

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

31 October 2001

(extract from Book 6)

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

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

JOHN LANDY, AC, MBE

The Lieutenant-Governor

Lady SOUTHEY, AM

The Ministry

Premier and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. S. P. Bracks, MP
Deputy Premier, Minister for Health and Minister for Planning	The Hon. J. W. Thwaites, MP
Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister assisting the Minister for Workcover	The Hon. M. M. Gould, MLC
Minister for Transport	The Hon. P. Batchelor, MP
Minister for Energy and Resources, Minister for Ports and Minister assisting the Minister for State and Regional Development. . .	The Hon. C. C. Broad, MLC
Minister for State and Regional Development and Treasurer	The Hon. J. M. Brumby, MP
Minister for Local Government, Minister for Workcover and Minister assisting the Minister for Transport regarding Roads	The Hon. R. G. Cameron, MP
Minister for Community Services	The Hon. C. M. Campbell, MP
Minister for Education and Minister for the Arts	The Hon. M. E. Delahunty, MP
Minister for Environment and Conservation and Minister for Women's Affairs	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 Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment and Minister for Finance	The Hon. L. J. Kosky, MP
Minister for Sport and Recreation, Minister for Youth Affairs and Minister assisting the Minister for Planning	The Hon. J. M. Madden, MLC
Minister for Gaming, Minister for Major Projects and Tourism and Minister assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs	The Hon. J. Pandazopoulos, MP
Minister for Housing, Minister for Aged Care and Minister assisting the Minister for Health	The Hon. B. J. Pike, MP
Minister for Small Business and Minister for Consumer Affairs	The Hon. M. R. Thomson, MLC
Parliamentary Secretary of the Cabinet	The Hon. G. W. Jennings

Legislative Council Committees

Economic Development Committee — The Honourables R. A. Best, Andrea Coote G. R. Craige, Kaye Darveniza, N. B. Lucas, J. M. McQuilten and T. C. Theophanous.

Privileges Committee — The Honourables W. R. Baxter, D. McL. Davis, C. A. Furletti, M. M. Gould and G. W. Jennings.

Standing Orders Committee — The Honourables the President, G. B. Ashman, B. W. Bishop, G. W. Jennings, Jenny Mikakos, G. D. Romanes and K. M. Smith.

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 E. J. Powell, G. D. Romanes and J. W. G. Ross. (*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, O. 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

Parliamentary Services — Manager: Mr M. L. Bromley

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

President: The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN

Deputy President and Chairman of Committees: The Hon. B. W. BISHOP

Temporary Chairmen of Committees: The Honourables G. B. Ashman, R. A. Best, Kaye Darveniza, D. G. Hadden, P. R. Hall, Jenny Mikakos, R. F. Smith, E. G. Stoney and C. A. Strong

Leader of the Government:

The Hon. M. M. GOULD

Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. G. W. JENNINGS

Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. BILL FORWOOD from 13 September 2001

The Hon. M. A. BIRRELL to 13 September 2001

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. C. A. FURLETTI from 13 September 2001

The Hon. BILL FORWOOD to 13 September 2001

Leader of the National Party:

The Hon. P. R. HALL from 20 March 2001

The Hon. R. M. HALLAM to 20 March 2001

Deputy Leader of the National Party:

The Hon. E. J. POWELL from 20 March 2001

The Hon. P. R. HALL to 20 March 2001

Member	Province	Party	Member	Province	Party
Ashman, Hon. Gerald Barry	Koonung	LP	Hall, Hon. Peter Ronald	Gippsland	NP
Atkinson, Hon. Bruce Norman	Koonung	LP	Hallam, Hon. Roger Murray	Western	NP
Baxter, Hon. William Robert	North Eastern	NP	Jennings, Hon. Gavin Wayne	Melbourne	ALP
Best, Hon. Ronald Alexander	North Western	NP	Katsambanis, Hon. Peter Argyris	Monash	LP
Birrell, Hon. Mark Alexander	East Yarra	LP	Lucas, Hon. Neil Bedford, PSM	Eumemmerring	LP
Bishop, Hon. Barry Wilfred	North Western	NP	Luckins, Hon. Maree Therese	Waverley	LP
Boardman, Hon. Blair Cameron	Chelsea	LP	McQuilten, Hon. John Martin	Ballarat	ALP
Bowden, Hon. Ronald Henry	South Eastern	LP	Madden, Hon. Justin Mark	Doutta Galla	ALP
Brideson, Hon. Andrew Ronald	Waverley	LP	Mikakos, Hon. Jenny	Jika Jika	ALP
Broad, Hon. Candy Celeste	Melbourne North	ALP	Nguyen, Hon. Sang Minh	Melbourne West	ALP
Carbines, Hon. Elaine Cafferty	Geelong	ALP	Olexander, Hon. Andrew Phillip	Silvan	LP
Chamberlain, Hon. Bruce Anthony	Western	LP	Powell, Hon. Elizabeth Jeanette	North Eastern	NP
Coote, Hon. Andrea	Monash	LP	Rich-Phillips, Hon. Gordon Kenneth	Eumemmerring	LP
Cover, Hon. Ian James	Geelong	LP	Romanes, Hon. Glenyys Dorothy	Melbourne	ALP
Craige, Hon. Geoffrey Ronald	Central Highlands	LP	Ross, Hon. John William Gamaliel	Higinbotham	LP
Darveniza, Hon. Kaye	Melbourne West	ALP	Smith, Hon. Kenneth Maurice	South Eastern	LP
Davis, Hon. David McLean	East Yarra	LP	Smith, Hon. Robert Fredrick	Chelsea	ALP
Davis, Hon. Philip Rivers	Gippsland	LP	Smith, Hon. Wendy Irene	Silvan	LP
Forwood, Hon. Bill	Templestowe	LP	Stoney, Hon. Eadley Graeme	Central Highlands	LP
Furletti, Hon. Carlo Angelo	Templestowe	LP	Strong, Hon. Christopher Arthur	Higinbotham	LP
Gould, Hon. Monica Mary	Doutta Galla	ALP	Theophanous, Hon. Theo Charles	Jika Jika	ALP
Hadden, Hon. Dianne Gladys	Ballarat	ALP	Thomson, Hon. Marsha Rose	Melbourne North	ALP

CONTENTS

WEDNESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2001

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

<i>Saizeriya project</i>	1007
<i>Industrial relations: workplace agreements</i>	1007
<i>Tipstar: revenue</i>	1008
<i>Small business: fair trading</i>	1008
<i>Environment: greenhouse strategy</i>	1009
<i>Boating: licences</i>	1009
<i>Minister for Sport and Recreation: conduct</i>	1010
<i>Consumer affairs: second-hand vehicles</i>	1010
<i>Electricity: contestability</i>	1011
<i>Youth: leadership camp</i>	1011

PAPERS	1012
--------------	------

EASTERN SUBURBS: INFRASTRUCTURE	1013
---------------------------------------	------

MARINE SAFETY LEGISLATION (LAKES HUME AND MULWALA) BILL

<i>Second reading</i>	1040
-----------------------------	------

MINERAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (FURTHER AMENDMENT) BILL

<i>Second reading</i>	1040
<i>Third reading</i>	1045
<i>Remaining stages</i>	1045

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

<i>Adjournment</i>	1045
--------------------------	------

ADJOURNMENT

<i>South Oakleigh Primary School site</i>	1046
<i>Bunyip State Park</i>	1046
<i>Snowy River</i>	1046
<i>Smoking: rooming houses</i>	1046
<i>Retail tenancies: tenure</i>	1047
<i>Fishing: Corner Inlet licence</i>	1047
<i>Liquor: Woolworths</i>	1047
<i>Member for Chelsea Province: statements</i>	1047
<i>Country Fire Authority: volunteers</i>	1048
<i>Ministers: staff</i>	1048
<i>Waverley Park</i>	1048
<i>Casey: maternal and child health funding</i>	1049
<i>Responses</i>	1049

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

TUESDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2001

<i>1956. Racing: Victorian Workcover Authority chairman</i>	1051
<i>1957. Manufacturing Industry: Victorian Workcover Authority chairman</i>	1051
<i>2044. State and Regional Development: ministerial staff</i>	1051
<i>2071. Workcover: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1052
<i>2072. Premier: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1052
<i>2073. Workcover: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1052

<i>2074. Finance: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1053
<i>2075. Arts: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1053
<i>2076. Health: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1053
<i>2077. Health: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1054
<i>2078. Multicultural Affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1054
<i>2079. Multicultural Affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1054
<i>2080. Energy and Resources: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1054
<i>2081. Ports: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1055
<i>2083. Treasurer: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1055
<i>2085. Environment and Conservation: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1056
<i>2086. Agriculture: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1056
<i>2087. Transport: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1057
<i>2088. Transport (Roads): Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1057
<i>2089. Local Government: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1057
<i>2092. Planning: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1058
<i>2095. Police and Emergency Services: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1058
<i>2096. Corrections: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1058
<i>2097. Planning: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1058
<i>2101. Gaming: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1059
<i>2103. Consumer Affairs Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1059
<i>2104. Attorney-General: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1059
<i>2105. Women's Affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1060
<i>2106. Community Services: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1060
<i>2107. Housing: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1060
<i>2108. Aged Care: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1060
<i>2109. Aboriginal Affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts</i>	1061
<i>2171. Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: nurses — training</i>	1061
<i>2172. Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: nurses — training</i>	1062
<i>2173. Aged Care: personal care workers</i>	1062
<i>2174. Aged Care: personal care workers</i>	1062
<i>2175. Aged Care: personal care workers</i>	1062
<i>2176. Aged Care: personal care workers</i>	1062
<i>2177. Aged Care: personal care workers</i>	1063
<i>2178. Aged Care: personal care workers</i>	1063
<i>2179. Aged Care: personal care workers</i>	1063

CONTENTS

2192. Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: staff.....	1063	2325. Premier: Latrobe Valley projects	1073
2194. Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: staff salaries.....	1064	2375. Workcover: Transport Accident Commission — chairman.....	1074
2196. Energy and Resources: Latrobe aquifer.....	1064	2376. Workcover: Transport Accident Commission — chairman.....	1074
2213. Premier: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest	1064		
2214. Multicultural Affairs: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest.....	1064		
2216. Treasurer: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest	1065		
2219. Workcover: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest	1065		
2220. Community Services: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest.....	1065		
2223. Environment and Conservation: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest.....	1065		
2225. Police and Emergency Services: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest.....	1066		
2226. Corrections: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest	1066		
2227. Agriculture: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest	1066		
2228. Aboriginal Affairs: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest.....	1066		
2229. Attorney-General: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest.....	1067		
2238. Health: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest	1067		
2240. Ports: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest.....	1067		
2242. Energy and Resources: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest.....	1067		
2245. Consumer Affairs: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest.....	1068		
2253. Treasurer: net state debt.....	1068		
2254. Treasurer: unfunded superannuation liability.....	1068		
2255. Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund	1068		
2256. Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund	1069		
2257. Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund	1069		
2258. Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund	1069		
2259. Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund	1069		
2260. Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund	1070		
2268. Health: registered nurses — salaries.....	1070		
2270. Health: registered nurses — salaries.....	1070		
2271. Health: registered nurses — superannuation	1071		
2272. Health: registered nurses — salaries.....	1071		
2273. Health: registered nurses — superannuation	1071		
2274. Health: registered nurses — salaries.....	1071		
2275. Health: registered nurses — superannuation	1072		
2296. Treasurer: country rail services — funding	1072		
2297. Treasurer: Transport Accident Commission — dividend.....	1072		
2298. Local Government: debt	1073		
2300. Industrial Relations: unions — use of members' funds.....	1073		

Wednesday, 31 October 2001

The PRESIDENT (Hon. B. A. Chamberlain) took the chair at 10.02 a.m. and read the prayer.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Saizeriya project

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — I refer the Minister for Industrial Relations to the ongoing industrial action by the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, which is crippling the construction of Saizeriya's \$40 million Melton factory. Does the government support the company's section 166A application, which will allow it to pursue common-law action against the AMWU?

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — The government, as I have advised the house previously, supported the company, Saizeriya, in its application before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission for a section 127 order, which for those members who do not know is an order to cease and desist. The union did not adhere to that order. The government encouraged the company to go to the Federal Court and sought leave to intervene in that matter. The Federal Court then issued an injunction against the union. The company took further action before the commission and made a section 166A application, seeking a certificate to be issued allowing the company to take legal action in tort. That matter went before the Federal Court last week. The government has encouraged the company to take whatever legal action is open to it in an attempt to ensure fairness in that industrial issue.

The government is committed to the establishment, construction and ongoing production of this new company in Melton and is encouraging the company to take whatever action is available to it to ensure that its construction and ongoing investment in this state is successful. The government wants Saizeriya to establish its first stage and is hopeful that after that first stage there will be further investment by the company in Melton and in Victoria generally.

The government believes this is an important issue. It believes the company is entitled to take appropriate legal action within the Workplace Relations Act, and has encouraged the company to do so.

Industrial relations: workplace agreements

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I refer the Minister for Industrial Relations to the recent

Australian Agreements Database and Monitor Report published by the Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training. Do the report's findings about agreement wages outcomes have any impact on the government's policy of encouraging collective bargaining and discouraging the use of individual Australian workplace agreements?

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — As honourable members will be aware, it is the policy of the Bracks government to encourage the use of enterprise bargaining, and this is consistent with our cooperative partnership approach to industrial relations. This is in stark contrast to what the Kennett government did in its divisive promotion of secret individual Australian workplace agreements (AWAs). I am sure honourable members will also be aware that these secret individual contracts, which were introduced by the Howard government, did nothing to improve the lot of working people.

The Kennett government forced public servants in Victoria onto these AWAs and one of the first things we in the Bracks government did when we came to government two years ago was to abolish that practice. We have replaced those AWAs within the public service with a collective agreement that is based on a partnership approach. We are also committed to discouraging AWAs in the private sector, which would, of course, be assisted by a Beazley Labor government federally, as the federal opposition has publicly announced it will abolish AWAs.

The recent *Agreements Database and Monitor Report* — which is known as the ADAM report — provides information that is useful in assessing the impact of these Australian workplace agreements as part of our government's policy to abolish them. The September 2001 ADAM report contains some alarming figures about AWAs. The average annual wage increase for these secret agreements is 2.2 per cent — that is, almost half of the annual wage increase for those who are covered by certified collective agreements, because for the June 2001 quarter it shows that the average increase that applies to collective bargaining is 4.3 per cent. This difference is so great that something is obviously seriously out of kilter with those people who are on AWAs. The AWAs do not provide a proper balance between employees and employers and the interests of those people.

The Bracks government supports the policy of encouraging collective agreements and discouraging the use of AWAs. By encouraging collective agreements and bargaining along with providing a fair safety net for minimum conditions the government will

help to ensure to grow the whole of the state and share that growth fairly amongst all Victorians.

Tipstar: revenue

Hon. I. J. COVER (Geelong) — My question is to the Minister for Sport and Recreation — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Did David Davis uncover your spending?

Hon. Kaye Darveniza — I bet he is not your friend! No friends in all the world!

The PRESIDENT — Order! Ms Darveniza, keep quiet!

Hon. I. J. COVER — Has any funding been distributed as yet from the less-than-predicted proceeds of Tipstar to women's sport, sports medicine or to saving Waverley Park for Australian Football League football?

Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — I welcome the question from Mr Cover. With the release of Tipstar from the Minister for Gaming it has been announced that Tipstar has not been as successful as might have been anticipated by those who have been licensed to deliver Tipstar.

The amounts to be distributed from that are in the order of \$200 000 at this point in time. I have to have those figures confirmed in detail, but that is my understanding. Those figures will be topping up moneys to women's sport and sports medicine in this state.

I highlight that whatever that final amount might be, it is a mountain of money compared to the amount the opposition, when in government, gave to grassroots sports during its seven years in office. I repeat: it is an absolute mountain of money compared to the support the former government gave to women's sport.

