold sway with most, particularly over near Rochester or Wappan or as may be.

What we saw on Friday was something that we do not reflect on enough in this place, and that is evidence of the fact that we all have a life outside here. We saw opened up to us on Friday just for a brief period an opportunity to look through the window at one of the great country families in the state — the Tehan clan. I thought it was a great tribute to a great lady. On behalf of The Nationals I convey my deepest sympathies to Jim, the children, Paddy, Denis and members of the extended family. Vale Marie Therese Tehan.

**Mr BATCHELOR** (Minister for Transport) — This house was saddened by the passing of Marie Tehan on Sunday, 31 October 2004. She was 64 years of age, being born on 19 June 1940 in Melbourne. Marie studied law and went on to become a tutor at Newman College. She was later an assistant examiner in the law faculty at Melbourne University.

Marie went on from there to hold a number of positions on boards, being actively interested in wider community issues. She was a member of the Veterans Review Board, the Australian and international board of Foster Parents Plan and a number of regional TAFE boards. As the Leader of The Nationals just commented, earlier this year the government appointed her to the board of Goulburn-Murray Water. That was, as he said, a ministerial recommendation that went to cabinet, where it was enthusiastically supported. We saw it as a good appointment, and we are saddened that she was unable to fulfil the hopes that were held of her in our making that appointment.

Marie Tehan made a noble contribution to Victoria. She was first elected to Parliament in 1987 as a member for Central Highlands in the other place before becoming the member for Seymour in this place in 1992. She served both houses of this Parliament with commitment for 12 years. During that time she held a number of cabinet positions in the Kennett government, including Minister for Community Services, Minister responsible for Aboriginal Services, the Minister for Health and Minister for Conservation and Land Management. During this period a major, if controversial, milestone was overseeing the introduction a new hospital funding formula, casemix.

But she also made a significant contribution in the environment and conservation area. This was recently acknowledged by The Wilderness Society, which commended her for saving some 13 000 hectares of old

growth forest at Wongungarra Valley near Mount Hotham in her capacity as conservation minister.

Her passion for social policy and justice were admirable. She had a high regard for family: she was the loving mother of six children and was recently described as a role model for all women.

Marie retired from state politics in 1999 but maintained an active interest in public service, particularly with regard to refugees. She became so committed to this cause that after visiting the Maribyrnong detention centre she commented that she was appalled by the mental and emotional state of the detainees. She went on to play a leading role as an advocate for refugees. She worked with the boards of the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre and the Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace and the refugee committee of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Marie spoke out fervently against the injustice of mandatory detention. Her commitment to social policy was not hindered by party politics. As members will have read, in the *Age* on 17 February 2003 she was prepared to speak out publicly, stating that the federal government's statements and public fears had created a 'bizarre entanglement' of refugees with terrorism, which she regretted, and it drove her on to work even harder for those people on whose behalf she was advocating — the refugees. Marie motivated and inspired other people to be better informed on this issue — to get out there and get involved, and to be compassionate and help the less fortunate in our society.

I, along with others, offer my sincere condolences to Marie Tehan's loving and large family.

**Mr HONEYWOOD** (Warrandyte) — In rising to speak today I would like to focus on just two of Marie's attributes: her mentoring role and her loyalty to individuals and causes in which she believed. When you look back on any career, and particularly on this career, you warmly remember colleagues or elders who took a genuine interest in your progress, who encouraged you when you were at a low ebb and who selflessly provided advice on the way forward. Back in those days those colleagues were very much in the minority. Marie Tehan was a very important mentor for a number of us on this side of the house.

I first met Marie in 1986 when she and I took part in the Liberal Party's first ever prospective candidates training program. I well recall the member for Bass was also an outstanding graduate of that intake. He has not

changed! Marie's talent shone through then, and she was very quickly endorsed as our candidate for a by-election in the upper house province of Central Highlands, which she won early in 1987. Marie told me that her never wavering loyalty to Jeff Kennett was forged during that turbulent and character-building by-election campaign, which he very much guided her through. Mind you, she told me later that her election night was probably one she would rather forget given a certain famous and colourful car phone conversation that transpired later that evening between Jeff and his mate Andrew Peacock regarding John Howard, our current Prime Minister.

When I came into this place in 1988 Marie was one of the few who would take the time to look out for you as a newcomer. At the time her thoughtful words, her wonderful smile and those amazing blue eyes were something you looked out for too. She was always immaculately tailored. She was in every sense — I know it is an outdated term — a real lady, yet she could mix it with the best of them, and she could mix it with all walks of life. I am certain that having a publican for a father and having Jim, a farmer, for a husband helped in terms of mixing it with all walks of life.

Marie was particularly a mentor to both the members for Brighton and South-West Coast and the member for Malvern, our current leader. I well recall that in the health and community services policy arena, Marie very much guided the member for South-West Coast and the member for Malvern, but at a personal level that mentoring was very strong indeed. Before the member for South-West Coast attained his current sartorial elegance, I well recall that the only time we thought Denis had a decent necktie was when Marie returned from an overseas trip and would buy him one at the airport lounge.

On a more serious level I remember that back in those days the member for Malvern was not, let us just say, the apple of Jeff's eye and was not necessarily seen to be one of Jeff's greatest — but I will move on. Marie was a fearless champion for the member for Malvern. Around the cabinet table if there was any position going for somebody to chair an important and sensitive inquiry into any government service delivery, Marie would without hesitation fearlessly advocate to the then Premier that the member for Malvern was the right man for the job. Whilst her loyalty to Jeff was paramount, she was very much loyal to those whom she regarded as protégés and had a big future ahead of them.

I got to know Marie well as a fellow cabinet minister when she sat next to me on the government front bench in this chamber from 1996 to 1999. I have to say that

she faced the most amazing, sustained and vindictive attack on a minister I have witnessed in this chamber, and she was by then no longer the Minister for Health. She never let it really show; except when question after question was thrown at her I noticed that she would take a deep breath alongside of me, rise to her feet, walk over to where the Premier is now sitting, and the only telltale sign of the stress involved in that sustained attack on her was the fidgeting with her eyeglasses case behind her back. That eyeglasses case was her rock that she took to the table when she was facing a barrage. Enough said on that. She was the real lady she has always been. She was able to defend herself, and she was an outstanding parliamentary orator and performer.