Hon. I. J. Cover — On a point of order, Mr President, my question was quite specific. While I welcome that the minister seems to have found some figures, the question was quite specific about whether any funding has been distributed as yet. The minister mentioned a figure and talked about something that might happen in the future. My question was specific: has any funding been distributed as yet?

Hon. J. M. MADDEN — I believe I have answered the question.

Hon. Bill Forwood — On a point of order, Mr President, the minister has plainly not answered the

question and he cannot hide the fact that he did not answer it. Why doesn't he just stand up and say no?

The PRESIDENT — Order! The minister has to respond to the question. The question was specific, and the minister has clearly not answered that part of the question. If the minister chooses not to answer it he should say, 'I'm not prepared to answer it'.

Hon. J. M. MADDEN — If the opposition members want further information I am happy to give them that information now. The funding has been announced in relation to the moneys that have been derived from Tipstar, and that money will be spent. The revenue is still coming through, so it will be spent.

Small business: fair trading

Hon. G. D. ROMANES (Melbourne) — Can the Minister for Small Business inform the house how the Bracks government is creating a fairer trading environment for Victorian small business?

Hon. M. R. THOMSON (Minister for Small Business) — Honourable members will be aware that for small businesses dealing with big business there can be situations where larger businesses will use their power and capacity to take advantage of a smaller business.

Section 51AC of the Trade Practices Act prohibits unconscionable conduct in business transactions where the price of goods or services is \$3 million or less. There is a broad interpretation of what 'unconscionable conduct' might constitute under this legislation, and it offers small businesses options to take legal action against larger corporations that have been taking unfair advantage of their position in the marketplace against smaller players.

Some successful cases have been prosecuted by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) under this section of the Trade Practices Act. Cheap As Chips was a franchisor that terminated or suspended dissenting franchisees' franchise agreements rather than negotiate their disputes about money owed to them. Another situation involved a food court landlord who attempted to destroy the business of a tenant by authorising other stallholders to sell food of the same kind as that reserved for the tenant at a lower price than the lease agreement required. These were successful cases that the ACCC took under section 51AC of the act.

For some time now we have been calling on the federal government to enact legislation to allow us to draw down section 51AC of the act into our fair trading

legislation. Finally, just before the federal Parliament rose from its last sittings, the federal government took into the Parliament legislation that would enable us to draw down section 51AC into our fair trading legislation. It has taken a long time for the federal government to get around to doing that, but it has been done.

Today I announce that the Bracks government will be bringing into this Parliament legislation to include those aspects of section 51AC within the fair trading legislation to assist small business in Victoria.

I alert the house to two additional advantages in having this legislation in our Fair Trading Act: it will protect small businesses that wish to take claims of unconscionable conduct against an unincorporated trader under section 51AC of the Trade Practices Act — currently they cannot do this — and it will give access to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, which will allow the use of a cheaper mechanism than the Federal Court and also greater access to mediation.

This government is committed to looking after small business. We are committed to listening and delivering for small business. It is unfortunate that the federal government would rather take care of big business.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The minister is entitled to be heard. I ask honourable members to keep quiet and allow her to finish her answer.

Hon. M. R. THOMSON — The federal government has announced that it will be allowing greater access for those large businesses to acquisitions and mergers, which will put smaller businesses at a disadvantage. At least there is one government that is prepared to look after small business, and that is the Bracks Labor government.

Environment: greenhouse strategy

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Western) — Given the rhetoric of the Minister for Energy and Resources about the need to reduce Victoria's greenhouse gas emission levels, and noting that she has been the minister directly responsible for that issue for more than two years, I ask her to explain to the house why she has not set any form of target or benchmark in respect of emission levels to demonstrate the effectiveness of her administration.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I ask the Honourable Kaye Darveniza and the Honourable Bob Smith to keep quiet and allow the minister to answer. Keep out of it!

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — Unlike the opposition, which is focused on long lunches and long dinners, the government is getting on with the job of addressing its responsibilities in relation to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

The Victorian government has made it clear that it supports working within the framework provided by the Kyoto protocol. I am pleased to indicate to the house again that this is supported by the federal Labor Party, but unfortunately not by the current federal government: on the one hand it seems to indicate through the Minister for the Environment and Heritage that targets under that protocol can be met without great difficulty or cost to industry, and on the other hand the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Industry, Science and Resources seem to indicate that this is an impossible target to meet. This is not the view of the Victorian government, which has clearly supported the adoption of the framework provided by the Kyoto protocol, and that is the framework that this government is pursuing in terms of meeting its responsibilities.

We have proceeded through the establishment of the Sustainable Energy Authority — a proud achievement of the Bracks government — to pursue investment in renewable generation and energy efficiency savings. We are also proceeding to apply this approach to the government's own operations. We believe it is important for the government to show leadership, and the government has set targets for reducing its own energy use and for the adoption of green power in relation to its own energy use.

The government is proceeding to meet its responsibilities, and it advocates very strongly that the Australian government also exercise some leadership in this area, which has not been forthcoming to date.

Boating: licences

Hon. R. F. SMITH (Chelsea) — In light of the approaching summer boating season, will the Minister for Ports advise the house of progress made by the Bracks government in delivering on a safer environment for recreational boat operators on Victorian waterways?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Ports) — I thank the honourable member for his question and for his ongoing interest in the matter of boating safety. As honourable members would appreciate, the introduction

of boat operator licensing by the Bracks government is the single biggest boost to boating safety ever seen in Victoria. Importantly the introduction of licensing is consistent with the Bracks government's vision of improving the safety of Victoria's waterways through better competency of operators and related safety measures.

Significant progress has already been made in preparing the boating community for the introduction of boat operator licensing. Licence testing for personal watercraft operators and operators under 21 years of age will be available at all Vicroads offices from 3 December and is on track for 1 February, when these users will need to be licensed. All other operators of power boats will need to be licensed by 1 February 2003.

I am pleased to advise the house that in the coming weeks, for the first time, all of Victoria's 140 000 registered boat owners will be mailed a copy of the 'Victorian recreational boating safety handbook', which contains everything that power boat operators and personal watercraft users will need to know in order to obtain a boat licence and to use our waterways safely. The handbook focuses on safety principles and practices consistent with national principles adopted by the National Marine Safety Committee.

Every year the Victoria Police and waterway volunteers respond to more than 700 incidents involving boats and every year an unacceptable number of lives are lost among the boating community.

These responsible initiatives that have been introduced by the Bracks government, including this handbook, are designed to address such unfortunate incidents. The introduction of boat operator licensing and the launch of the 'Victorian recreational boating safety handbook' are clear examples of the progress that the Bracks government has made already in improving community safety on our waterways in the interests of all Victorians. As licensing proceeds we will see even greater increases in community safety resulting from this important initiative of the Bracks government.

Minister for Sport and Recreation: conduct

Hon. B. C. BOARDMAN (Chelsea) — I refer the Minister for Sport and Recreation to his endorsement of Labor candidate for Dunkley, Mark Conroy, in the candidate's promotional CD-ROM. Will the minister explain to the house why he used his taxpayer-funded ministerial office for purely party-political purposes?

Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — It is an interesting question. The

honourable member would appreciate that in that video I am endorsing the candidate. As he is a Labor candidate I am happy to endorse him. During my lunchtime break I was happy to make sure that I took the time to endorse the candidate. It is interesting to contrast what we do in our lunchtime with what the opposition does with its lunchtime — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am trying to help the minister by getting his colleagues to stop yapping over him. I ask Mr Theophanous and Mr Smith, who are behind the minister, to let the minister respond.

Hon. J. M. MADDEN — Thank you, Mr President. As I mentioned, I was happy to record that message during my lunchtime break. It is interesting to contrast what we do in the lunchtime breaks as opposed to opposition members, who are very keen to spend up taxpayer dollars.

Hon. B. C. Boardman — On a point of order, Mr President, I have the said CD-ROM on my notebook computer in front of me. Clearly there is a photograph of the minister within his ministerial office and I think the question of timing is completely irrelevant in this instance. I repeat the question once again for the minister's edification — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! No. I heard the question and the minister responded to the question. Whether it was in the way the honourable member wanted is a matter for the minister.

Consumer affairs: second-hand vehicles

Hon. E. C. CARBINES (Geelong) — Will the Minister for Consumer Affairs outline any recent developments undertaken by Consumer and Business Affairs Victoria to protect consumers purchasing second-hand vehicles?

Hon. M. R. THOMSON (Minister for Consumer Affairs) — I thank the honourable member for her question. As I have indicated in this house before, earlier this year Consumer and Business Affairs Victoria conducted a blitz on motor trading. The campaign was — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! If honourable members want me to stop question time I am happy to do that. This is a time for a question to be asked and for the minister to respond, and not for a conversation

between both sides in the meantime. I want to hear the minister.

Hon. M. R. THOMSON — A campaign was conducted to enable the public to do in rogue traders. This was targeted towards both licensed and unlicensed traders. Infringement notices were issued against those motor car traders who had breached the Motor Car Traders Act.

Also in relation to unlicensed traders, a program has been run by Consumer and Business Affairs Victoria, together with the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC) and local councils, to uncover unlicensed traders and to take action against them. Yesterday Consumer and Business Affairs Victoria prosecuted Laksiri De Silva of Glen Waverley for trading while unlicensed and for odometer tampering. Mr De Silva tried to sell some 20 cars over a 15-month period without a motor car traders licence.

A government member interjected.

Hon. M. R. THOMSON — That's right. He was also found guilty and convicted of winding back the odometer of a car he sold to a 20-year-old. The court considered this to be a serious offence and convicted Mr De Silva and fined him \$8000. He also ordered that Mr De Silva pay restitution of \$2800 to the young person to whom he had sold that car.

There is also concern about unlicensed motor car traders selling stolen vehicles. The VACC recently held a seminar to bring together those agencies that are responsible for ensuring that motor car traders are selling vehicles appropriately and that stolen vehicles are not hitting the market through motor car traders as a result of an increase in motor car vehicles stolen in Victoria. Consumer and Business Affairs Victoria joined with other agencies to attend this seminar. One of the key conclusions from the seminar was that unlicensed motor car traders trading through auction houses makes it far easier to dispose of stolen vehicles. We are concerned about that and Consumer and Business Affairs Victoria will be appointing an additional inspector to work at detecting unlicensed trading. The inspector will regularly visit auction houses to try to reduce the opportunities for thieves to dispose of stolen vehicles in that way.

Electricity: contestability

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — On 10 October the Minister for Energy and Resources committed to ensure that commencement of full retail competition proceeds in January. However, the industry advises that insufficient preparations have been made.

Is it still the minister's intention to ensure that the January time line is met?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I reiterate my previous answer on this matter. This government, the Bracks government, has done everything necessary to ensure full retail contestability can commence from January of next year, and so has the management company for the national electricity market. It is the case that some of the incumbent businesses have some issues to do with business-to-business transactions. Those are clearly the responsibility of those businesses. It is the responsibility of those businesses to be ready. They have had an extra year to get ready, and until contestability starts new competitors cannot enter the market to compete with incumbents. That is just one of the reasons this government is determined that full retail contestability will commence from the beginning of next year, and the industry is well aware of that.

The Office of the Regulator-General is also doing everything necessary to ensure that consumers are properly advised of what they can expect from the changes that will take place. This government has also acted to put in place consumer protections that were completely lacking under the previous Kennett government. We now have in place the Essential Services Commission to further enhance the protections for consumers in order to ensure that contestability can proceed in January of next year. That is the government's expectation, and business is well aware that that is the government's expectation.

Youth: leadership camp

Hon. JENNY MIKAKOS (Jika Jika) — Will the Minister for Youth Affairs inform the house of innovative Bracks government initiatives that promote teamwork and leadership skills, and build links between young people and the police?

Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Youth Affairs) — Last week I attended a very successful youth leadership camp in Halls Gap with 60 young people from the Victoria Police youth corps. The camp was part of the Bracks government's youth development program and the South Australian Active 8 program, which is that state's equivalent of Victoria's youth development program. Students from Maroondah and Goroke secondary colleges in Victoria and from Adelaide High School attended the camp. The camp was organised by Victoria Police and was a chance to encourage youth leadership and promote youth development.

About 6000 students from 178 government secondary schools are involved in the youth development program. The camp was representative of the tremendous work Victoria Police does in promoting the youth development program. I congratulate not only the police generally for their involvement but particularly Senior Constable Steve Gambetta, who was involved in a leadership role in promoting relationships with the people in the South Australian equivalent program.

We have seen an enormous development in the program. It not only promotes and develops young people but also reflects the leadership capacity of Victoria Police among our Victorian young people.

I also thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place, Victoria's Chief Commissioner of Police and South Australia's assistant police commissioner, who attended the camp on that day. Their presence demonstrated the government's commitment to young people and to members of Victoria Police in the work they do to recognise the attributes of young people. It was a successful event and represented the government's long-term commitment to young people through the Victorian youth development program and the positive engagement of young people across the community.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Adult, Community and Further Education Board — Report, 2000–01.

Albury Wodonga Development Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Alpine Resorts Coordinating Council — Minister for Environment and Conservation's report of 30 October 2001 of receipt of the 2000–01 report.

Architects Registration Board — Report, 2000–01.

Australian Grand Prix Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Barwon Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Board of Studies — Report, 2000–01.

Building Control Commission — Report, 2000–01.

Central Gippsland Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Central Highlands Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Cinemia Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Coliban Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01 (two papers).

Docklands Authority — Report, 2000–01.

East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Education, Employment and Training Department — Report, 2000–01.

Emerald Tourist Railway Board — Report, 2000–01.

First Mildura Irrigation Trust — Report, 2000–01.

Fisheries Co-Management Council — Report, 2000–01.

Gambling Research Panel — Report, 2000–01.

Gippsland and Southern Rural Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Glenelg Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Goulburn–Murray Rural Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Goulburn Valley Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Grampians Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Greyhound Racing Control Board — Report, 2000–01.

Harness Racing Board — Report, 2000–01.

Hastings Port (Holding) Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Heritage Council Victoria — Report, 2000–01.

Human Services Department — Report, 2000–01.

Infrastructure Department — Report, 2000–01.

Justice Department — Report, 2000–01.

Lower Murray Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Marine Board of Victoria — Report, 2000–01.

Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd — Report, 2000–01.

Melbourne and Olympic Park Trusts — Report, 2000–01.

Melbourne City Link Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust — Report, 2000–01.

Melbourne Cricket Ground Trust — Report, 2000–01.

Melbourne Port Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Melbourne Water Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Museum Board of Victoria — Report, 2000–01.

Natural Resources and Environment Department — Report, 2000–01.

North Central Catchment Management Authority — Report, 2000–01.

North East Catchment Management Authority — Report, 2000–01.

North East Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Office of Public Employment — Report, 2000–01.

Overseas Projects Corporation of Victoria Ltd — Report, 2000–01.

Plumbing Industry Commission — Report, 2000–01.

Portland Coast Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Premier and Cabinet Department — Report, 2000–01.

Public Advocate's Office — Report, 2000–01.

Public Record Office — Report, 2000–01.

Public Transport Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Regulator-General's Office — Report, 2000–01.

Residential Tenancies Bond Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Roads Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Royal Botanic Gardens Board — Report, 2000–01.

Rural Finance Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

South Gippsland Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

South West Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Spencer Street Station Authority — Report, 2000–01.

State and Regional Development Department — Report, 2000–01.

State Sports Centres Trust — Report, 2000–01.

State Trustees Limited — Report, 2000–01 (including financial statements of the Common Funds) (two papers)

Sunraysia Rural Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Tourism Victoria — Report, 2000–01.

Treasury and Finance Department — Report, 2000–01.

Treasury Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Urban and Regional Land Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

VicFleet Pty Ltd — Minister for Finance's report of receipt of the 2000–01 report.

Victorian Catchment Management Council — Report, 2000–01.