I would like to pay particular tribute to Marie's friendship with Ann Henderson, a former minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs. Ann Henderson and Marie's friendship came into their lives at a very appropriate time. They were both ministers, they were both first-time grandparents, and they had moved into townhouses close to one another. Every morning those two fine ladies would go for a walk around the tan. They used to talk about those morning discussions, and they gained a great deal from that friendship they shared. I know Marie was particularly affected by Ann's passing, and I am sure the Henderson family's thoughts go out to Marie, who was a true friend to Ann.

In closing I would like to quote from Marie's maiden speech on 7 April 1987:

Our people are our greatest resource and we should listen to what they are saying, share their concerns and give them the right direction and the future leadership they want. We, together, then can make this state a place where we can enjoy our freedoms, respond to our opportunities and live our lives free of excessive government intervention without the spectre of economic disaster hanging over our heads and with a sense of pride in ourselves, our communities, our state and our nation.

Those words particularly sum up Marie's life, and to this quote I know that I could add that to her, her family was her greatest resource. Farewell, Marie.

**Ms GARBUTT** (Minister for Community Services) — I am pleased to join this condolence motion in honour of the life of Marie Tehan. I was in Parliament for much of the time that Marie was, and, of course, I was shadow minister for conservation while she was Minister for Conservation and Land Management. I then followed her as Minister for Environment and Conservation. I found Marie to be a very tough and willing opponent. She was a strong debater, very articulate. She was sharp and was always on top of her material, but when we were outside this

place and the political forum in the chamber, she was always very courteous, accessible and friendly.

She came to the conservation portfolio a bit to my surprise, I must confess, and with a very good reputation with environmental groups because when she was shadow minister in opposition she had persuaded the Liberal Party to support new national parks. I cannot recall whether it was the Mallee National Park or the Alpine National Park, or perhaps both, but she certainly persuaded the Liberals to sit on our side of the house, and that new national park was created.

In her term as minister, environment groups nominate the Wongungarra wilderness being added to the national park as her greatest achievement, but the creation of Parks Victoria and the Victorian coastal strategy were also bold moves — ones that I subsequently amended as minister; but that just reflected the political differences and approaches between us. She was an active minister and she certainly kept me very busy. It was very hard to pin her down; she was a pretty tough political opponent.

When I became minister and took my seat behind the desk one of the first telephone calls I received was from Marie Tehan, wishing me all the best. I knew that she meant it, despite the adversarial situation we had been placed in. She also spent time talking about how she was thoroughly enjoying family life and being able to spend time with her children and grandchildren.

Being a woman member of this place is a pretty tough job, but Marie was always professional and dignified. Serving seven years as a minister is a great achievement for anybody, and certainly for a woman in this state. But I always knew that her family mattered to her, that hers was not just a life about politics but that she had a life outside Parliament that was very important to her. She often talked about her family, and particularly about her grandchildren.

After her life in Parliament we saw her continue with her public service, where her work certainly reflected her compassion and her humanity. She spoke out fearlessly and clearly, and she was a very strong advocate for the causes she believed in. I pass on my deepest sympathy to her family.

**Dr NAPHTHINE** (South-West Coast) — It is with a degree of sadness that I rise to speak on this condolence motion. Marie Tehan was first and foremost a very intelligent person. She was also a strong person — indeed, as described at her funeral, at times strong to the point of being stubborn. She knew her mind and

spoke her mind. She argued her case with intelligence, wit and determination. At the same time she was prepared to listen and to change her mind if she was given a sufficiently solid argument — but it had to be very strong and very good. She was always ready to debate issues, always ready to learn and always ready to put things to the test and increase her opportunity to deliver better outcomes for the community.

Marie Tehan was an absolutely committed person. She was passionate about doing the things she cared about. She was courageous and prepared to make the hard decisions. I always think of *Yes, Minister*, in which a minister described as a courageous decision maker was seen as a person to be wary of. Marie Tehan was a person who was prepared to make courageous decisions, sometimes to her political detriment. But if she thought the decision was right and in the best interests of the community, she made it.

She was a very caring person who was driven to do something about what she cared for. If she was concerned about an issue and thought that something needed to be done, she did not just comment on it, she went in boots and all and did something about it. Whether it was the Foster Parents Plan, her concerns about refugees or helping those in Victoria with mental illness, Marie Tehan gave it driven, committed and passionate care. At the same time she also had a warm and magnificent smile and a quick wit. She was a great personal friend, a great person to sit down with and have a conversation about a range of topics.

For those who worked with and around her she was a very demanding taskmaster, but she was the most demanding of herself. She had very high expectations of herself and set high standards for herself — and she delivered on those high expectations and standards. I worked with her initially as the chair of her committee when she was shadow Minister for Health, and I also worked as her parliamentary secretary when she was Minister for Health from 1992 to 1996. The years from 1992 to 1996 were a very challenging time for the government, because it inherited a debt of \$33 billion, the interest costs on which were equal to the cost of delivering on any of the larger government departments.

Upon coming to government there was a demand that all government departments would cut their budgets by 10 per cent. As Minister for Health, when there is a huge demand for service delivery and increasing demand through technologies and the ageing of the population, to be told that your primary responsibility is to cut the budget by 10 per cent poses some challenges. But Marie Tehan was up to that challenge, and she was

absolutely determined that she would seek a way to deliver the budget outcomes that were required for the state of Victoria without compromising service delivery. Indeed she said very early on in our discussions that not only would she not compromise service delivery but that she wanted to find a way to deliver on the budget outcomes and improve service delivery at the same time.

Indeed it is interesting to read some of the old documents about casemix funding. An early document outlines the four principles on which Marie Tehan said she would make all her decisions as Minister for Health. They were follows:

- To put people first, rather than institutions or systems.
- To ensure a fairer distribution of limited resources.
- To obtain value for taxpayers' funds.
- To provide a better health status and outcome for all Victorians.