Victorian Channels Authority — Report, 2000–01 (two papers).

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Victorian Energy Networks Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Victorian Institute of Sport — Report, 2000–01 (two papers).

Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission — Report, 2000–01.

Victorian Medical Consortium Pty Ltd — Report, 2000–01.

Victorian Rail Track Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

Victorian Relief Committee — Report, 2000–01.

V/Line Passenger Corporation — Report, 2000–01.

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Western Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Westernport Region Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Wimmera Catchment Management Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Wimmera-Mallee Rural Water Authority — Report, 2000–01.

Wonthaggi and District Hospital — Report, 2000–01.

Yarram and District Health Service — Report, 2000–01.

Young Farmers' Finance Council — Report, 2000–2001.

EASTERN SUBURBS: INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. W. I. SMITH (Silvan) — I move:

That this house condemns the government for its failure to provide essential infrastructure and services to the people in the eastern metropolitan area and calls on the government to stop ignoring the people of this region.

The Bracks government has turned its back on the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, and particularly on the outer eastern suburbs. Honourable members who will contribute to debate on the motion will concentrate on the Labor government's failure to provide essential services and infrastructure in different suburbs of the eastern metropolitan region.

During my contribution I shall concentrate on the issues that affect my electorate in the outer east and on suburbs that have been completely ignored by the Labor government — suburbs such as Heathmont, Warrandyte, Bayswater, Ringwood, Croydon, Mooroolbark, Boronia, Kilsyth and Knox as well as towns in the Dandenong Ranges such as Olinda, Belgrave, Sassafra and Upwey.

The Bracks government may have made election promises in 1999, but it did not expect to have to keep

them because it did not expect to win government. It made policy commitments that it never expected to put in place, and it has not done so, particularly in the outer east of Melbourne.

Promises were made before the 1999 election on essential services and infrastructure delivery, but that is what they were — only promises! They were words and rhetoric; the promises were never kept for the outer eastern suburbs. There was no real commitment to service delivery in the outer east.

The government talks about being committed to health, education, reducing crime and basic infrastructure projects. It talks about a social conscience and about helping those who cannot help themselves, but in reality it has used only words and rhetoric. The government does not have a social conscience, and it has turned its back on the residents of the eastern metropolitan region, particularly those in the outer east.

A good government provides services and infrastructure for service provision. It provides them for the community's wellbeing. Those services are equitable and available to all. Generally they are services that people cannot provide for themselves. Those services include the areas of public health, public education and safety from crime within the community. Certainly it is a government's responsibility to provide a good economic environment for the growth of business and jobs, but it is just as important for a government to provide the basic services for a community — particularly for those who need assistance.

In analysing the subject of the motion this morning, particularly in regard to the outer eastern region, I examined Labor's policies in 1999 and their implementation, or lack of it, in the outer east. It is critically important that all citizens feel safe in their homes and their communities. The outer east of Melbourne has seen two years of broken promises from the Bracks government in regard to crime safety and police. In 1999 the Labor Party went to the Victorian community with a promise: no more excuses on crime. Labor said it would introduce its community protection action plan because Victorians needed new solutions for today's problems. Labor said there were to be no more excuses on crime. Crime prevention and crime safety were going to be the hallmarks of a Bracks government.

What did the Bracks government provide for the outer eastern suburbs? Two years of broken promises with regard to police and crime prevention. Labor said it would provide new police stations or replacement

stations, including a 24-hour facility at Belgrave. It was still negotiating to build that station on 25 October this year. Labor promised to encourage force command to staff the Mount Evelyn police station 16 hours a day. There is a feasibility study out two years later; there is no further change on that to date. Labor promised to encourage police command to staff the Olinda police station 12 hours a day. There has been no action on that.

The Olinda police station desperately needs to be staffed 12 hours a day. There is a serious problem in Olinda which the residents have known about for a long time. It is not uncommon on Friday and Saturday nights for youths to go through that area causing violence and causing patrons coming from restaurants in the area to feel threatened. The owners of those businesses up there feel threatened. The police have been told about it, but there has been no action because it is a difficult area to get to. People in Olinda have actually stopped reporting crimes. Labor said it would enforce the operation of the Olinda police station 16 hours a day, and still the people of Olinda are not covered.

Labor said it was committed to the establishment of a specialised crime prevention unit within each police district, which would be a key crime prevention priority for the incoming Labor government. It has not happened, and it certainly has not happened in the outer eastern region. Labor also said it was committed to the trialling of a new Streetwatch program to complement and enhance the existing Neighbourhood Watch program. It said Victorian police would develop Streetwatch programs for those areas where there was a recognised problem, and that Streetwatch would involve members of the local community walking in pairs in times and areas specified by local police. It has not happened through the Dandenong Ranges or in Ringwood. It has not happened anywhere in the outer east or the eastern metropolitan area.

Labor said in its election policy that it was committed to the development and implementation of an integrated community-based antiviolence strategy which would focus on domestic violence, violence among and against young people, as well as alcohol-related violence. It has not happened. It is not unusual for people to come to my electorate office and complain about domestic violence, yet nobody is able to do anything about it. There is no facility or action in the outer east for the community.

Labor said on shopping centre safety that it would set up police booths or shopfronts at key targeted shopping centres to improve police visibility. It has not happened at Ringwood and Knox shopping centres. They are the

two main regional shopping areas in the eastern metropolitan area, and there are no police booths or shopfronts there, yet there is a high incidence of robbery at both those centres.

Labor talked in its crime prevention policy about early intervention for young people at risk. It said it would support the development of programs to provide practical guidance in parenting and improving family relationships to address some of the ingredients within families that may contribute to offending behaviour among young people, and said that may include a program of home visits. This has not happened, and it certainly has not happened in the outer east.

Two weeks ago I had a mother and daughter come into my electorate office with a conflict over two grandchildren aged four and six. They were being violently treated by the mother; they were being emotionally and physically abused. There was nothing the police could do about it unless the violence was reported. Conflict continues. The Labor government says it is committed, but nothing has happened.

Labor said it would develop and implement measures to raise community safety for all Victorians. What did it do in its first budget? It reduced spending on crime prevention and the community support program by \$19.9 million. A Bracks government pledged itself to implementing a comprehensive anticrime policy. It said Labor would develop innovative anticrime strategies to tackle the heroin crisis and implement new measures to crack down on white-collar crime. That did not happen. The anticrime strategy was to introduce safe injecting houses! Labor has not delivered on reducing crime in the outer east.

The Bracks government promised to solve the overcrowding situation in prisons. The reality is that it has failed dismally. In many instances convicted and sentenced prisoners have been held at police stations for more than 30 days. A classic example is the Ringwood police station. I was alerted to this problem recently when a young wife and mother came to see me at my electorate office because her husband had been kept in a cell at the Ringwood police station for more than 30 days. She was having difficulty visiting her husband and did not like taking her children to visit him in the police station.

The result of this Labor policy is that police officers are taken off the street to guard prisoners at police stations. There is less ability to assist the community generally, and as I said, the problem is not uncommon. People in the outer east are asking whether Ringwood police station is being used as a de facto prison for that area

because it is often holding convicted prisoners for more than 30 days.

This government uses expressions such as policy commitment to proper resourcing of police and emergency services, increasing the safety and security of all Victorians and building new police stations in the outer east or extending operating hours at stations such as Olinda, but it has not delivered these services in the outer east. They are words — mere rhetoric. Labor has failed to extend the police station operating hours in the outer east, failed to build the new stations and failed to establish the integrated strategies for police and the community.

Access to good health care is a fundamental right in our Australian society. Whether rich, poor, young or old, all individuals expect equitable health care and services for themselves and their families. This has not been delivered to the residents of the outer eastern region. Since the election of the Bracks government they have experienced an increase in waiting lists at public hospitals, the number of ambulance bypasses ballooning, patients waiting longer on trolleys, and no commitment to a teaching hospital at Knox.

Federal opposition leader Kim Beazley is promising to cut waiting lists. So did state Labor before it was elected. Labor promised in its 1999 state election health policy new solutions that Victorians needed for today's problems. Restoring confidence in public hospitals was one of the main planks in its platform. It said it would introduce a better ambulance system. Labor's health policy was the provision of access and quality. The result has been very different.

The *Hospital Services Report* that has just been released contains a comparison of figures on elective surgery and ambulance bypass at Maroondah and Angliss hospitals. The elective surgery waiting list has increased over the past two years. The number of occasions on bypass has also increased in the past two years since the Bracks government was elected. The Angliss Hospital has experienced a 200 per cent increase, and at Maroondah the number of ambulance bypasses increased from 25 to 76 occasions.

In regard to patients staying in emergency departments for more than 12 hours, there has been an outrageous increase, particularly at the Maroondah Hospital. The report released for the June quarter includes information about patients about to be admitted to Maroondah Hospital who had to wait on trolleys in corridors until a hospital bed could be found. Under a Kennett government in June 1999 there were 16 cases; under the Bracks government in June this year there

were 316 cases. So we have seen a rise in the number of people waiting on trolleys at Maroondah Hospital from 16 to 316 cases.

If we look at ambulance bypasses of the Maroondah Hospital, the figures released for the June quarter show that under a Kennett government in June 1999 there were 25 ambulance bypasses; under the Bracks government the number was 76 — the number has increased three times under a Bracks government.

I refer to the waiting lists for elective surgery in semi-urgent cases. Honourable members know that many patients are having their surgery cancelled, but the number of those who were actually on the waiting lists in June last year was 176; under a Bracks government in June this year there were 267. There has been a 50 per cent increase in the number of people on waiting lists. This is the party that said it cared about people and that it was going to reduce the number of people on waiting lists — that had a platform of equity and access for all Victorians.

At the Maroondah Hospital again, the number of patients on waiting lists for longer than the ideal time was: Kennett government, June 1999, none; Bracks government, June this year, 59.

The outer east used to have a mobile immunisation service — a bus from which immunisation injections were provided to people. Earlier this year the Bracks government scrapped that service; the bus from which those injections were provided for families was completely scrapped. The Labor government's commitment to essential services in the outer east has been poor. The service from that bus that was scrapped was acknowledged as being very effective in the enhanced measles control campaign in 1998 and in response to the outbreak of measles in young adults in 1999. What Labor wants to do now is collect data and deliver promotion — it is going to become a travelling road show, but there is no immunisation for people.

The Labor government has not only scrapped the immunisation bus but it has scrapped any commitment whatsoever to building a Knox hospital. There is no commitment at all from this government to establishing a tertiary teaching hospital in the outer eastern region of Melbourne. Surely it is important to maintain the best possible health services to a region? But what we have seen in the outer east instead is an increase in ambulance bypass, an increase in waiting lists, an increase in the number of people on trolleys, and a lack of commitment to health services in Knox and the surrounding areas. From Warrandyte, all through the Dandenong Ranges and through to Knox, people would

use a new tertiary hospital. Because the Bracks government does not support building the Knox hospital the residents are condemned to continue to travel long distances. Surely this Labor government wants its people to have essential services, to have more choice, and to have more specialists in the area? That is what a tertiary hospital would have done — it would have given a 24-hour emergency service and it would have brought more specialised care into the area which the outer east does not have.

This is the government that talks about having a heart, having a social conscience, and looking after the people. Let's compare it to the Kennett government in 1998 and what it was going to do for the community in the outer east.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You didn't even talk about it!

Hon. W. I. SMITH — Oh, yes, we did, Mr Theophanous. We were committed to building a tertiary hospital at Knox. I quote from an article in the *Herald Sun* of Monday, 28 September 1998, which states:

The Victorian government's plans for a new hospital serving the communities of the eastern suburbs is on track for an opening in 2001, says health minister Rob Knowles.

The advertising had gone up. The article states further:

... Mr Knowles said it would provide quality, accessible, locally based and responsive health care services to the community.

There was a great community expectation for the service. The hospital was to be built on the corner of Mountain Highway and Boronia Road in Knox. The site had been chosen, the advertising was in progress and the tender process had started. What that hospital would have provided to those residents in the outer east was a 24-hour emergency service, critical and intensive care, heart and respiratory services, specialist neurosurgery, cancer treatment — oncology — and outpatient facilities and a teaching, training and research centre. It would have attracted our young people in the outer east. It would have given them a facility to train and work at, instead of having to travel out of the region and the area. It also would have provided an excellent facility for the community. As I said, the people of the outer east are condemned to travel long distances when they or their families are sick and need emergency care.

The proposal to build the Knox hospital is yet another infrastructure project that would have provided an essential service for the outer east that has been

scrapped by the Bracks government. Two years of a Bracks government has seen the quality of the Victorian health system drastically reduced. The June quarterly report on hospital services indicates how the Victorian health system is performing. It proves unequivocally that two years of a Labor government has been disastrous for the Victorian health system.

As I indicated, what we have seen in the two hospitals in my area is patients left waiting on trolleys for longer than 12 hours in our emergency services. The figures have ballooned, as seen at the Maroondah Hospital. The number of ambulances forced to bypass emergency departments because they are full has blown out. I have given the examples of the Maroondah and Angliss hospitals. The number of patients on the waiting lists for semi-urgent elective surgery such as hip replacements has increased. Many patients have not been treated in clinically ideal time frames. Again I gave the example of Maroondah Hospital. More patients are having their surgery cancelled.

On every key indicator there has been a grave deterioration in the health system since the Labor government has come to power in Victoria. Our emergency departments are struggling to cope and as a result are being constantly bypassed by the ambulance service. The government's own report went on to say that the areas affected worst are those in the south-eastern corridor: Monash, Box Hill, out to Dandenong, William Angliss and the Maroondah hospitals. We have a health system which on every key indicator, particularly for the outer east, is performing worse than it did when the Labor Party came to government.

Labor came into government committed also, it said, to providing a fair and equitable education system for our community. The outer east has seen nothing but broken promises in the government's education commitment. When it came to office the Labor government said on education, 'We are going to build school communities; we are going to invest in schools and teachers'. The reality is that there has been a variety of broken promises in education services in the outer east under the Bracks Labor government. An election promise of the Bracks government was to cut class sizes for grades prep, 1 and 2 to 21 or less through annual savings of \$40 million in cuts to government waste and advertising, it said. It was no. 2 of Bracks's six commitments to Victoria.

Later it was revealed that the costing was done on average class sizes of 21 across the state in those year levels. A typical-sized primary school has to date received new funding for only a quarter to half a new

teacher position. That means pressure has been placed on principals to move teachers from those upper primary grades of 3, 4, 5 and 6 to the lower grades of prep, 1 and 2. That pressure has been applied purely to support the political promise of having lower class sizes in the early years. That has impacted on schools in the outer east. The result has been that in 2001 Andersons Creek Primary School had a prep to grade 2 average class size of 20.8 students but, due to the government's policy push, an average of 27 students in years 3 to 6. Similarly, in 2001 Croydon Hills Primary School had an average class size of 23.2 students from prep to grade 2, but it ballooned out to 28.4 in years 3 to 6. Manchester Primary School had average class sizes of 22.8 for prep to grade 2, but in years 3 to 6 the average class size was 27.3.

Of particular interest is the review of the school bus service, which was an ALP election policy. The government did review it, but timing became an issue in my electorate. It is crucial for school students living in urban fringe areas such as those in Silvan Province — areas of Monbulk, Silvan and out through Lilydale — that there are good school bus services.

Many schools made detailed submissions to this review, including a group in Lilydale, which formed a committee especially to prepare its submission. It is a big issue out that way. The common comment is that it is very difficult for kids to get to schools because of the lack of school buses in the area. But, even though it was an election promise, the review did not commence until May 2000. The chairman of the committee, the Honourable Theo Theophanous, issued a press release in May 2000 in which he states:

Initial recommendations are expected to be available at the end of this school year for implementation in the 2001 school year.