It was these principles that drove her and attracted her to casemix funding. Casemix funding had been proposed in various places around the world, and it would be fair to say that it was probably championed by Stephen Duckett, who was then head of acute health in the Department of Human Services. It was a revolutionary approach and a courageous decision to adopt casemix funding, but it did offer a real hope of providing a fairer and better funding system for our acute hospitals, and also of providing budget savings and improved services to the people of Victoria.

I well remember the final decision that was made after much debate and much discussion. There was a meeting in Marie Tehan's office on the 22nd floor of 555 Collins Street, overlooking a site that was then being proposed for the casino. We were looking out the window and wondering whether the casino would give us the revenue to save us from all these budget cuts. The discussion around the table was between Professor Duckett, Dr John Paterson, the then head of the Department of Human Services, Marie and me. There was earnest discussion for hours, and at the end of the meeting Marie stood up and said, 'We are going to go with casemix funding'. That was on the basis of logical thought, intelligent thinking and a real commitment to delivering better health outcomes and budget savings.

The bottom line was that casemix funding did deliver those things. Within the first year or two years of the introduction of casemix an extra 30 000 patients were treated by Victorian acute hospitals. The category 1 waiting list — that is, the list for people who are waiting for heart surgery and life-saving surgery — had

hovered between 900 and 1000 for years previously. These people were waiting more than 30 days for life-saving surgery and were literally dying on that waiting list. Within the first 12 months of the introduction of casemix funding that waiting list was reduced to zero — nobody was waiting more than 30 days. At the same time the budget cuts were delivered. Casemix funding did deliver improved health outcomes, did deliver budget savings and did deliver a better hospital system. Indeed the fact that casemix funding has been copied in many jurisdictions around Australia and around the world is a great tribute to the people involved in making that decision, but ultimately it is a tribute to Marie Tehan, who had the courage to take that leap of faith and introduce casemix funding.

The second issue is the one raised by the Leader of the Opposition in terms of Marie Tehan's contribution to mental health services. I know from personal experience that Marie had an absolute commitment to improving mental health services. She introduced a new framework for the delivery of mental health service in Victoria, which is contained in *Victoria's Mental Health Service — The Framework for Service Delivery*. The introduction states:

Services for people with mental illness have had a troubled history.

And further:

The key change in Victoria must be to match in practice the long-held aim of shifting the focus from a reliance on separate psychiatric hospitals as the preferred place of treatment. An expansion of general hospital psychiatric units for the treatment of acute patients in less stigmatising settings is required, along with the development of treatment and other services from community-based settings.

Look at the range of services now, with critical assessment and treatment teams through to mobile treatment teams. Indeed you have a microcosm of that in my own area of south-west Victoria. Following the closure of the Brierly psychiatric hospital, which was a Dickensian institute and which despite the best commitment of the staff did not deliver the proper outcomes, we now have psychiatric services delivered through the acute hospital setting at Warrnambool and we have community-based services in regional towns, which deliver a much better outcome.

Finally, the other area I want to highlight is the way Marie Tehan was involved in reforming the health sector from top to bottom. The Leader of the Opposition talked about Melbourne health networks. I think the change from individualised hospitals that had a very narrow focus and approach to networks was a significant step forward in the delivery of health

services in the modern Melbourne setting. At the same time Marie Tehan was involved in changes at the smaller end of the scale. Together with Rob Knowles, who was then Minister for Aged Care, she was involved in introducing multipurpose services, which everyone agrees are the best model for the delivery of health, aged care and community-based health and primary care services in smaller rural settings. Rob Knowles and Marie Tehan set up the first multipurpose services in Victoria — at Orbost, Corryong and Apollo Bay — where funding was pooled and the community delivered the best outcomes for the people.

As Minister for Conservation and Land Management Marie Tehan was involved in the war on weeds, which I think was the first time we had a real focus on noxious weeds and their cost to our communities, and the wonderfully named Rabbit Busters program. She was involved in the release of the calicivirus in Victoria, and people have already mentioned her involvement in the establishment of Parks Victoria.

On a personal note I will always remember the welcome that Marie, Jim and the rest of her family provided when my family visited them at their wonderful family home at Wappan. She was a very good friend to our family and made our children very welcome. I remember well the dinners we used to regularly have in East Melbourne with Rob Knowles and Marie Tehan where the problems of the world — and particularly the problems of government — were discussed at length and in a very enjoyable way. I remember visiting her in her house in Richmond, where again she made us feel very welcome. The discussions and debates we had, and Marie Tehan's intellect and the real enthusiasm she had for making things better in our community, are the things I will remember most.

Finally, and for all of Marie's busy-ness as a minister, I well remember that while she was a busy health minister with some crisis or another to deal with, she always had time to make sure that Patrick was being read to and was getting his schooling done appropriately. She was always concerned about her daughters' wedding plans or whether Jim was being adequately fed and watered at home. She was foremost concerned about being a wife and a support to Jim, and I know that Jim was a great support to her in all her challenges. She was a great mother to her six children, and she was very proud of her grandchildren. I pass on my sympathy to Jim, Kathryn, James, Daniel, Rachael, David and Patrick, and to her grandchildren. They can be very proud of both the personal and public achievements of Marie Tehan. I valued her as a friend and colleague. She will be sadly missed by us all.

**Mr HARDMAN** (Seymour) — I rise to join the condolence motion for the late Honourable Marie Therese Tehan. I wish to pass my deepest sympathies to her husband, Jim, and her six children — Kathryn, James, Daniel, Rachael, David and Patrick — and her grandchildren, all of whom will greatly miss Marie, whom they felt great love and adoration for. The common theme throughout the funeral ceremony for Marie last Friday was that, through all of Marie's achievements and responsibilities, the family felt she put their interests and concerns first.

Marie Tehan was the member for Seymour from 1992 to 1999 after moving across from the upper house, to which she was elected as a member for Central Highlands Province in a by-election following the retirement due to ill health of the Honourable Fred Grimwade, a person I know she held in high esteem. Marie held the health portfolio between 1992 and 1996, and drove substantial reform in hospital funding through casemix, which is still the major method of funding for Victorian hospitals and is now widely utilised around Australia. As well Marie brought health and community services into one department, creating the Department of Human Services, which still exists today. She was also the Minister for Conservation and Land Management between 1996 and 1999.