It has not happened. We know the review was finally released this year because Mr Theophanous was waving it around the Parliament. It was reviewed in October 2001. The major changes are unlikely to be implemented until the 2003 school year, two years later than promised. This will impact adversely on the urban fringes such as the Lilydale, Monbulk and Silvan areas.

At the beginning of the school year the Minister for Education issued a press release saying that all priority 1 moves will be in place at the start of the school year. That did not happen. Many schools started the year using corridors, libraries and other non-class facilities as classrooms. Bimbadeen Heights Primary School, a school in my area, had to hold classes outside classrooms because it did not have the facilities.

School sport is an issue with schools in my area. School sport is compulsory and schools want it to remain so. The minister said on the Steve Price program on 3AW in mid 2000 that compulsory school sport was to be expanded, but to date nothing has been done to expand or enhance compulsory school sport. In fact, the opposite is the case. The minister recently announced a review of school curriculums and many groups believe school sports will be removed as a compulsory element of the curriculum in Victorian schools.

One of the criticisms that is ongoing from principals of schools concerns the fact that they cannot attract young teachers to their schools. In fact, one of the principals in my area said that the mean age of teachers was 40 years and that it was becoming increasingly difficult to get young men and women to teach at schools.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

Hon. J. M. Madden interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT

(**Hon. E. G. Stoney**) — Order! I ask the minister to desist and for Mr Theophanous to take his seat.

Hon. W. I. SMITH — As I was saying, one of the main areas of concern of principals in my area is that they are unable to attract young people to teaching. They no longer find that they can readily employ young men and women as role models, particularly in primary schools. The Labor government promised it would provide 250 scholarships each year for university graduates to undertake the diploma of education. By October this year only 60 scholarships had been offered and accepted. The government offered no new scholarships under this proposed program for the 2000 school year. As I said, it is increasingly difficult to attract young people to teach in primary schools. It is of grave concern and a criticism by school principals.

Schools in the eastern suburbs are being forced to shed experienced teachers due to the Bracks government's new funding formula. They are affected by this particular policy. Not enough people are able to take up diplomas of education and principals cannot get younger people and a younger age profile into their staffs.

When it came to office Labor said school communities would not be penalised for raising funds for local projects. We know that most school communities work very hard to raise funds. In my community it is not uncommon for parents to work hard to set up an information technology room and to buy hardware and other computer aids. It is very common for the school

community to work together for a period to buy computers to fit out computer rooms.

In the past six months one of my schools had to fundraise to buy a canopy for a playground area to provide shade and protect students. School communities take seriously their role in providing a range of facilities for students, but Labor has ruthlessly used the one classroom per 25 student program to strip self-funded classrooms from school communities. Schools have used fundraising to purchase classrooms for specialist programs. In one example a school raised \$400 000 for a new technology classroom that was subsequently stripped from that school under the one classroom per 25 student allocation program.

It is a great worry for schools in the outer east who have parents spending many hours of volunteer time raising funds to create good facilities. Labor has gone against its own policy and it is unable to ensure that schools will not be penalised for this program.

I have looked at the provision of essential services and infrastructure in health, education and crime prevention and found there is a deficiency in the provision of these services in the outer east. Surely one of the most important and essential services a government can offer a community is assisting those in our society who are most at risk, those whose needs are unmet and those who are homeless and have no way out. Labor talks about social policy — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous interjected.

The ACTING PRESIDENT

(**Hon. E. G. Stoney**) — Order! Mr Theophanous, I note that you are listed to speak next. I suggest that you keep your rebuttal until then.

Hon. W. I. SMITH — Labor talks about a social policy and assisting people in need, but in reality it does little for people in the outer east who face that predicament. The Wesley Community Contact Centre has prepared some research into unmet needs of people experiencing homelessness in the eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne. The figures include people in the outer east in particular. There are three centres in the outer east that provide for people who need resources or assistance because of homelessness. The Wesley Community Contact Centre is one of those centres. It has 350 to 400 people a month coming to it for assistance seeking resources, assistance and housing. The report concluded that 46 per cent of people in the eastern metropolitan region were in private rental immediately prior to becoming homeless. This indicates that approximately half of those receiving

homeless support were initially able to secure and maintain private rental for a specific period prior to homelessness. The report found there was no crisis accommodation facility in the region for the family type of single persons with children. The report found that the majority of people attempting to access housing and support and not having their needs met were primarily seeking accommodation.

The results of the report are very worrying. They show that demand for support services has increased over the past several years with more than 2000 more support periods being provided with minimal increase in allocated funds to agencies. The really worrying trend in the outer east is that the family type most likely to access support services has shifted from singles to families. It was put to me by the writer of the report that the people in the homeless crisis are going into crisis purely for financial reasons. It is not about social problems or family breakdown. These people are becoming homeless purely for economic and financial reasons. There is no other significant matter. The report also shows an increase in the number of children looking for crisis accommodation. Private rental is identified as the main area of concern. The report is critical that there is no coordinated regional system to record unmet demand, and it raises the questions: how do we know how many people are out there needing assistance and how can we assist them? There is no regional coordination of support facilities in the outer east or in eastern metropolitan Melbourne.

It was put to me that one way of assisting these people was to provide sustainable affordable housing but that was impacted enormously by stamp duty. Stamp duty is a barrier for some people in trying to buy affordable housing. John Harvey was commissioned by the government to examine taxes and its impact on businesses. The report clearly identifies that stamp duty is having an impact on rental property and results in an increase in rent that individuals pay for accommodation. This results in a reduction of rental stock for those most in need and increases rental rates. We know that stamp duty is very high in this state and that it is having an impact on basic housing in the outer east. We know there is a housing prices boom, which the government cannot control, but it has collected an obscene amount of stamp duty. It has had a stamp duty windfall. Surely if stamp duty were abolished Labor would be interested in a policy to assist those who cannot find affordable housing.

I turn to the impact of stamp duty on median-priced housing in the outer east. For example, in Bayswater for a median house price of \$166 000, stamp duty is \$5620; in Boronia for a median house price of \$160 000, stamp

duty is \$5260; in Croydon for a median house price of \$185 000, stamp duty is \$6760; in Kilsyth for a median house price of \$175 000, stamp duty is \$6160; in Montrose for a median house price of \$225 000, stamp duty is \$9160; in Mooroolbark for a median house price of \$183 000, stamp duty is \$6640; in Mount Evelyn for a median house price of \$167 000, stamp duty is \$5680; in Ringwood for a median house price of \$212 000, stamp duty is \$8380; and in Upwey for a median house price of \$155 000, stamp duty is \$4960.

I put it to the house that if stamp duty were abolished housing would be more affordable for people in that price range simply because it would be cheaper. People would invest in property if stamp duty were abolished and therefore there would be more affordable rental properties available for low-income families. Sustainable affordable housing is impacted by stamp duty.

Where is Labor's social conscience, where is its policy towards the people who need assistance and where is its policy towards those in the outer east? Labor has turned its back on the outer east, particularly in regard to homelessness and with regard to families and children who are seeking new accommodation purely for financial rather than social reasons.

I know in this debate Labor will use in its defence the Eastern Freeway infrastructure that it has offered to the Eastern metropolitan region, but the facts are that the time frame has blown out on that project — it is now a four-year project. Some of the issues involved in the planning of the project are still unresolved. The community is still unaware of where some of the off and on ramps will be located, even though the government has been talking about this project for two years.

What about the Scoresby freeway and the provision of basic road infrastructure to the outer east? The Bracks government again has not provided it. The Prime Minister has given a funding commitment. Even the federal Labor opposition has given a commitment. It has said it will put forward \$500 million, but in the *Age* on 29 October 2001 Dr Paul Mees, president of the Public Transport Users Association, labelled Labor's funding announcement as tokenistic. More importantly, where is the Bracks government's commitment? We have heard Paul Mees, a former adviser to the Minister for Transport, say that federal Labor government's commitment is tokenistic, as I suggest is the state government's interest in the Scoresby freeway. There is no real budget funding.

The true commitment of the Bracks government is \$2.1 million. Its members can talk as much as they like about being committed, but no funding has been provided for connecting roads for the Scoresby freeway. What about the Dingley bypass? Last year \$500 000 was provided in the budget, and \$500 000 is being provided next year in the budget. There has been no funding for the feeder or collector roads into the Scoresby freeway and no buying up of land for those road feeders. How can one take the Bracks government seriously about being committed to a Scoresby freeway when it has provided only \$2.1 million in the budget?

The Scoresby corridor is home to a million residents. More than 40 per cent of Melbourne's manufacturing and production activities are located in this area; almost one third of Melbourne's jobs are in this area. This basic infrastructure that is needed for businesses to create jobs and for people is not there. Road safety would be improved for the community in the outer east and accidents would be reduced by the provision of the Scoresby freeway. There would be a saving of travelling time and easier access for people going to the airport and to Frankston. These are basic necessities of any community, but even this basic and essential provision of road infrastructure is not being committed as yet for the outer east.

There are many other areas besides health, education, crime prevention and road infrastructure where Labor has failed to provide essential services in a whole range of areas to the outer east. For example, time and again we hear the Honourable Andrew Olexander asking the minister about Freeza funding, but all we get is smoke and mirrors. There is no commitment in budget terms for that program — it is all smoke and mirrors. The state government has failed the residents of the outer east by not providing good public services and the basic infrastructure that is important for the delivery of good services.

I conclude by saying that the Bracks government is only electorally and sectorally interested in providing essential services and infrastructure to the community, and that does not include the outer east or the eastern metropolitan region because the seats there are predominantly held by Liberals. I condemn the state government for its hypocrisy about having social policies, about being committed to people who need assistance, about providing essential services to people who need them in the areas of health, education and road infrastructure. I condemn the government for not providing essential infrastructure and services to the people in the eastern metropolitan area, and in particular the outer eastern area. I call on the government to stop ignoring people in this region.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS (Melbourne) — In my contribution to the debate on the motion I shall outline a large number of undertakings that the Bracks government has made to the people of Victoria who live in the eastern metropolitan area of Melbourne. I will do so at great length. There will be a policy tour of the commitments and undertakings the Bracks government has given to the people of the eastern metropolitan region.

At the outset of my contribution I will be gracious to the Honourable Wendy Smith, who moved this motion condemning the government and outlined in her contribution a number of concerns she has on behalf of her constituents. On behalf of the government I acknowledge the legitimacy of many of those concerns. The Parliament should be alert and extremely responsive to the social, economic, environmental and quality-of-life needs all of citizens, including those who in this case live in the eastern metropolitan region. I applaud the Honourable Wendy Smith for outlining a number of her concerns.

If I were to be less gracious I would be interested to check *Hansard* over the period of the Kennett government to see whether members of the now opposition were then as vocal and strident in the expression of their concern on behalf of their constituents about the run-down of infrastructure and service delivery that was provided to all Victorian citizens, including those in the eastern metropolitan region. I will be very interested to check at a future time what level of concern was put on the public record — whether it was put so clearly and so passionately in the manner put this morning by the Honourable Wendy Smith in support of her motion. I doubt I will find many lengthy contributions within *Hansard* by members of the then government identifying their concerns about the running down of infrastructure and service delivery that their constituents and in fact all the citizens of Victoria faced during the period of the Kennett regime.

To put into context the program and policy tour of the eastern metropolitan region that I will be taking the house on, I will refer to the most recent state budget to demonstrate the framework of the budget policies that the Bracks government set for the state and delivered to the people of Victoria. I will then quickly move on to address at great length the undertakings the government has made and delivered to the people of the eastern metropolitan region.

I commence by briefly outlining to the house the framework of the most recent Victorian budget — the 2001–02 budget — which appears in a supporting document entitled *Growing the Whole State*, which was

delivered to the Parliament by the Treasurer in May of this year. That document outlines on page 3 the priorities of the government in this budget, and they include the following issues:

investing heavily in social and economic infrastructure, to be funded in part through the allocation of the Growing Victoria infrastructure reserve;

building a creative and innovative economy, with a substantial investment in schools, TAFE institutes and research institutions and the establishment of the Victorian Endowment for Science, Knowledge and Innovation ...;

improving environmental sustainability with a series of initiatives focusing primarily on the sustainable use of Victoria's water resources;

enhancing Victoria's business environment, including the implementation of the government's tax package — *Better Business Taxes: Lower, Fewer, Simpler*; and

new programs to strengthen the Victorian community through multiyear strategies in the key areas of health, education and community building.

Hon. W. I. Smith — And specifically in the eastern metropolitan region?

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — In response to the interjection from the Honourable Wendy Smith about the eastern suburbs specifically, I will be dealing with that at great length shortly.

On page 5 of the budget overview the Treasurer outlines for the Parliament and the people of Victoria the budget priorities in the programs that appear to support those objectives. Those priorities include:

a \$108 million ongoing commitment to increasing hospitals' capacity to cope with rising demand, in particular for emergency services plus support for alternative care options;

a four-year \$150 million program to address the causes of growth in hospital admissions through a range of preventive initiatives;

\$7 million over three years towards community building projects;

\$25 million targeted towards enhancing a wide range of community support services available to people and their carers;

\$14 million ongoing in new initiatives to improve services provision for older Victorians;

since the 2000–01 budget, education has received an additional \$371 million to 2004–05 for initiatives directed at improving participation and achievement in education outcomes;

\$386 million investment in education and training facilities across the whole of Victoria to provide modern and enhanced learning environments;

\$34 million to make Victorian communities safer through a visible police presence and to upgrade local and regional police stations;

\$166 million to increase the permanent capacity of the prison system; and

\$246 million over four years towards transport initiatives to provide more accessible and efficient transport services.

Those are significant investments that were made by the Bracks government in this budget. The reason that that vast range of priority programs and that level of investment had to be put in by the Bracks government over the breadth of issues that confront the Victorian community was to redress the downturn in the quality of infrastructure and service provision that occurred during the Kennett regime.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — I want to put on the public record in this debate — I do not have the selective amnesia that members of the opposition have in relation to this issue — the run-down of the quality of service provision to the Victorian people during the era of the Kennett regime. I will outline to the house the breadth of undertakings that were delivered in this budget to all Victorian citizens and the level of investment that was required to redress that run-down.

Pages 24 and 25 of this overview list specifically for members of the Victorian community who live in the eastern and south-eastern suburbs the projects that received priority attention during the course of this financial year in that region. Listed on those two pages are, at a guess, 60 or 70 projects. I will not read them into *Hansard* because my intention is to move through — policy area by policy area and department by department — the initiatives that have been funded by the Bracks government and delivered on within this financial year.

I will respond at great length to the challenges that have been laid down by the opposition about specific initiatives that have been undertaken in the eastern metropolitan region. The first policy area I address is the often vexed question of transport in the eastern corridor.

Hon. K. M. Smith — The Scoresby freeway!

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — Yes, the Scoresby corridor. On many occasions in this place during general business I have discussed the Scoresby freeway. In fact, that has been the topic of debate on any number of occasions within this place over the past year, and on every occasion in my contribution on behalf of the Bracks government I have outlined its

commitment to ensuring the delivery of the Scoresby freeway and to ensuring that it is delivered within an integrated Scoresby corridor transport plan — one that is not solely focused on the provision of a freeway but one that sees the important role the freeway will play in the context of an integrated transport strategy.

That has been the clear divide between the government and the opposition in Victoria, because the government has maintained a commitment to an integrated transport plan for the Scoresby corridor and it has forced the federal government to come to the table and fund the Scoresby freeway development on a fifty-fifty basis — something it was most reluctant to do for the best part of this year.

The Victorian government identified that it was prepared to put on the record over \$500 million and it waited a very long time before the federal government responded to that fifty-fifty proposition. The federal government has been silent — it has gone down a long black tunnel in relation to its commitment to an integrated transport strategy plan for the corridor.