Marie's compassion for her fellow human beings was exemplified in the many activities she participated in before, during and after her time in politics. She took an active interest in others, notably through her active involvement in Foster Parents Plan and more recently through her active and courageous fight for the wellbeing and decent treatment of refugees in Australian detention.

Regarding my personal relationship with Marie, I only met her briefly on several occasions. I had had brief conversations with her in my time as an ALP candidate for the seat of Seymour at the 1996 and 1999 elections, and in recent times when I met her at various functions. Each time Marie asked after my welfare, and each time she struck me as having genuine interest in and concern for it. Throughout the campaigns Marie was always professional and respectful and made no personal attacks. This was always appreciated by me, and led to the development of my respect for her as a person.

One anecdote that portrays Marie's compassion for others is that at the declaration of the poll in 1992 she quietly asked the ALP candidate at the time, Ian Rogers, about his welfare. Marie offered to speak to the arts minister of the time, Haddon Storey, to ensure that Ian was looked after, as his job had become redundant.

It was done with no fanfare or fuss. It was not for the media's attention; it was just a genuine act of decency.

As a member for Seymour the things that Marie will be remembered for include her role in the development of the new Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE campus in Seymour, the redevelopment of the Seymour District Memorial Hospital, the funding of the Goulburn River walking trail and the state government's contribution to the Seymour Performing Arts and Cultural Centre, all of which still contribute to the quality of life in our community. My deepest sympathies go to Marie's family.

**Mr MAUGHAN** (Rodney) — I wish to add my tribute to a person for whom I had the very highest regard. Others have spoken eloquently about Marie Tehan's capacity, her compassion, her determination and her intellect. I want to touch briefly on her interest in mental health, and the member for South-West Coast has already indicated her interest in mainstreaming mental health services and removing the stigma of mental health. There have always been difficulties between the states in the provision of mental health services, particularly between Victoria and New South Wales; no more so than in Echuca, the area that I represent. In order to put pressure on New South Wales, the Victorian government at the time that Marie was minister was refusing to admit New South Wales patients to mental health institutions in Victoria. It was during that time that a person who lived just over the border in Moama suffered a psychotic episode, presented to a doctor in Echuca, urgently needing admission to a mental health facility. I phoned Marie. Using one of the principles that the member for South-West Coast spelt out about the interests of a patient coming first she instantly said, 'We have got to attend to the patient first. I will immediately phone the hospital and demand that they be admitted', and the patient was admitted to Bendigo hospital that very day.

I was privileged to attend the state funeral for Marie Tehan in Nagambie. I thought it was one of the most moving and inspiring services I have ever attended and a celebration of the life of an exceptional woman. I extend my condolences to Marie's husband, Jim, to her six children, her grandchildren and to Marie Tehan's extended family.

**Mr SEITZ** (Keilor) — I rise to extend my condolences to the Tehan family. I am one of the members of Parliament who knew Mrs Tehan in this house and when she was first elected to the upper house. I remember her inaugural speech, as we call it now. However, in those days it was called the maiden

speech. I will read a paragraph from that speech which typifies the person she was. She said:

We should be looking critically at legislation and regulation, and testing on the grounds of overall value and cost effectiveness. We should be pruning the state housekeeping budget to live within our means. We should be leading by example, by giving more than we take, by doing rather than saying, by being prepared to establish the decisions in the interests of the people and to apply them without fear of criticism and without the politician's plight of compromise.

That is the sort of person she was in her political life here, and it really typifies the sort of person she was. I well remember when she was elected to the upper house. It was a change to see women from the opposition party being elected to the upper house. She had her legal qualifications, but most people asked how she would cope with six children. That was the talk around and the concern in the media and of other members of Parliament, because the hours and the working conditions we had in those days were completely different. We did not work family-friendly hours. She came through that and engaged us in the corridors. She talked to everybody and became quite well known. Usually you rarely meet upper house members unless you go into the dining room or are on a joint committee.

When she was a minister I had a lot to do with her while lobbying for my electorate and for the needs of the Sunshine Hospital, particularly during the transition phase when she changed portfolios and the Honourable Rob Knowles took over. She introduced him to the needs of the western suburbs. That involved not only the development of the Sunshine Hospital in the west but also a community centre known now as the Errington Community Centre. We were just about ready to get an aged care grant for that centre when she changed from the health portfolio, and we had to lobby both Mrs Tehan and Mr Knowles to get the funding to build that centre. That showed the commitment that she had to the people in the area despite our political differences.

Marie was a person whom a lot of people looked on as a role model for future members of Parliament. Once we leave this chamber people seem to embellish or think differently about members. I met a former member yesterday at the first official visit of this Governor-General to Victoria, and I was reminded of the work that is done for the state. Marie Tehan was a person who worked for the state. Once again, my deepest condolences to the family.

**Mr COOPER** (Mornington) — I want to add my words to the tribute today to Marie Tehan by this house. I suspect the hardest job for most members who have

served with somebody is to speak on a condolence motion, and I am going to find this pretty hard indeed.

Marie Tehan was somebody I served with for her entire time in this Parliament. I have written down some of the adjectives that have already been said about her. I was trying to find an essential quality of Marie, but I came up with a whole lot because that was the sort of person she was. I have written down the words 'intelligent', 'incisive', 'decent', 'compassionate', 'honourable' and 'honest'. I suspect she was what a great many others aspire to be: she was a good person who dedicated her life to her family and to the community that she served so admirably in so many ways. Her death at the very young age of 64 years is a tragic loss to us all because she had so much more to give.

The philosophy of Marie Tehan on the role that she undertook in this Parliament was well set out in her first speech, and I suspect that her first speech is going to get a bit of a working over today. Marie would probably have a wry smile that we are going to quote from her speeches. The speech that was made on 7 April 1987 was a very good speech. I have heard quite a few first speeches. I remember mine — it was appalling; and most first speeches do not really stack up. But Marie's speech was well researched, well put together and argued a whole lot of different cases. I am delighted that those who have spoken before me have not mentioned the paragraph that I am going to quote. It says:

The community is overgoverned: our bureaucracies are too big; we are taking on ourselves that which should be left to the people. We are imposing too often and intruding too deeply into people's lives, and we are costing the people too much in doing it. Big is not beautiful: it is cumbersome, ineffective, impersonal and expensive.