I would like to put into context for the Parliament a number of key public transport initiatives that have been undertaken by the Bracks government to improve service delivery to the citizens of eastern metropolitan Melbourne. Those initiatives include spending \$10 million to improve the Smart Bus service along Blackburn and Springvale roads with more frequent services, establishing clearways to improve travel times and electronic real-time information signs at major stops that accurately display when the next bus will arrive. Additional bus services have been put into the Rowville, Glen Waverley and Ringwood areas as part of a \$14 million extension to the bus network throughout Melbourne's outer suburbs.

The introduction of flyer train services along the Ringwood, Frankston and Dandenong lines have considerably reduced travel times from these areas to metropolitan Melbourne. Additional train services have also been put on the Belgrave and Lilydale lines.

We have seen significant improvements in the park-and-ride facilities, with the provision of additional car parking at railway stations along the corridor to make catching trains more convenient. Connecting transport services are occurring at Belgrave, Blackburn, Boronia, Box Hill, Lilydale, Nunawading and Ringwood stations where \$500 million has been spent with a further \$2.8 million committed towards 2003.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — Despite the clear intent of the opposition to prevent me from putting this on the public record I can assure honourable members that I can put it all on the public record and I will take as long as is required to do so. This is your time and I am using it! I alert the opposition —

Hon. N. B. Lucas interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Mr Lucas, you will have your opportunity later!

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — I will not be prevented from clearly outlining to the Parliament and the people of Victoria the entirety of the undertakings. I have hundreds of commitments that the Bracks government has made to the people of the eastern metropolitan area and they are all being delivered in the context —

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — The Bracks government has committed funds to an integrated transport planning regime, and that is something the opposition absolutely detests, so it hangs its cynical and contemptuous hat on the \$2 million investment for the integrated transport plan. That plan is a clear undertaking of this government to ensure that there is the appropriate integration of all the transport needs in the eastern corridor.

My colleague, the Minister for Transport in the other place, is absolutely committed to pursue the tram line to Knox within this service.

Hon. B. N. Atkinson — Where is the tram line to Knox?

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — As the honourable member would understand there have been extensions of the Mont Albert tram line to Box Hill, which is a \$22 million investment, and we have seen the extension of route 109 as part of that extension. It is a major improvement to the service provision. Indeed, the people of Victoria have had the luxury of travelling on state-of-the-art-trams — a new investment in tram infrastructure.

Hon. B. N. Atkinson — A private company!

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — Exactly, Yarra Trams, and supported entirely by the government. It is a foretaste of things to come. The government is actively pursuing the interest in the extension of the light rail system to Knox — an acute priority of this opposition — the extension of the light rail connection from Huntingdale to Rowville, the transit ways and bus

lanes along Springvale and Stud roads, and provision within the median strips of the Scoresby freeway of space for future rail services.

I have outlined a number of issues that are part of the integrated transport plan — matters that opposition members have clearly no commitment to and no interest in. They are bending over backwards to not have these things placed on the public record here this morning. They are not the slightest bit interested in integrated transport planning and have demonstrated time and again no interest. Unlike the federal Beazley opposition, which has matched the Howard government's undertaking to a fifty-fifty funding of the Scoresby freeway. The Beazley opposition has been prepared to make a commitment that it will fund many of the projects that I have outlined in cooperation with the Victorian government should it be elected on 10 November.

Hon. B. N. Atkinson — Promises, promises! People want to see the colour of your money. Where's the money for the Scoresby freeway? Sign a cheque!

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — I will take up the interjection. Have any cheques been signed in relation to this matter?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Honourable members will direct their remarks through the Chair!

Hon. B. N. Atkinson — Yes. The federal government has put money in this year's budget.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — Where is it?

Hon. B. N. Atkinson — It is there now.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — It has been paid has it?

Hon. B. N. Atkinson — It was put on the bulldozer six months ago.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — The opposition is clearly unhappy about and does not want to place on the public record that the federal opposition, led by the Honourable Kim Beazley, has made undertakings to the Victorian community and those who live in eastern metropolitan Melbourne that it will fund, along with the state government, an integrated transport plan for the corridor.

In a press release dated Sunday, 28 October the Honourable Peter Batchelor, the Minister for Transport, announced that the Bracks government:

... welcomed the commitment of a future Beazley Labor government to fund improved public transport in the Scoresby corridor, saying it would allow major public transport initiatives worth more than \$140 million to proceed.

It went on to say:

... the \$55 million public transport commitment was in addition to federal Labor's pledge to meet 50 per cent of the cost of the Scoresby freeway

That would include many of the projects I have already outlined to the house. This is a significant undertaking and the state government clearly has a commitment to these projects. Just as it has extracted from the federal government a commitment to fund the Scoresby freeway on a fifty-fifty basis, it will seek a similar commitment from whichever government is elected after 10 November. However, we have a clear undertaking to pursue an integrated transport plan for the Scoresby corridor.

In response to the allegations that were made in the house earlier today about the commitment of the government to fund road projects in the eastern metropolitan area, I outline a significant number of black-spot investments that have been made within the eastern metropolitan area of Melbourne to a total in the past two years of \$21.4 million. Eighty-one projects have been undertaken in that region and they include the following: the intersection improvements on the Burwood Highway from Lysterfield Road and Selman Avenue to Forest Road in Ferntree Gully; the installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Dublin Road and Alexandra Road in East Ringwood; the construction of a roundabout on Belgrave-Gembrook Road at the Grantulla Road and School Road intersection; and the construction of a roundabout on the Monbulk-Seville Road at the Beenak Road intersection.

These projects are in addition to a number of other major road infrastructure programs that are currently being funded within this financial year and include: the Princess Freeway East-Hallam bypass, the construction of which commenced in July 1999 and will be completed in December 2003 at a cost of \$175 million; the Eastern Freeway, Springvale Rd to Ringwood bypass, the construction of which commenced in March 2000 and is to be completed by July 2005 at a cost of \$326 million; the High Street duplication from Doncaster Road to Manningham Road, the construction of which will be completed by June 2002 at a cost of \$4.5 million; the High Street Road duplication from Mimosa Street to Cathies Lane, which will be completed by June 2003 at a cost of \$13.3 million; the duplication of Kelletts Road from Stud Road to Taylors Lane, which is to be completed by December this year

at a cost of \$4.2 million; the duplication of Narre Warren North Road from Magid Drive to Ernst Wanke Road, the construction of which is to be completed by June 2002 at a cost of \$7 million; the Reynolds Road duplication from Andersons Creek Road to Springvale Road, the construction of which is to be completed by June 2002 at a cost of \$5.1 million; and the Swansea Road Stage 3 duplication from the Lilydale–Monbulk Road to York Road, construction to be completed by December 2002 at a cost of \$14 million.

The breadth of those projects, the time for their completion and the financial commitment I have outlined to the house do not indicate that the Bracks government is ignoring the region. There can be no measure to indicate that the Bracks government is ignoring, in any sense of the word, the infrastructure and transport requirements of people in the eastern metropolitan region. It is impossible to suggest, as the opposition is trying to, that there is not an undertaking by the Bracks government to make significant investment in infrastructure in the eastern metropolitan region.

I move to the important field of education, one of the major priorities of the Bracks government and one that was taken to the people of Victoria at the last election. Education spending has been a major feature of its first two budgets, including the major undertakings outlined to the house earlier in the budget overview. There are significant financial and policy investments in the field of education. Increases in funding have been available to schools within a range of suburbs in the eastern metropolitan area since the election of the Bracks government. These are increases in the financial resources put into schools in these suburbs since the government was elected, including increases to the school global budget, the new initiative funding totals in 2000–01, and funding for facilities that are required in those schools.

I refer to the total level of investment, which is new money that has been put into schools in the following suburbs since the election of the Bracks government. The schools within the Bayswater area have received an increase of \$6.037 million; in Bennettswood, \$6.653 million; in Box Hill, \$9.336 million; in Burwood, \$3.327 million; in Doncaster, \$6.684 million; in Evelyn, \$12.558 million; in Forest Hill, \$7.673 million; in Glen Waverley, \$6.453 million; in Knox, \$7.565 million —

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — That is not what the motion says. Read your motion and understand it!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order!
Mr Jennings, through the Chair.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — In Knox there has been an increase of \$7.565 million; in Monbulk, \$10.702 million; in Mooroolbark, \$8.201 million; in Wantirna, \$7.941 million; and in Warrandyte, \$6.830 million. Those additional funds have been put into schools in those suburbs by the Bracks government. It is hardly evidence that the Bracks government has ignored schools in the eastern metropolitan region. In fact, they are significant undertakings made by the Bracks government and delivered to the school communities within the eastern suburbs.

Apart from those significant increases in the amount of money that has gone to schools in those suburbs, there have been a number of other significant undertakings of which I will list just a few. The Donvale Student Development Centre was established last year. The centre caters for primary school aged children who present with disturbing behaviours. It is administered by the Donvale Primary School and supports schools and children in the region. The establishment cost of this facility was \$220 000 per year.

A number of local learning and employment networks have been created within the local government areas of Whitehorse, Manningham, Monash, Yarra Ranges, Maroondah and Knox. The disability support fund has been provided to the Box Hill Institute of TAFE. That fund was a pre-existing fund and has received additional resources of \$200 000 in each of the two past financial years.

Again, the breadth of commitment made and delivered by the Bracks government to the people of the eastern suburbs in the education sector to redress the downturn in the quality of public education in that region has been profound. There has been a significant level of investment and a clear demonstration that the Bracks government treats seriously the rights and responsibilities of the people in the eastern metropolitan community.

In health, the Honourable Wendy Smith put on the public record today her concerns about waiting lists and the quality of care received by her constituents. I reiterate that these are legitimate concerns for a member of this house to put on the public record. I want to respond on behalf of the government to those concerns — and I will not be ungracious and refer to the hypocrisy associated with the issues being raised in the house today. I will not use that phrase, but it was unfortunately something that did not appear regularly in

the *Hansard* during the Kennett regime. As part of this government I am happy for those legitimate concerns to be put on the public record and for the government to respond to them.

I refer to the budget overview entitled 'Delivering today, building for tomorrow', which was presented by the Treasurer in this year's budget. Page 19 has an overview of the level of commitment in this budget for restoring the quality of health care within Victoria. It states:

The 2001–02 budget builds upon the work of the last 18 months and continues to enhance the system by targeting new strategies to keep Victorians healthy. The rebuilding of Victoria's human services system will be boosted by \$849 million over four years in new initiatives and \$514 million in infrastructure investment in the 2001–02 budget.

Demand for health and community services provided by the Department of Human Services continues to grow strongly. Responding to this growing demand is an ongoing challenge for the government. To address the continuing demand, the 2001–02 budget puts in place a new \$582 million hospital demand strategy ...

The strategy is expected to increase admitted patients from emergency departments by 14 000 per year and a further 11 800 elective surgery admissions.

Hon. A. P. Olexander — Talk is cheap; where are the results?

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — The inheritance and legacy left to this government in terms of health care was a complete abomination, riddled with fudging of figures, ignoring of responsibilities, and there is no reliable comparison between the data that was available on the election of the Bracks government and what is in place today.

Hon. A. P. Olexander — Not reliable?

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — Not reliable! But I reiterate to the house an unswerving commitment of the Bracks government to deliver on the undertakings that it made. It will deliver through the strategic financial resources that have been placed in the budget, the strategies that the Minister for Health is adopting, the significant reforms that we have seen to the way our health care system is administered and the significant investment that has seen the introduction of more than 2500 nurses within the hospital system in the past two years.

Within the eastern metropolitan region there has been the much-vaunted debate by the opposition about its hankering for the Knox hospital. I rebut the nature of that quite disingenuousness bleating from the

opposition on the Knox hospital. I refer to a press release from the Minister for Health of 20 June 2000 where he referred to the sleight of hand that the Kennett government entered into with the Knox hospital. The media release states:

The former Kennett government wasted \$210 693 on consultancies and glossy brochures on a phoney hospital in Knox, John Thwaites revealed today.

Mr Thwaites said a plan for a new privatised hospital in the outer east was 'a cruel hoax', as ministerial documents showed the former government abandoned the project in November 1998. This was because it would have caused major downgrading of seven public hospitals and the closure of emergency services at the Angliss and Maroondah hospitals.

...

Ministerial briefing documents show the Kennett government shelved its plans when the reality of supporting a private hospital became clear. To make the deal attractive to a private operator, the Knox project involved closing the Angliss and Maroondah emergency hospitals after two years, downsizing Box Hill Hospital, and savage cuts to existing tertiary hospitals.

The press release continues:

The documents show the Knox plan was predicated on cuts of \$22 million to St Vincent's Hospital; \$12.8 million to Maroondah Hospital; \$7.7 million cut to Angliss Hospital; \$4.9 million to Box Hill Hospital; \$9.7 million to the Alfred Hospital and reductions in services to Caulfield General Medical Centre and St George's Hospital.

It goes on:

By contrast the Bracks government is committed to redeveloping the Maroondah Hospital with 64 additional beds and the Angliss Hospital with 32 additional beds.

It reports:

The government's winter bed strategy has also provided an additional seven beds at Maroondah Hospital and 10 beds at Box Hill Hospital — a total of 17 extra beds for hospitals for the eastern suburbs.

That is consistent with a well-considered response by the Minister for Health and the health department in making an appropriate assessment on the level of need in eastern metropolitan Melbourne. That in itself is a measure of the commitment to ensure that Victorian citizens who live in metropolitan Melbourne are not ignored and that they receive the health care they deserve.

As a further measure of the commitment to those citizens, on 4 October this year the minister released a press release to indicate that 122 additional nurses were being provided to hospitals within the eastern metropolitan area. This was part of the funding for 2650 extra nurses in the state health system, of whom

1650 are to provide better care and reduce nurse workload through the introduction of nurse–patient ratios, while the other 1000 nurses will enable hospitals to open more beds and treat an extra 30 000 patients a year.

The press release continues:

Mr Thwaites said the 122.2 extra nurses to Eastern Health Hospitals — the Angliss, Box Hill, Maroondah, Peter James Centre and Yarra Ranges Health Service — were just to reduce nurse workload, with more nurses to be employed to treat more patients and meet growing demand.

I suggest this is again evidence that the health needs of Victorian citizens who live in Melbourne's eastern suburbs are very much in the mind of the Minister for Health.

The minister has issued other press releases, to which I shall allude briefly. They include the announcement of the new Ranges Community Health Centre at Lilydale and the Maroondah Addictions Recovery project, which will also operate from the new Lilydale site and will provide a regional alcohol and drug supported accommodation service.

I know the Honourable Wendy Smith referred to the need for drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs in the outer eastern region. On 27 April this year the Minister for Health gave an undertaking and made a commitment to provide \$677 million of funding over three years for the provision of an after-hours drug treatment service, a parent support program, a mobile overdose response service, and a mobile drug safety worker. The press release states:

The new services are part of the Bracks government's \$77 million Saving Lives initiative and will cover Boroondara, Yarra Ranges, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse, Knox and Monash.

The government has introduced a mobile overdose response service and mobile drug safety worker with total funding over three years of \$429 000.

...

Based at Box Hill Hospital, the service has developed links with the Metropolitan Ambulance Service, the accident and emergency department of Eastern Health and adult mental health services.

I suggest that series of undertakings on drug and alcohol services is significant. It is additional to an announcement made on 21 May this year that the government would allocate an extra \$180 000 in start-up expenses for the Salvation Army facility at The Basin to provide 77 beds for residential drug rehabilitation, and \$750 000 in interim funding to allow

the services to operate until the commonwealth money is available.

It is a recurring theme that the state government has given undertakings and contributions in a timely way to enable services to be delivered to citizens in the eastern suburbs but the federal government has been somewhat tardy in taking up its fair share of responsibility in funding those programs.

I move on now from health, which has received a significant level of investment from the Bracks government to redress the chronic state of health care to all Victorians, including those in the eastern suburbs, that it inherited. I refer to community services and shall highlight to the house a number of key initiatives that my colleague the Minister for Community Services has delivered to people in the eastern suburbs.

The government has increased funding for disability services by \$141 million, which is an increase of 25 per cent over the level of funding it inherited. The funding is for programs such as Shared Supported Accommodation and new initiatives such as Homefirst. Some \$2 million of funding has been made available from the budget for the provision of Homefirst in the eastern metropolitan area. These funds are currently supporting 54 people with disabilities — including people with ageing carers and people with acquired brain injury — to live independently and participate more fully in the community.

The Great Break Respite Development project, which has increased the respite choices for families, has also been implemented in the eastern suburbs. An innovative Lifetime Caring Health Promotion project has been implemented also in the eastern metropolitan region. The project aims to increase the health and wellbeing of ageing carers, enabling them to better care for people with disabilities.

In January this year a new day program was established by Statewide Autistic Services in the eastern metropolitan region. The program offers suitable day activities to young people who have high support needs through the Futures for Young Adults program.

Also within the budget the government has made a major undertaking to close down Kew Residential Services and to make a significant investment in housing those long-term Kew Cottages residents. In fact, many new accommodation services will be created for the former patients and their families in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

As honourable members can see, the area of community services also shows that a range of

commitments has been made and initiatives taken by the Bracks government in the last two budgets to support those in the community who have disabilities or those who care for loved ones with disabilities.

In the important area of community safety, on which the Bracks government made an undertaking to the people of Victoria, there has been a significant investment in community safety over the past two years. We have seen an increase in the net number of police who operate in Victoria — approximately 500 in the past two years, I believe. That is well on track to deliver what was promised by the Victorian government — that is, an increase of 800 during the first term of the Victorian government. We have seen new police stations in Kew, Endeavour Hills, Rowville and Eltham. The government has a commitment to build a police station in Belgrave.

Hon. W. I. Smith — Endeavour Hills; that has been built, has it?

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — As the Honourable Wendy Smith indicated, it has not been finalised but the undertaking is to complete it. The Bracks government has full intentions of delivering on its commitments within its first term. I acknowledge that further work will have to be undertaken to improve if possible the coverage of police at the Olinda police station. I take note of that urgent plea in the honourable member's contribution.

In the area of aged care significant investment has been made by the government because it appreciates that it is important for older members of the community to live comfortable, secure and safe lives within their homes. Significant investment has been made by the government to support people living at home. It includes a number of specific undertakings by my colleague the Minister for Aged Care which include a falls prevention project, which operates in the eastern suburbs. Boroondara has received \$50 000 to look at ways of preventing people from falling and injuring themselves at home. That was a significant initiative of the government in the past financial year.

That comes on top of additional resources provided to the Peter James Centre in the Department of Human Services eastern region to help people suffering from differing levels of dementia to continue living in their own homes. Additional funds have been provided to the Eastern Region Mental Health Association to assist homeless people in the eastern suburbs who are elderly or have acquired brain injury.

Hon. W. I. Smith — Not for families and young people.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — There are some there. We have seen \$3.7 million in initiatives developed by the government to assist people who are homeless or living in insecure accommodation, and people with acquired brain injury.

One important undertaking that the Bracks government has made is in the area of dental care, which honourable members would appreciate has been neglected in public policy for far too long. There have been health problems in our community, particularly for senior citizens who cannot eat properly and maintain healthy lifestyles because of the poor quality of their dental care. We have seen an increase of \$872 000 in the last budget. I note that dental care was the first policy commitment made by the Beazley opposition during the current federal election campaign.

Within the allocations made by the Bracks government, it is anticipated that the 52 per cent increase in funding that the government has provided through the community dental program will shorten the waiting time for eligible people among the residents of the Boroondara, Manningham, Monash, Maroondah, Yarra Ranges and Knox areas. I note that historically that region has had the lowest per capita spending on public dental services and also has the lowest number of dental chairs. In this budget the government is providing \$2.5 million in recurrent funding for services at the Maroondah Hospital in Ringwood and a new dental clinic at the Ferntree Gully site of the Knox community health service.

Hon. W. I. Smith — What about the Knox hospital?

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — I think I dealt with the Knox hospital before. I ran out of steam debunking the mythology surrounding the Knox hospital!

In addition to the funds I indicated, an extra \$157 000 has been allocated for a community rehabilitation clinic at the Peter James Centre in Burwood and the same amount for Angliss Health Services. Those funds will provide physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapies and social work services. The government believes that funding boost will provide Victorians who live in the eastern suburbs, those with disabilities, the frail, the chronically ill and those getting over traumatic injury, greater access to community rehabilitation services.

From April 2000 we have seen an increase to \$360 000 in the amount of money made available through the Minister for Aged Care to the women's

health network in the eastern suburbs. Again in the important area of aged care a breadth of funding has been introduced by my colleague the Minister for Aged Care, and services have been targeted to provide the appropriate regime in addressing health issues, including long-term chronic health issues, and providing support so that as much as possible people can live in their own homes.

As Minister for Housing the minister also has major responsibility for housing and homelessness. She has addressed the issue of families at risk of homelessness. In response to the challenge only moments ago by the opposition, we have seen an increase of \$2.34 million to new services to develop a new crisis accommodation service in the Ringwood area. Four eastern suburbs agencies are sharing \$420 000 in new recurrent funding to pilot a crisis response ahead of the new service becoming operational in late 2002.

Supported accommodation assistance program funds have been made available. The Wesley Community Contact Centre has received \$119 000; Knox Community Support Services, \$79 000; the Yarra Ranges Community Christian Care service, \$49 000; and the Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service, \$37 000.

In addition to those funds that have been specifically allocated to those services, pool funds of \$133 000 are available to provide for brokerage and to develop innovative and responsive programs to meet the needs of homeless families and those at risk of becoming homeless in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

In addition to the significant priority the minister has given to aged care, significant emphasis has been placed on younger people and families at risk, providing them with the appropriate level of support in their homes. The government understands that people living in all parts of Victoria, including the eastern suburbs, deserve to feel safe and secure in their homes. They need to feel there is an appropriate level of infrastructure support. They need to know they are part of the priorities that the government has in establishing its budget.

I have outlined to the house today at length the contribution the Bracks government has made to the citizens who live in the outer suburbs of Melbourne to demonstrate on a well-developed scale the level of infrastructure and the program support put in place in the past two years to redress the downturn in service provision that occurred during the life of the Kennett government.

The performance improvement in service delivery may be taking longer than the government may have wished. The government will maintain its vigilance to ensure that the quality of service and the care provided by those services are improved — that, for example, waiting times and ambulance bypass figures diminish. The government has confidence in the strategies outlined in the budget. Through the health care strategy it will be addressing those critical issues.

The government has made significant undertakings to invest in the facilities in community safety. There has been a net increase of 500 police across the state, well on track to deliver on the government's promise to deliver 800 police within the life of the government.

We have seen significant spending in education. I outlined to the house earlier that my estimate is that about \$120 million in education funding, if not more, is the net increase in funds for schools in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne above the base the government inherited. I have indicated to the house that the government is committed to an integrated transport plan, which includes the Scoresby freeway being delivered, and that both the state and federal jurisdictions acknowledge the responsibility for matching funding to make sure that important infrastructure is built.

There is ample evidence on the public record today to demonstrate that there is no credence to the suggestion that the government is ignoring those citizens who live in the eastern suburban areas. I will oppose the motion because I have full confidence that the government is committed to those citizens and that the lengthy contribution I have made outlining a number of programs demonstrates that the government is committed to those citizens and by no measure is ignoring their needs.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — The motion talks about essential infrastructure and services for the people in the eastern metropolitan area of Melbourne. The National Party does not have any political representation in the eastern metropolitan area.

Hon. G. W. Jennings interjected.

Hon. P. R. HALL — No, the National Party does not intend to stand candidates in the foreseeable future in the eastern suburbs, although at a recent meeting of the Australian Deer Association Melbourne branch, which I addressed as the National Party shadow minister with responsibility for that area, I was asked by a number of people whether the National Party would stand a candidate for the Legislative Assembly seat of

Mitcham, where many deer hunters reside. They said they would give us resounding support if we did so. I say today that at this stage the National Party does not intend to nominate a candidate for the state seat of Mitcham or other seats in the outer eastern area of Melbourne, because its focus remains solely and entirely on issues of country Victorian importance, which is the basis of the political party.

That does not mean the National Party does not have an interest in this motion or any motion concerned with Melbourne or its surrounds. I will explain why it has an interest in this motion. Firstly, although the National Party represents country Victoria, it has an interest in what happens throughout the entire state of Victoria, which means all country and metropolitan centres. Members of this house know that members of the National Party speak on all legislation that comes before the house, whether or not it directly impacts on the people they represent. That is a responsibility of the National Party, being the third party in the Victorian Parliament.

The second reason the National Party has a particular interest in the motion is that the corridor for people living in the eastern part of Victoria, particularly the Gippsland area that I have the pleasure of representing, travels through Melbourne and the eastern suburbs to get to Melbourne and other parts of Victoria. Consequently, when the motion refers to infrastructure in the eastern suburbs, particularly transport infrastructure, it is of vital importance to the National Party.

I admit to not having the same level of knowledge of service provision in the eastern suburbs as do other members who have already spoken in the debate or who will participate in the debate. I wish to concentrate my brief comments on transport infrastructure. The eastern part of country Victoria is predominantly called Gippsland, and to travel from Gippsland to other parts of the state is different from travelling to other parts of country Victoria. Gippsland is almost like a court that it is difficult to travel out of other than to the end that is connected to the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Although some routes take you to the northern part of Victoria by traversing the Great Dividing Range, the most common arterial road through the Gippsland area is the Princes Highway, which goes through to Sydney on the eastern end but to Melbourne and other parts of country Victoria on the western end coming out of Gippsland. Most people do not go over the Great Dividing Range to get to other parts of country Victoria. Most of the traffic going in and out of Gippsland and eastern Victoria goes via the Princes

Highway, which takes people through the eastern suburbs.

Hon. G. B. Ashman interjected.

Hon. P. R. HALL — As Mr Ashman says by interjection, they welcome the visits from the people of Gippsland through the eastern suburbs. People get very frustrated when they hit the eastern suburbs because of the significant population growth in recent years in the outer east and in areas around Berwick, Cranbourne and Pakenham, which means there is a lot more traffic on the road. Consequently travelling time along the Princes Highway is more lengthy because of the increasing congestion.

There is a great and urgent need for significant improvement to the Princes Highway and the Monash Freeway so travel times can be reduced. Some improvements have occurred over a period. Under the Kennett government stop lights were removed from the then South Eastern Freeway. It is now a much better run. Also under the Kennett government the Hallam bypass was started — a much-needed project. That is happening at this time, and I understand the due date for completion is 2003. I wish it could be brought forward, because the congestion towards the Dandenong exit end of the Monash Freeway is great. It is dangerous at times and adds significantly to travel times and to cost.

The Hallam bypass is a \$175 million initiative that was started by the Kennett government. I give credit to the Bracks government for continuing with the program, as it should, but there is scope to expedite the works to get that part of the freeway completed more quickly.

The next major improvement that is absolutely necessary on Princes Highway East is the Pakenham bypass. Honourable members have talked about this project during the past few days. The Pakenham bypass has been on the minds of the people of Gippsland and those in the outer east for many years. It is important that we plan these things well in advance because by the time we think of the need for them, often the period between the planning and completion stages can be 5 or 10 years, so we have to plan to get them on the agenda and started early.

Over 12 months ago the federal coalition government put \$30 million on the table to advance stage 1 of the Pakenham bypass project, but that offer was not taken up by the state government. I argued strongly at the time that there was a great need to get the planning stages under way. I am pleased to say that today's *Herald Sun* has a report of a commitment being made

by both the federal coalition and Labor parties to 50 per cent funding for the construction of the Pakenham bypass. I am grateful for that. We now wait on the state Labor government to match the commitment. It is classified as a road of national importance, which means it will normally be funded by a 50 per cent allocation from both the state and federal governments. Both federal parties have made a commitment, so no matter who wins the election on 10 November, a federal government will provide its share of funding for this project. I now call on the state Labor government to match that offer given by both federal political parties.

The release I have also refers to the importance of the Pakenham bypass — a 17-kilometre four-lane bypass — to relieve heavy Princes Highway traffic through Pakenham. As I said, the state government has a chance to verify the credentials espoused by the Honourable Gavin Jennings this morning and show that it does care about the people in the eastern suburbs and that it does care about the people living in the eastern part of country Victoria by putting matching funds on the table to ensure this important project proceeds.

The other area of transport infrastructure is that of the Scoresby freeway, an important project for people who live in eastern Victoria. As we come into Melbourne and want to travel to the northern suburbs or connect to the Hume Highway we now have to travel through the city via City Link as the most direct and quickest route, but the original plan for the highway network around Melbourne was to have an outer ring-road, of which the Scoresby freeway was a significant part, starting at Frankston, going through to Ringwood and connecting with the Eastern Freeway. When I first saw the original drawings I presumed it would connect with the Hume Highway and the Western Ring Road. Even when the Scoresby freeway is completed there will still be a gap that needs to be connected so that the eastern ring-road is connected to the Western Ring Road, and then there will be a continuity of travel around the outer perimeter of the City of Melbourne, which is much needed.

Debate on the Scoresby freeway has been interesting. Once again there has been lethargy on the part of the government in committing to that project. I think the government has now committed itself to that particular project, but it has had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the table to commit. It was the initiative of the previous Kennett and coalition federal governments that put the project on the agenda and ensured that it will go ahead.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Did the Kennett government commit to it?

Hon. P. R. HALL — Absolutely, not a problem at all that the Kennett government committed to this important project — absolutely. It was the Kennett government that picked up all the improvements to the South Eastern Arterial and all the improvements to the duplication of the Princes Highway, the main arterial through the eastern suburbs and eastern Victoria. It was the Kennett government that did that, and it was the Kennett government that first committed to the Scoresby freeway.

Now the challenge to the Victorian government on both of these important road projects is to put its commitments on the table to show that it is fair dinkum and serious about the welfare and care of people who live in the eastern part of the state by ensuring that these projects proceed in the shortest time frame.

The National Party is interested in this motion as it affects the eastern suburbs. There are access issues for country Victorians through the eastern suburbs, and that is why projects of road infrastructure are relevant and important to us. The National Party is supporting this motion on the basis that these projects will help country Victoria. I urge honourable members to do likewise in supporting the motion.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I am amazed that members of the opposition can come into this house and move a motion — —

Hon. R. F. Smith — Audacious!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Audacious is a good word, Mr Smith. They must have more front than Coles Myer's window, because what the coalition parties have left the state is devastation. When we came into power, in terms of services this state — in particular the eastern suburbs and country Victoria — was totally devastated by the actions of the previous Kennett government, where teachers had been sacked and a hospital system run down.

Hon. P. R. Hall — How many teachers were sacked? You name one teacher who was sacked!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am glad that the Leader of the National Party wants to defend his record. When the Kennett government was in government you did nothing to stop those school closures in country Victoria. That is why country Victorians said they had had enough of the National Party. All you did in government was to say that you wanted the trappings and benefit of being in government, but not the responsibility of looking after your constituency in country Victoria. Nothing has changed because in opposition the National Party and the Liberal Party

members are still out there with their heads in the trough. That is what is happening; that is what they do and that is what they know how to do best. The Honourable David Davis did a public service by asking for a freedom of information request on spending on lunches and dinners in the Premier's office. What did he uncover?

Hon. C. A. Furletti — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, the motion before the house relates to the Labor government's inactivity on the development of infrastructure and services to people in the eastern metropolitan area. This line of debate by the Honourable Theo Theophanous about freedom of information of the Department of Premier and Cabinet is absolute nonsense.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — On the point of order, Mr Acting President, this goes to the credibility of the argument being put by the opposition. It is seeking to condemn the government on the basis of action or inaction about spending in a particular area.