She went on to say that we are over-legislated and overregulated, and how true it was then. Indeed how true it is today. Marie recognised that too much legislation and regulation costs the community dearly. It is public money that would be better directed to helping those in the community who desperately need assistance from the government, but who in many instances go without that assistance. Cutting the cost of government was important to Marie Tehan. She not only talked the talk, she walked the walk. Introducing casemix funding to public hospitals in Victoria was certainly walking the walk for Marie Tehan.

As others have already said, it serves no point today to regurgitate the complaints, the accusations, the allegations and the insults that were hurled at Marie over casemix funding and indeed over a number of

other issues. But what can be said about casemix funding, and Marie Tehan, is that the proof is now clearly seen in the pudding, and what a wonderful pudding it is that Marie Tehan cooked up for Victoria from her talented and incisive mind. Casemix funding is now accepted as the way to go in public hospital funding not only in Australia but in other parts of the world.

In February 1994, as the Leader of the Opposition said, it was described by the former federal Labor Party health minister, Neal Blewett, as ‘the most imaginative set of reforms to deal with the hospital system in this country in the last half a dozen years’ An *Age* editorial under the heading ‘Healthy praise’ says:

Dr Neal Blewett, the former federal Labor health minister who retired on Thursday, used his retirement speech in the House of Representatives to praise the Victorian government’s health changes and to congratulate its health minister, Mrs Tehan, for introducing casemix funding in public hospitals.

The editorial also says:

In calling her changes ‘the most imaginative set of reforms to deal with the hospital system in this country in the last half a dozen years’, Dr Blewett not only speaks the truth, but gives a generous and genuine endorsement his former colleagues could do well to acknowledge.

Dr Blewett was no doubt a brave man in making those statements, but he spoke the truth about somebody who always spoke the truth.

I served in the cabinet of the Kennett government with Marie Tehan. She was an admired colleague of mine for the entire service that she gave to this Parliament. The enormous number of people from all around the state who attended her funeral in Nagambie last Friday was testament to the impact that she made on the community she served so well.

I extend my condolences to Jim, to his entire family and to all the relatives of Marie on their great loss. It is a loss that I feel and one that is shared by a great many others.

**Mr PERTON** (Doncaster) — Marie’s funeral request, which each of us received, ‘No flowers ... Donations can be made to Hotham Mission, Asylum Seeker Project’, stands as a final dedication to the causes, community and people that Marie Tehan served. Marie’s passion and involvement with refugees went back to the 1980s. Following her retirement from politics she again became a liberal advocate for refugees and their cause. I was honoured that on several occasions I was able to speak with her and talk about her strategies and tactics for assisting those who were

incarcerated and those whose rights she served. As members know, she served as a board member of the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre, as well as being a member of several other organisations.

Last year she made a speech in St Michael’s Church. Her commitment to refugees was summed up in these words:

Every person is entitled to be treated with compassion and dignity.

This hearkened back to her first speech, which has been quoted so well by two members before me, where she said:

Victoria and Australia have so much to be thankful for and so much to give. We are a country of remarkable freedom, freedoms of every sort, and the envy of most other countries in the world.

She valued that freedom and she sought that for others.

She was a role model for men and women alike, raising six children in a loving household with Jim while managing a career as a tutor and a secondary school teacher, establishing her own Mansfield legal practice and becoming a parliamentarian and a minister of the Crown. She was a gifted speaker, and she was a leader from her school days and through her university days. Her Catholic religion guided her. Her political beliefs were liberal and focused on personal liberty. In a very interesting interview published in a newspaper in the early 1990s she said:

I don’t think government can solve people’s problems. People have to solve their own problems. I support minimum government.

In opposition she steered through important national parks legislation. I know a former Premier, Joan Kirner, pays tribute to her work in guiding that legislation through and also her work with the women’s movement. As shadow health minister she crossed a union picket line to care for psychiatric patients in a Beechworth hospital.

When she changed houses and moved to the Legislative Assembly seat of Seymour her natural leadership qualities were of course commented on by many. A *Bulletin* magazine columnist wrote:

From the start of her political career, Tehan was being mentioned as a future Liberal leader. She was charming and on top of her subjects, looked good on television and seemed to float effortlessly through shadow portfolios.

As Minister for Health she took on the hardest role that anyone could have taken on in that first Kennett government. Other members have spoken well about

her work in that area. I saw Profession Duckett on Thursday night, the night before the funeral. As he said, of course, our politics were different, but he recalls the pleasure of working with someone who was so focused on the interests of patients and the community.

As Minister for Conservation and Land Management, her commitment was undeniable. The Minister for Community Services has already spoken eloquently of that. I had the opportunity to walk with Marie through national parks in East Gippsland. She walked through the parks and met the rangers and she really knew and understood her portfolio from the ground up. People have spoken very well of that. Representatives of the Wilderness Society have said that the Wongungarra wilderness will stand as a monument to her work.

Marie's bravery through her illness has been spoken about so eloquently by her brother. On behalf of my electorate and my family I extend my best wishes to Jim and the children — Kathryn, James, Daniel, Rachael, David and Patrick. Her eight grandchildren, Tom, Sam, Lily, Isabelle, Alice, Oliver, Maya and Henry, will be able to draw great strength and inspiration in their future lives and careers from their very brave and courageous grandmother.

**Mrs POWELL** (Shepparton) — I wish to pay tribute to the life of Marie Therese Tehan, who sadly passed away on Monday, 1 November, at the relatively young age of 64. In reading about her life it is obvious Marie lived life to the full. She had very strong moral values, a strong love of family and a strong work ethic. She was a solicitor; a teacher; a human rights campaigner who recently fought for the cause of refugees and asylum seekers; an environmentalist; a strong community advocate, being a member of the Australian board of the International Foster Care Organisation; and over the years a member of a number of boards and committees. I believe that the roles she most valued were those of wife, mother, grandmother and sister.

Marie had the distinction of being a member of both houses of the Victorian Parliament. She was an upper house member for Central Highlands Province from 1987 to 1992 and in 1992 moved to the lower house seat of Seymour, for which she was the member until her retirement at the 1999 election. In 1992 Marie was appointed Minister for Health. During her period in that office she experienced some very turbulent, challenging and changing times, including — as a number of members have spoken about — the introduction of the Metropolitan Ambulance Service dispatch system, or Intergraph, and later a royal commission on that issue. Marie also presided over the introduction of casemix

funding, which saw thousands more patients treated in hospitals. Marie handled her portfolio and the challenges and criticisms of her in that portfolio with dignity, self-control, strength and professionalism.

In 1996 Marie was appointed Minister for Conservation and Land Management. In that same year I was selected as the first woman member of the National Party in the Victorian Parliament and sat next to Marie in the coalition party room. At that time Marie took an interest in me. As has been said by a number of speakers, Marie was a great role model for women as well as a valuable member of the Victorian Parliament. She was a woman in a position of power who still behaved like a lady. She balanced her strong interests in her family, her career and her faith. Marie was very supportive of many new members. If I needed some advice she was always on hand to guide me on any issues.

When as Minister for Conservation and Land Management she travelled to my electorate, she always had a great charm about her. She treated people with respect and compassion and always listened to their side of an argument and to their point of view. Marie also dressed impeccably. A number of speakers have spoken about that. When I sat next to Marie and I was wearing a new pair of shoes or a new suit she always commented about my new shoes or new suit.

I was very pleased to read recently in a newspaper that Marie had been appointed to the board of the Goulburn-Murray Rural Water Authority. In June Marie phoned me about an issue that she wanted to talk to me about. We chatted for a while. She sounded very strong and passionate about what she was doing. She asked, of course, about how I was going and how I was making the transition from the upper house to the lower house. She talked a bit about the time she changed from the upper house to the lower house. I was sad to hear only a short time later that she had become ill with a life-threatening disease.

Marie was a popular and very highly regarded person. That was shown with more than 700 people attending her state funeral in Nagambie. Marie has left a great legacy to her family and to the people of Victoria. I would like to pass on my sincere sympathy to her family, her husband, Jim, her six children James, Rachael, Kathryn, Daniel, David and Patrick, and to their partners, to her much loved grandchildren, to her brother, as well as Marie's extended family.

**Mr BAILLIEU** (Hawthorn) — It is an honour to speak on this condolence motion for Marie Tehan, albeit on such a sad occasion. Others have spoken

eloquently about Marie's career in this place and as a minister. I do not intend to repeat that, but there is so much that I wish to agree with.

Marie Tehan was not defined by her job as a politician or a minister. She had done so many other things in her life and had done them all with equal vigour. Everything that she did, she did very well. She did it with an independent mind, a zest for life, a glint in the eye and incredible loyalty to all of those around her. Whether it was the family, the farm, her faith or her friends, she did it with style, grace, extraordinary charm and compassion. As a former president and vice-president of the party I saw much of that from an organisational point of view. What we saw in the party and what we saw in the Parliament was only part of an extraordinarily diverse life. As the Leader of The Nationals remarked, it is a reminder to us all about the benefits of having so many other aspects to one's political career. I want to make some brief comments on behalf of the Liberal Party organisation and the staff who happily served Marie for so many years.

As we have been told, Marie was preselected in 1987 for a by-election. It was a time when the Liberal Party was not at its highest. Her commitment to the party at that stage was an act of faith in the party, in the region, in the prospects for change and certainly in the colleagues around her. The by-election itself was an important event for our party. She handled it and the pressure extremely well. We were successful. Not only that, she handled the pressure of successive elections extremely well, and many of them in her case were under marginal seat pressure.

After winning the by-election Marie entered the upper house of Parliament with high expectations. She brought her charm, loyalty and personal touch to the electorate, to all the volunteers who served around her and to those stalwarts in the party such as John Nathan, Noelle Nathan and Marg Forrest, and later Murray and Jenny Mountjoy in their roles in the Seymour electorate. She captured them, she won us all over and she never diverted from that approach at all. That was part of the joy.

In 1992, with equally high expectations, she was nudged or encouraged or chosen to shift from the upper house to the new seat of Seymour in the lower house, and there was some attention paid to that at the time. Again, she carried that extremely well. As we have heard, when she arrived in this house she carried a big load as Minister for Health. She never got ruffled, did her job, performed admirably, made significant changes and made a difference.

The Tehan family's commitment to the Liberal Party has been extraordinary. Jim is here with us today. I count him as a friend. Jim and I shared roles as vice-president in the party at the same time. Jim continued to serve while I was president as well. The commitment of the whole Tehan family to the party is known and appreciated. I have certainly enjoyed them as part of the organisation and so does the party. Marie Tehan has been a fantastic servant from the Liberal Party's point of view. We can only offer enormous thanks.

I will comment also on behalf of all those staff who worked for Marie. I do this in the context that a member of my staff had the pleasure and delight of working for Marie. On a daily basis I can see the consequences of the way Marie did her job and the loyalty she enthused into people. Marie treated everybody she dealt with in the same way. It has been said to me that she was just as comfortable pulling up a stool to the bar of the Tallarook pub as she was meeting with state, national and even international leaders. Above all she always took the time and the trouble to express her gratitude and to say thank you.

For those who work in the business of politics, thanks are often not given. And when they are given it is sometimes missed, but in Marie's case it was never so. She really appreciated those who worked for her, whether on a staff or a voluntary basis. She thoughtfully and carefully demonstrated that gratitude. She did not always follow the rules of expressing that gratitude. Sometimes she went out of her way to thank somebody who had done the very smallest of things, but it had not gone unnoticed by Marie. She made a special effort of it for those members of her staff.