Hon. C. A. Furletti — In relation to infrastructure in the eastern suburbs.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — In relation to infrastructure. My line of argument is that the credibility of those putting the argument has to be a part of the debate. I have important information that would contribute to the people of Victoria being able to assess whether the Liberal Party and the National Party have any credibility, particularly when one looks at the fact — —

Hon. C. A. Furletti — You cannot debate a point of order.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am putting the point of view that these issues go to your credibility in relation to the argument you are now putting. In a debate such as this traditionally we are allowed a broad-ranging debate for honourable members to put their points of view. I urge you, Mr Acting President, to rule the point of order out of order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT
(**Hon. R. H. Bowden**) — Order! It is a free-ranging debate. The motion talks about essential infrastructure and essential services which, by their nature, are wide ranging. I think that when one gets to specifics about it, such as the cost of lunches, ministerial activities and so on, that is outside the motion. I do not uphold the point of order. There is no point of order, but I suggest to honourable members on both sides of the house that the Chair is very much aware that the debate is wide ranging. The Chair will be tolerant on that point of

view. I do not want to hear about lunches and ministerial details like that; I would rather honourable members on both sides of the house stick to the motion. There is no point of order.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I thank you for your ruling, Mr Acting President, and I certainly will not go into the specifics of what individual members of the opposition staff from both the Liberal Party and the National Party spent on lunches at a range of venues. Suffice it to say that the total spending of the two chiefs of staff of the National Party and the Liberal Party was \$2190, whereas — —

The ACTING PRESIDENT
(**Hon. R. H. Bowden**) — Order! I remind the honourable member that I gave a ruling that there was no point of order when one was called a few moments ago and indicated that the Chair will be generous in its degree of tolerance on the wide nature of the motion. However, I suggest with respect to the honourable member that we move on from lunches of chiefs of staff and ministers and that kind of argy-bargy. I do not want to hear about that.

Hon Kaye Darveniza — Opposition staff!

The ACTING PRESIDENT
(**Hon. R. H. Bowden**) — Order! Opposition staff or government staff, it does not matter. Honourable members on both sides should stick to the motion, and as the Chair I want that ruling upheld.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I defer to your ruling, Mr Acting President, but it is a bit hard to take seriously an argument from an opposition whose chiefs of staff spend twice as much on lunches as the government chief of staff.

Hon. C. A. Furletti — On a point of order, Mr Acting President, the Honourable Theo Theophanous is obviously flouting your direction and totally disregarding the comments of the Chair. I ask you, Mr Acting President, to draw Mr Theophanous's attention to the fact that you have the right to ask him to cease speaking if he persists in his conduct.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — On the point of order, Mr Acting President, I take offence at the attempt by Mr Furletti to direct the Chair as to what the Chair can or cannot do in that blatant manner. I have confidence in the Chair being impartial in this matter, and the honourable member's cheap attempt to direct the Chair to do or say something will not work.

The ACTING PRESIDENT
(**Hon. R. H. Bowden**) — Order! There is no point of

order. However, it is incumbent on honourable members on both sides to respect the tolerance of the Chair and the request the Chair made for members to stick to the business of the motion. The Chair will continue to be tolerant, but the Chair requests again that honourable members respect the content of the motion, as will the Chair.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Thank you for your ruling, Mr Acting President. My point was simply that the credibility of opposition members in putting up a motion like this leaves a lot to be desired, given their history of putting their own heads in the trough rather than assisting the people of Victoria. That is what they did for seven years — all they did was help their mates. They closed schools, they closed hospitals and now they come in here with all of this. It is laughable!

I will go on. The opposition cannot even get its act together, because when the Liberal Party tried to have a shot at government members on the question of the Scoresby freeway I noticed that the Leader of the National Party at least got up and said, ‘I think the Labor Party is committed to the Scoresby freeway’. The Liberal Party needs to get its act together because the Leader of the National Party thinks the government is committed to the Scoresby freeway and the people of Victoria know it is committed to the Scoresby freeway. The only person who does not know the government is committed to the Scoresby freeway appears to be the honourable member who moved the motion on behalf of the Liberal Party. She is the only person in Victoria who does not know this. I will reiterate it for Ms Smith so that she understands it: the government is committed to the Scoresby freeway. Is that clear enough?

An Honourable Member — Spell it out!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — One wonders sometimes! I will go on to another matter raised by the Honourable Wendy Smith — that is, the issue of school buses. I am very glad the honourable member raised that issue today. I start by saying that I have sent to her, as I have to all other honourable members, the progress report of the review of school buses in accordance with what the government had promised. The Honourable Wendy Smith said in her contribution that I had said we would be bringing down recommendations for implementation in 2001. We did that with the progress report, with implementation in 2001. Now we have brought down the final report — which has been sent to the Honourable Wendy Smith — for implementation during the course of next year. There is no mystery to this.

Hon. J. M. McQuilten — What happened to the Liberal Party report on school buses?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am glad my colleague the Honourable John McQuilten has asked me about the Liberal Party report, because the Liberal Party report took — —

Hon. W. I. Smith — Let’s talk about yours!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am happy to go through mine, don’t you worry about that, but honourable members might be interested in going through the Liberal Party’s report first. I have the Liberal Party’s report on school buses. For the information of honourable members, this document was never released. This is a secret document. It took more than a year to complete. We have not been able to figure out how much money was spent on the preparation of this report, but it was never released publicly.

Hon. J. M. McQuilten — It never saw the light of day.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It never saw the light of day, Mr McQuilten. Whom did the committee consist of? That is a very good question. The report lists who was on this committee. The committee was chaired by the Honourable Andrew Brideson — the same person who is chairing the other Star Chamber and the person who is involved in open government, open reporting and all of that. He prepared this report, which never saw the light of day.

Let us see who else was on the committee. The Honourable Peter Hall has been going around country Victoria complaining about the bus review and saying, ‘The government promised to do a bus review and it has not been delivered on time. When are we going to get it? What will be in it? What are they going to deliver’, and all the rest of it. Guess who was on the previous bus review?

An Honourable Member — Peter Hall?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, you got it in one: Peter Hall was on the previous bus review too. Who else was there? Don Kilgour, the honourable member for Shepparton in the other place — is he still around? I do not know. Is he still there? I did not even know he was there. Stephen McArthur, the honourable member for Monbulk in the other place was on it. Garry Spry, the honourable member for Bellarine in the other place — is Garry Spry still around?

An Honourable Member — He’s a shellback.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — He is a shellback, is he? And Robert Doyle, the honourable member for Malvern in the other place. I know he is around. He has ambitions for various things. He has higher office ambitions, but I do not think he did any good on the bus review. This document shows that the membership of the working party was subsequently expanded to include the Honourable David Evans.

An honourable member interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, David Evans was a member of the Legislative Council; newer honourable members here would not know him, but I do.

I have to say, Mr Acting President, that the working party also included you, although I am sure you played a constructive role on the committee.

Originally it consisted of those six people, but they were not enough so another two were added. Obviously that was not enough to get to the crux of the problems in the buses because the committee decided it also needed the assistance of a few other members of Parliament so the Honourables Barry Bishop and Ron Best were added for good measure. Finally — the Honourable Elaine Carbines would be interested in this — it added another very important member — the Honourable Bill Hartigan. And look what happened to him!

Because you were on the committee, Mr Acting President — I know which side of the debate you came down on — you would know that the major debate during the review was whether to introduce fees on the free bus service. A group on the committee, headed by the new economic rationalists, wanted to introduce charges for students in country Victoria. That was the agenda. The group was ultimately defeated on this 11-member committee and that recommendation was not made. But very few other recommendations were made. I refer to a couple of recommendations that were made not in the final report but in the progress report and were subsequently taken up by the current government. There was a recommendation in the Brideson report to introduce a two-way communications system on buses as a safety measure.

An Honourable Member — Did they do it?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — This was in 1994.

An Honourable Member — They didn't implement it?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — They didn't. Another failure. They failed to do it. The two-way communications system was recommended in the progress report, which was released publicly — in stark contrast to the previous government. The system was introduced on buses and has already been instrumental in safety situations on a number of situations.

What did the opposition do when we introduced the system? It put out a whole lot of misinformation about the nature of the system, claiming that you had to get out of the bus to use the satellite communication. However, it forgot to say — or did not want to say — that it was a dual system. Not only did the system have satellite capability, it also had normal two-way mobile phone capability. The system has been universally welcomed in country Victoria and it is an important safety measure.

The only other thing of note that I can find in the report is the recommendation for flashing lights on school buses as another safety measure.

Hon. Kaye Darveniza — Did they implement that?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am afraid they did not implement that recommendation over the course of another five years either. When was it introduced? It was introduced by a Bracks Labor government.

Let me make this point. The previous opposition over a period of two years tried under freedom of information to get hold of this document. Was it ever released to us? No, it was not allowed to be put out publicly.

The opposition when in government did absolutely nothing for school buses in this state. It ought to be ashamed to even come in here and talk about school buses after its performance on that review.

I could go on and talk about the many wonderful recommendations that are in the final report, but I will resist the temptation. However, unlike the previous government's report, this report is welcomed by the Association of Independent Schools as a serious step forward in addressing issues about school buses and bringing back equity, improving safety and improving fairness in the system. They were the three aims. Do you know what those three aims are? They are Labor aims. That is why the previous government could not bring them in. It does not matter whether we are talking about school buses or what we have done for the eastern suburbs, the infrastructure we are introducing, community safety or fairness in the delivery of services in the eastern suburbs or equity in getting to the people who really need those services, these are Labor objectives!

These are and have always been Labor objectives. People in the eastern suburbs understand that and that is why the opposition has no credibility when its members come in here and try to talk about these matters.

Hon. R. M. Hallam interjected.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The Honourable Roger Hallam should not enter this debate because he might get me started on how the opposition knocked off common law for workers in Workcover and a range of other initiatives that his government brought into play. He was one of those who slavishly followed the Honourable Jeff Kennett and are now paying the price.

I was going to talk about a whole range of matters, including the wonderful things that this government has done in the eastern suburbs. As honourable members can see by the number of notes I have here, there are initiatives in a number of areas: aged care, health, housing, transport, police and planning. Should I start from the beginning and keep going to the end?

I will give the opposition a tip. If it wants to have any chance of getting back into government the first thing it should do get is up and apologise. It should listen carefully and it might get some good advice here.

Hon. W. I. Smith — From you?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I was pretty successful, and that is why we are over here! The first thing the opposition should do is get over its Howard complex and have the guts to get up and apologise. It should say that it is sorry. It is a simple word. Its members should say that they are sorry for all the devastation they caused — sorry that they closed all those schools and services. They should say they are sorry!

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

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Over lunch I had a bit of time to reflect on what I have said and I may have been a bit harsh on the National Party. The debate is about the eastern suburbs and the Honourable Peter Hall began his comments by saying that the National Party had no representation in the eastern suburbs, so it was probably a bit harsh of me to get stuck into him about that. However, the fact is that not only does the National Party not have any representation from but it also has no interest in the eastern suburbs. It is not surprising that the only comment made by the Honourable Peter Hall was that he thought the government is committed to Scoresby. I thank him for saying that; at least he has got one thing right in his speech.

I am sure that you were listening to my contribution, Mr Deputy President, when I mentioned that you were also one of the people involved in the bus review. I am trying to figure out who was on the side of those who wanted to get rid of the free bus service and charge students and who was on the other side. I am reliably informed that you were on the side of the ones who wanted to keep the free bus service. If that is the case I commend you for taking that stand. However, the difference is that when this government started the review of school buses — —

Hon. B. N. Atkinson — Which is nothing to do with the eastern suburbs.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — It was raised by the Honourable Wendy Smith in her contribution.

Hon. W. I. Smith — We are looking forward to seeing some real money in a budget. You are in government!

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I was assisted in the bus review, and I commend her for that assistance, by the Honourable Glenyys Romanes, so yes, it took one member of Parliament. I was the chair of that committee and I have to say in all modesty that I think the 2 of us did a better job than the 11 members of the previous committee. I do not really know what to do with this report that has never been released because it is a very interesting report.

Hon. W. I. Smith — It is more important what you do with your own report.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — At least ours is out there, Ms Smith. You have our report and can look through it — it is not archived. We have nothing to hide. We have made our recommendations and they will be implemented next year.

Hon. P. R. Hall — Is that a guarantee that they will be implemented next year?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — That is what the recommendations are in the report. If I were you, Mr Hall, I would be quiet about this.

Hon. P. R. Hall — You are the loudmouth. Tell us about the guarantee.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — The fact is that you were on the previous — —

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! Through the Chair, Mr Theophanous.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — What exactly was it that you did over that course of time? You did absolutely nothing and you have the cheek to come in here and try — —

Hon. P. R. Hall — You said your recommendations would be implemented next year. You are the booster. Will you guarantee they will be implemented?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — This is a report that is before the government for consideration.

Hon. P. R. Hall — You said they would be implemented next year.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — Yes, the recommendations that the government accepts will be implemented next year. There is no issue in relation to that. During my contribution I want to highlight the difference between our approach and that of the opposition. The difference comes down to the fact that we do things in an honest and open way. The school bus review is a very stark example of that. Why would you spend an inordinate amount of money — and I do not know how many trips to the country the previous bus review did, but the fact is that our trips to the country — —

Hon. P. R. Hall — You did not even go to Gippsland yourself.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — We went to 18 country locations. The Honourable Glenyys Romanes did the trip to Gippsland.

Hon. P. R. Hall — She did it very well in your absence.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — She did it very well, and I did trips to other locations. The difference though is that Mr Hall took 11 members of Parliament around the state at a cost to the taxpayer to get a whole lot of evidence.

Hon. R. F. Smith — Did their staff buy lunch?

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I am sure their staff bought lunch. I am not sure how much they spent, but you cannot take seriously an opposition that has been prepared to spend that sort of money to go around country Victoria and then not even release the report. It is no different from when we are talking about the actions of the current opposition. It will not have credibility until it starts to treat people in this state seriously and starts to care about the people out there in the eastern suburbs and all over Victoria. Rather than going around having lunches among themselves — and

I might say the latest revelation is that the opposition spent \$4882 on lunches and did not spend a single dollar of that in the eastern suburbs.

Hon. W. I. Smith — On a point of order, Mr Deputy President, the Honourable Theo Theophanous is not talking to the motion. He has talked about almost everything else except the motion. I ask you to take note of the fact that the honourable member has digressed greatly from the subject of the motion.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — On the point of order, Mr Deputy President, I was specifically making the point that the opposition had no credibility given that Dr Naphine has allowed a free lunch culture to operate in his own office, and given that those free lunches were not in the east.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! The point is being debated. On the point of order, the comments made by Mr Theophanous in relation to lunches have absolutely nothing to do with the motion before the house, so I uphold the point of order and invite Mr Theophanous to come back to the motion as soon as he rises to continue.

Hon. C. A. Furletti — You should be in the Chair more often, Mr Deputy President. I was overruled on one of those before.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I will let Mr Furletti's reflection on the previous Chair go by. Mr Furletti obviously tried to give directions to the previous Chair, but the Chair was not prepared to take those directions. You have made yourself perfectly clear.

I want to say a couple of things about education before I close because education is more than school buses. There has been a huge turnaround in education in this state, and I commend the Minister for Education and the government for that most significant turnaround. There have been improvements in retention rates and for the first time schools have started to feel a sense that they belong to a state and are doing something valuable. For the first time a career structure has been established for teachers that allows them to aspire to something.

The government went away from the model of the previous government, which was about encouraging a dual structure in our public education system, and brought it back to the point where all schools are valued and there is a commitment to a high level of education whatever public school in Victoria we are talking about. All those things have occurred.