At the risk of missing some, I will mention Noelle Nathan, who was her electorate officer in Central Highlands Province; her drivers Fred and Stan; Judith Foley, who was initially her electorate officer when she was in Seymour and who later went with her to the health portfolio; Graeme Duro, whose role we have heard about already; Stephen Kerr; David Stoddart; Susie King; James Tonkin, who wrote so eloquently in the papers this week about Marie's role; John Richards; Serena Williams; Claire; Barbara Wilson, her electorate officer; and when she was in conservation John Kerr; Liz Brawley; Penny Johnston; Angela Doyle; and Di Rule, who is now a member of my staff. They were all deeply appreciative of the care and consideration that Marie offered them.

I will tell one little story that was passed on to me. It is just a measure of the instinctive decency of Marie and her charm. It was on the night of the 1992 election

when Marie had successfully won her seat of Seymour, was a member of the frontbench of a new government and was to take on the health portfolio. There was all the triumph of her ascension into that position and a joyous celebration — and as I understand it, a very vigorous celebration. A meal was being served at the buffet and many were in the queue. There was a very simple, small gesture that Marie made which might have gone unnoticed but was not.

Marie simply stepped out of that queue to quietly and carefully tend to the needs of a little seven-year-old girl before she got her own meal. It was a little gesture that no-one was meant to notice and almost no-one did. The family probably did not even know, but the parents of that little girl noticed, and they have felt a deep affection ever since, knowing that someone in such a position and on such an occasion could spend a little extra time to care for their child. That was very much Marie — it was just what she did.

On behalf of the Liberal Party organisation, to the extent that I can represent it in this chamber, and on behalf of those who worked with her as members of staff I say thank you to Marie and to the Tehan family for all the pleasure and leadership they have given. I extend my sympathies to Jim, the children, their families and the grandchildren. In the last few months I have had the pleasure of watching a couple of those little grandchildren running around at Auskick. If there is a little sin to be committed at Auskick, it is to give your child a hand-knitted jumper in your favourite team's colours. Those Tehan kids have hand-knitted football jumpers, which is a reflection of the joy of the family.

I finish by saying that when Marie left this place I was living in East Melbourne and the Tehan's had a place in Richmond which they were about to dispose of. Marie decided it might be appropriate for us to purchase the property, and she was very keen for that to occur. Having visited the new Tehan family home at Nagambie on the banks of the river, I do not think there is a more joyous place on the earth. It is a glorious country crucible which will be forever her legacy — and in another capacity I must say it is a fabulous piece of architecture. I am sure the family will elicit everlasting joy from that place, knowing that it is a piece of Marie and Jim's legacy to a family that has contributed to the state in every way.

**Mr WELLS** (Scoresby) — Marie Tehan was a very special person. I had heard a great deal about Marie when she was in opposition in the late 1980s. In particular I had heard that she was incredibly hardworking and very loyal. As a new candidate I

invited Marie to visit the outer east, and after meeting her I realised that what I had heard about her was true and that she was a very special person.

When Marie became Minister for Health in 1992, changes had to be made to the health system. There needed to be a shift in focus that emphasised the quality of health services. This was against a backdrop of state finances that had been plunged into massive deficit and massive debt. Marie had a very tough job. At times her treatment by some was well outside the accepted rough-and-tumble of this Parliament. I suppose it is ironic that many of the changes Marie Tehan introduced into the health system are still in place today.

When Marie became the Minister for Conservation and Land Management she phoned me to see whether I could join her and other members of Parliament in hiking around Wilsons Promontory. I could not make the trip, but those who went were very impressed by Marie's mental and physical toughness.

Marie Tehan was a very special person, and she will continue to be revered by this side of the house. I extend my condolences to Jim and the family.

**Mrs SHARDEY** (Caulfield) — Marie Therese Tehan was a beautiful woman and wife to Jim, and a beautiful mother to six and grandmother to eight. Hers was a beautiful mind and a beautiful smile. Marie was a woman of great quality who sadly left this world prematurely. At 64 years of age Marie should have been looking forward to many more years in which to enjoy the fruits of her labour and to make a further significant contribution to Victorian life. Life for someone like Marie Tehan is impossible to describe in just a few short minutes.

Suffice it to say, her life was rich and full of achievement. The challenges were many — they had to be — wife, mother of six, teacher, lawyer, politician, minister, member of numerous boards and advocate. These things do not just happen: they take hard work, dedication, determination and being blessed with a fine mind and a sense of what is right and in the interests of mankind.

I first met Marie in the late 1980s, at the time of my first very active involvement with the Liberal Party. I had become a candidate for the 1988 state election after a very short involvement with the party. I was certainly very green in the political arena. There were only three women in the parliamentary Liberal Party at that time and I was in need of advice about a range of issues, mostly those political issues regarded as

conscience-vote issues — and some of you might guess what one of those issues might have been. The advice I received from Marie Tehan was sensitive, humane and above all very sensible. It reflected the person she was and the person she remained during her entire political career.

I had the pleasure of convening Marie's policy assembly health committee and serving on her environment committee in this place after my election. I always felt that Marie Tehan was given one of the hardest jobs as Minister for Health. However, despite the great challenges, she managed to bring about enormous reforms and introduce a new funding system, which remains today. It replaced an archaic system of global budgets which bore little relationship to the outcomes required by a progressive and technically advancing health system. She performed her role in a manner and style which was to be admired. I have rarely seen anyone remain so calm and composed in the face of some of the challenges Marie faced in this place during that time and subsequently. She remained true to herself and true to her values.

I believe political history will be very kind to Marie Tehan — a rare and accomplished person who will remain an inspiration to us all. I offer my sincere condolences to Jim and the wonderful Tehan family who so supported Marie. Her loss will be felt by us all.

**Mr PLOWMAN** (Benambra) — It is indeed an honour to be able to speak to the condolence motion for Marie Tehan. It gives those of us who worked with Marie an opportunity to comment on what an outstanding person and outstanding minister she was. However, it is also with a sense of sadness that I comment on my association with Jim and Marie over the years before she came to the Parliament, and with the Tehan family over many years. From their family property, Wappan, at Maindample they have had such an outstanding influence over the rural issues which affect country communities right across Victoria, in particular in north-eastern Victoria.

One of the reasons Marie had such a good hold on her conservation and land management responsibilities was her rural background and her knowledge of farming. Marie's achievements in conservation are many. The consolidation of the Alpine National Park by the addition of the Upper Wongungarra wilderness and the land that had previously been owned by the State Electricity Commission made this park one of the most significant parks in Australia. However, it was in the area of public land management and private land management where her rural background was of so much value.

The Good Neighbour program she introduced recognised the real need for better management of Crown land where it interfaced with private land. The Rabbit Busters program has been mentioned; it was enormously successful. Marie had a strong desire to bring the rabbit calicivirus to Victoria. It finally came by mistake and has made a significant difference to the rabbit population and the rabbit problem in Victoria. Her understanding of the cost to rural communities of feral animals, and more importantly the cost to Victoria of noxious weeds on both public and private land, meant Marie dealt with these problems with real understanding.

She was a great supporter of Landcare and recognised the value and the work that Joan Kirner had done to introduce this extraordinary program to Victoria. She was also responsible for the introduction of catchment management authorities in Victoria, a move which has now been emulated by the other states. But it is in her ministerial role as Minister for Health that she will be best remembered.

May I be parochial and make the point that the introduction of casemix funding provided a level playing field for hospitals that had the opportunity and the need to treat more patients. After the introduction of case mix, the treatment of patients in the Wodonga hospital grew from 5000 per year to over 10 000 per year, with a projected growth in excess of 10 per cent every year for the next five years. In 1998 the first cross-border obstetrics service was established in Wodonga, which now delivers over 1500 babies every year. Without that initial work, this service would never have been possible.

Marie was also responsible for the introduction of the Breast Services Enhancement Program into country Victoria, which has saved countless lives.

Between 1994 and 1996 Marie Tehan instigated an inquiry into cross-border health services, which was a forerunner to the current move to establish the first formal cross-border health service in Australia. Marie's most essential quality was her attention to detail. She wanted to know in the most minute detail everything about the development of this proposal, and, as she had appointed me to be part of this inquiry, I had to learn very quickly what it was all about. It was one of the best but also one of the most humbling experiences I have had since I have been a member of Parliament.

This is just one example of how committed Marie was to getting things right. She was always involved in the detail of issues before her and before her department, and as such she had the full measure of the public

servants who were there to give independent advice — sometimes to her cost. This was one of the major reasons she was such an excellent minister. The other was her compassion for everyone she helped through her life.

I wish to personally convey my condolence to Jim and to the family — a most magnificent country family which has represented us wonderfully in country Victoria.

**Mr DIXON** (Nepean) — When I was first elected to this place in 1996, Marie was the first minister to visit my electorate. She was on side immediately because she continued to tell me what a beautiful electorate I had. On our first visit to the Mornington Peninsula National Park there was a pod of whales at the Port Phillip Heads; she was enthralled and delighted by that and thanked me for arranging the display. The next year, when she invited me to join her on a two-day trip around the coast off Cape Otway, we again sighted whales — a pod of very rare minke whales off from the lighthouse. I returned the favour by thanking her for arranging that.

When Marie was Minister for Conservation and Land Management over three years I raised two major issues involving my electorate — they concerned the Rosebud foreshore and Rye beach. In both cases I put my arguments very strongly. She met the local people concerned, and she asked me what I wanted. I told her what I wanted — and I got it. When I had an issue to raise, she always attended the adjournment debate. She was almost the perfect minister.

Recently I was fascinated on hearing a story about her attending church to ask for guidance before making major decisions. On one occasion, after listening to a politically slanted sermon, she then prayed for the priest to be guided back to his more spiritual strengths.

There were two lessons that I learned from Marie, and I think they are lessons for all of us. They are: to overcome the odds and always stick to your guns; and to always take time to ask for guidance from wherever or from whomever you will get help. In Marie's case, that was her God. Rest in peace, Marie.

**Mr THOMPSON** (Sandringham) — My first contact with Marie was through her legal work when I had the opportunity to take over some legal files that she had handled upon her entry into the Victorian Parliament. The regard with which she was held by her former clients was of the highest possible level. They remained grateful to her for her work in that legal capacity on their behalf.

When I was first elected as the member for Sandringham Marie came to the electorate in her newly established role as the Minister for Health to give certain guarantees as to a continuing role for the Sandringham and District Memorial Hospital. The fact that the hospital stands in place today is a tribute to her hard work on behalf of the people of Victoria in delivering health service outcomes in the interests of patient care.

The other time she visited my electorate was to preside over the major project in the form of the rebuilding of the Hampton beach; it was a \$3 million commitment by the government prior to an election, which promise was fulfilled in her role as minister for conservation. Those two legacies — the continuing role for a hospital and one of the great beaches of Melbourne — are a great tribute to her ministerial role.

In general terms her work has been summarised in the preceding speeches, but I would like to add my own perspective. I found her to be a faithful, forthright and erudite person who balanced compassion with being a champion of worthy causes. She maintained a ministerial imperium that was appropriate for her parliamentary and ministerial roles. The state has lost a great stateswoman who served Victoria with distinction.

**The SPEAKER** — In concluding this debate may I on behalf of the members of the Legislative Assembly extend my sympathy to the family of Marie Tehan. It is unfortunate that while MPs spend a great deal of their time together in this chamber, it is often only when a member dies and their condolence motion is before the house that we learn a great deal about the member that we would have liked to know when they were alive. So it is with Marie Tehan. Many of us today have learnt a great deal about Marie that we did not know previously.

Her work with foster children, refugees and the Melbourne Cancerians Committee amongst other community activities demonstrates her very strong support of and concern for the welfare of families. As an MP Marie was not just a politician — she was a politician who wanted to make a difference. She approached her ministerial duties with a determination to make a difference. Her achievements in that area have been outlined by a large number of members today.

The MPs on both sides of the house who have spoken today have given a very clear picture of Marie not only in the political arena but also in her support of community and her love of the family. Her personal characteristics — loyalty, strength, determination, wit

and courage — have all been mentioned by many members. She was a wife, mother, grandmother and sister of whom her family can be very proud.

I would like members to show their support for the motion before the house by rising and standing silently in their places.

**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 Marie Therese Tehan, the house now adjourn until tomorrow.

**Motion agreed to.**

**House adjourned 3.49 p.m.**