I have a long list of things that have been done in the eastern suburbs. I do not want to refer to them all but I make the general point that local learning and employment networks have been established, contributions have been made through the disability support fund to the Chisholm Institute of TAFE and a range of other supports have been established, such as the first stage of the Berwick South Secondary College at \$4.6 million, the disability support fund for the Box Hill institute with \$136 000 in 2001 and \$130 000 in 2000, and the list goes on. These are real measures that are improving education in this state. That is what is occurring in education.

The difference between the government and the opposition is that we recognise one fundamental thing about education: education is the way in which fairness, equity and opportunity is delivered in this state. For children who might not have come from a privileged background — I do not want to use the term ‘upper class’ because it is not fashionable these days — education is their way to success.

Education is the way for our children to get opportunities. People like me and a whole range of others would never have achieved success had it not been for a public education system. That is what we are talking about. More than anything else the great thing that Labor stands for is the ability to provide opportunities to everybody through an education system in which what makes the difference between success and failure is the individual child’s ability. That is what we stand for. The important thing is that it does not matter whether you have the most money to spend but whether a child has the ability to go on and succeed in life.

I meet many professionals who tell me they would never have become professionals had it not been for a most significant event in 1972, when the Whitlam government made tertiary education free. That change, more than any other recent event, has led to the greatest increase in opportunities for people in disadvantaged areas. As Mr Bob Smith said earlier, the country has developed and gone forward as a result. That change meant that a whole range of people were able to be educated and then contribute to the community.

Education is one thing that Labor stands for. The opposition can sit opposite and try to pretend it stands for education, that it is interested in public education — but all that is just an effort to get votes because nobody believes the opposition parties stand for education. Ultimately the opposition stands only for the privileged.

I totally oppose the motion. The government is not ignoring the eastern suburbs, as the motion suggests. The opposition parties ignored the eastern suburbs. The opposition has paid, and continues to pay, lip-service to the eastern suburbs. The opposition would ignore the eastern suburbs were it ever to be elected to government again.

Hon. G. B. ASHMAN (Koonung) — The house has just heard one of the most outrageous contributions to debate on a motion made in this place for many years. The final two government speakers failed to address the motion and talked about a few services and a few trinkets — but said nothing about infrastructure or major projects. They did not talk about significant services. The house has heard nothing but trivia, which is what the government specialises in.

Not one major project in the eastern suburbs has been an initiative of the Labor government. The Eastern Freeway was a Liberal Party initiative. Under the Labor government the freeway completion has been put in the go-slow basket. It should have been finished by the end of 2003, but now its likely completion date is 2005 or beyond. Why? Because the government has pulled the money out and put the project on the drip system rather than complete it and get it into service for the community. It has pulled the money out and scattered it to other pet projects in other parts of the state.

The Eastern Freeway is critical for the welfare of people in the east, not only for the movement of goods and services but because it will allow access to the central business district for cultural and other activities, because the arts are not well represented in the east. The house has talked about community safety, yet the government has simply gone for window-dressing and taken no action. The house also discussed education: the same situation applies.

My office has received no notification by the government of any major project for the eastern suburbs. The government has been dragged kicking and screaming into action on the Scoresby freeway. Prior to the election the Australian Labor Party made it clear that it did not intend to proceed with the Scoresby freeway notwithstanding that the freeway would service between 23 and 25 per cent of Melbourne’s population plus all of Gippsland, and notwithstanding that it would carry a major proportion of product from throughout Victoria. The amount of goods and the number of services that rely on the construction of that freeway is significant.

In almost every report we pick up we read about the importance of Springvale Road. In its pre-election

policy the Australian Labor Party talked about improvements to Springvale Road. What has happened there? Nothing! The Labor government picked up the Liberal Party's proposal for a smart bus, but what has happened? It built a couple of bus parking bays, but the system is not in place. It looks as though the smart bus is many years away.

The government regards the east as the affluent suburbs and believes it does not need to resource that area, but nothing is further from the truth. Everybody would acknowledge that there are pockets of affluence out there, but anybody who travels through Mitcham or parts of Mount Evelyn, Bayswater, Boronia or Ferntree Gully knows about the areas where large numbers of Aussie battlers live — people who are working hard to keep it all together. They do not make great money, just a reasonable living, but the government is saying, 'You do not deserve any of the infrastructure we, the government, are prepared to provide to the people of the western suburbs'.

The Honourable Wendy Smith told the house how the Knox hospital project has been abandoned, and the Honourable Gavin Jennings also spoke about the project. As Liberals in government we proposed significant changes to the Angliss and Maroondah hospitals as part of providing wide-ranging integrated hospital and medical services to the outer east.

The Knox hospital was to have been a major tertiary teaching hospital, which is sorely needed in that area. One wonders when it will be built and if those services will ever be provided at the local level to the residents of the east who now are forced to travel to the central business district or its fringes for most major surgery. That is a most unsatisfactory situation.

Honourable members know the Angliss, Maroondah and Box Hill hospitals have been on ambulance bypass. The one bright light has been the commencement of the Knox Community Health Service building, but once again that was an initiative of the coalition government. To its credit, this government picked it up and is indeed funding its construction to the tune of \$6.5 million, from memory, but it is not a Labor government initiative.

There is significant overcrowding in several secondary colleges — the Vermont, Rowville and Wantirna colleges, just to name a few. Each of those colleges is currently holding more applications for 2002 than it has places. Heany Park Primary School also has more applications for entry than it has available places. People may recall that Blackburn Lake Primary School was destroyed by fire in 1999. It may be open in the

next school year. In the lead-up to the last state election Labor candidates promised Laburnum Primary School an upgrade. That has gone on the backburner; there appears to have been no delivery.

Honourable members in this debate have very briefly talked about policing. In my electorate the major stations of Knox, Boronia and Nunawading have significant understaffing problems. The government has failed to address those issues.

In transport, there have been no major works on the arterial road network. There have been proposals for a Dorset Road extension through to Napoleon Road; the duplication of High Street Road; the duplication of Stud Road in Bayswater; the upgrading and duplication of Wellington Road; the introduction of the smart bus for Springvale Road, as I have already mentioned; and the upgrading of the carriageway there. A whole range of projects are just waiting for funding. They are ready to go, and they are required now — not in 10 years time or when somebody gets around to it.

The other issue is general maintenance of the road network. The municipal councils tell me they are between 5 and 10 years behind in their current levels of road maintenance funding from this government. The backlog was being picked up under the coalition government but now, with this government having removed maintenance funding, the local municipalities are again falling behind.

Honourable members have talked about the Scoresby freeway. As I have said, the government was dragged kicking and screaming into agreeing to proceed with it. The freeway will carry probably somewhere around 80 000 vehicles a day and will make a significant contribution to solving traffic problems in the area. It will ultimately be part of the ring-road around Melbourne. The next link the government needs to address is from the Eastern Freeway through to the Greensborough bypass and the Western Ring Road. That is absolutely critical.

In the area of public transport much has been made of the tram extension through to Knox City from Blackburn Road, Blackburn. I must point out that I can recall a former member for Wantirna, Carolyn Hirsh, telling us back in the late 1980s that the tram would go from Middleborough Road to Knox City in the term of the then government. It is now 12 years later and not one inch of progress has been made from Blackburn Road. There has been a great deal of talk and a great deal of noise has been made about it, but no serious project has emerged.

The coalition government expanded bus services through that area. Quite frankly, that is the quick and simple way to improve services, particularly when you look at areas like Rowville. The coalition government introduced an express bus service from Rowville to Glen Waverley. All this government is doing is talking about putting in a rail line, which is not likely to be viable, certainly on all the figures I have seen.

In the lead-up to the last state election the government talked about duplicating the railway track from Blackburn to Mitcham, and it talked about the grade separation of the rail line at Springvale Road, Mitcham Road and Middleborough Road. It has done an awful lot of talking, but not a single project has been put forward.

Earlier I mentioned briefly the arts requirements of the east. Certainly we have a number of small facilities out there. Monash has the small gallery at Wheelers Hill, Nunawading has a small theatre complex, and Ringwood has the Karalyka Theatre Group facility, but none of those is a suitable facility for a major performance. They are all too small. The east needs a significant facility that will seat 700 to 1000 people so that a major performance can be held there and so that some of the major theatre companies can be encouraged to come out to the area. It needs to be handled in the same way as the theatre companies touring regional Victoria. That is something desperately needed in the east, and indeed the population of the area warrants such a resource.

A number of very small but very good amateur companies exist in the area: the 1812 Theatre at the Basin, the Nova group, and the Mitcham repertory group. They have small facilities, which are certainly not satisfactory for major performances.

I had intended to conclude my remarks by quoting from the ALP policy document about AFL Park, but I cannot find the document, so I shall paraphrase what the policy says. In it the Labor Party said that on coming to government it would negotiate with the Australian Football League for games to be held at Waverley Park. It indicated that it would have the power to do that, and that by restricting the number of games held at Colonial Stadium and other grounds it would effectively direct the AFL to hold games at Waverley Park. What has happened? Absolutely nothing. What do we have there in the south-western corner of my electorate now? It is not Waverley Park, not AFL Park, but Thistle Park — the only things out there are 4-foot high thistles!

This is a government of no action and no care for the east. Government members have gone back to the bad

old days — the eastern suburbs do not exist in their eyes. The east desperately needs projects. The people of the east want, indeed, demand services. The members of Parliament representing eastern electorates will not let the government forget its obligations to the east.

Hon. N. B. LUCAS (Eumemmerring) — In the short time available to me I rise to support this motion, which condemns the government for its failure to provide sufficient infrastructure and services to the people of eastern Melbourne. Simultaneously with our condemning the government we should look at how many members of the government are in the chamber for this debate. There are 2 members of the government sitting here listening to the debate — 2 members out of 14. That shows what the government thinks of the eastern suburbs. When I circulate this short speech that I am making amongst my constituents, those who read it will realise that the discredited Labor state government of Victoria does not have any feelings whatsoever for the east.

I will give some examples of the dissatisfaction enunciated to me by my constituents about what is not happening in my area. I take the example of the proposed Berwick hospital. Back in 1999 the Minister for Planning is reported in *Hansard* as saying:

I agree with the honourable member for Berwick: there is no time for delay.

He was relaying the government's thoughts on the development of the Berwick hospital. Over the ensuing year our local papers noted not much at all happening, except the Minister for Gaming, the honourable member for Dandenong in the other place, trying to talk the Mercy hospital out of putting in a bid — and he succeeded. The fact that he succeeded meant the establishment of the hospital at Berwick was put off for even longer. In March this year there was the joy of the local paper indicating that there would be a hospital signing within a fortnight, and that it was expected that negotiations would be completed. It was confirmed in April by the Premier, who said in answer to a question that the government was committed to building the Berwick hospital.

Joy of joys, in July 2000 our local paper had the heading 'Hospital by 2002'. It was expected to open by 2002 and the Minister for Health announced that it would be built in Kangan Drive, Berwick. Just a short time later, in September this year, the figures changed. The paper says 'Hospital to open in 2004'. In the blink of an eye the Labor government added two years to the project. Instead of proposing to build the hospital in Kangan Drive, Berwick, the dossier put out a couple of weeks ago states that there are two possible site

locations, one in Kangan Drive and the other next to the Monash University campus in Berwick. Yet some months before the Minister for Health announced that the hospital would be built in Kangan Drive. There is no joy and no hospital; there is only the flimsy promise that the hospital will open in 2004. That is too far away. The people of Berwick deserve better.

Prior to the last election we had the promise that the ALP would bring forward the building of a school in Narre Warren South. The promise was based on Phil Gude, the former Minister for Education, having said that the school would open in 2002. Mr Bracks went to Narre Warren and said, 'If we're elected we will build the school and have it open in 2001; we'll bring this project forward 12 months'. As the Leader of the Opposition indicates by pointing to his watch, it is nearly November 2001. Do we have a school in Narre Warren open for students? The answer is no, we do not! There is a school being built, certainly. When will it be open? It will be open in 2002, which is what Phil Gude originally announced. On that flimsy promise the ALP said, 'Elect us and we'll bring it forward 12 months'.

Another example is in an article headed '\$2.5 m promise', which states:

Endeavour Hills residents have won a 10-year battle to get a new police station.

The new state government will deliver its election promise to build a \$2.5 million ... police station at Endeavour Hills.

Is that there now? The answer is no! Do they have a site for it? No! Is there any building program in place to have the police station open in the short term? The answer is no! They are three infrastructure projects the Labor government promised the people of my electorate but has not delivered on.

Another example in relation to hospitals is of great concern to me. The figures show that at the Dandenong Hospital there has been an increase in the numbers of people waiting for elective surgery. That increase has certainly been of great concern. As an example, in June 1999 there were 23 people waiting as urgent cases, but that has ballooned out — there were 37 in June 2000 and the figure has increased even more. The latest figure for the Dandenong Hospital is 29 as at June 2001. The way the numbers have gone in semi-urgent cases at Dandenong Hospital, with people waiting for elective surgery, is even more serious: in June 1999, the figure was 184; in March 2000, 333; in June 2000, 510; in March 2001, 649; and in June 2001, 704. It has gone up from 184 to 704. That is outstandingly bad and concerning.

If I had time I could give a lot more figures to do with hospitals going on ambulance bypass, which have blown out significantly. I could give a number of statistics relating to hospitals that are consistent with the figures we have seen lately in relation to Labor's promises on health. All indicate that the Labor government has not been doing what it promised it would do. Numbers on waiting lists in Victoria have gone up 21 per cent since Labor took office yet the promise was that Victorian Labor would cut hospital waiting lists. That certainly has not happened. Another promise made in the form of a pledge prior to the election was that the waiting times for patients on emergency trolleys would be reduced. Since Labor took office the increase has been 203 per cent.

This Labor government should stand condemned for what it is not doing in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The people of my electorate have no doubt about what Labor stands for: it stands for procrastination, it stands for referring things to committees and it stands for having focus groups and meetings and discussions, but it never ever makes a decision. We want decisions and actions out of this government. We want infrastructure. We are not getting it. We are very concerned and the state government stands condemned for its inability to provide those things in the eastern metropolitan area.

House divided on motion:

Ayes, 28

Ashman, Mr (<i>Teller</i>)	Forwood, Mr
Atkinson, Mr	Furletti, Mr
Baxter, Mr	Hall, Mr
Best, Mr	Hallam, Mr
Birrell, Mr	Katsambanis, Mr
Bishop, Mr	Lucas, Mr
Boardman, Mr	Olexander, Mr
Bowden, Mr	Powell, Mrs
Brideson, Mr	Rich-Phillips, Mr
Coote, Mrs	Ross, Dr
Cover, Mr	Smith, Mr K. M.
Craige, Mr	Smith, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)
Davis, Mr D. McL.	Stoney, Mr
Davis, Mr P. R.	Strong, Mr

Noes, 13

Broad, Ms	Mikakos, Ms
Carbines, Mrs	Nguyen, Mr
Darveniza, Ms (<i>Teller</i>)	Romanes, Ms
Gould, Ms	Smith, Mr R. F. (<i>Teller</i>)
Hadden, Ms	Theophanous, Mr
Jennings, Mr	Thomson, Ms
Madden, Mr	

Pair

Ms Luckins	Mr McQuilten
------------	--------------

Motion agreed to.

MARINE SAFETY LEGISLATION (LAKES HUME AND MULWALA) BILL*Second reading*

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill provides for improved marine safety in Victoria and New South Wales through the introduction of corresponding legislation for marine safety on Lake Hume and Lake Mulwala.

The NSW/Victorian Border Anomalies Committee identified the need to rationalise enforcement of marine safety legislation on lakes Mulwala and Hume as the state border is submerged beneath the waters of the lakes. In these circumstances it is unclear to boaters which state law they must comply with.

The Victorian and NSW governments have agreed to overcome these anomalies through the rationalisation of enforcement of marine safety legislation on lakes Hume and Mulwala.

To address the current confusing situation, the NSW/Victorian Border Anomalies Committee in consultation with appropriate state government agencies, proposed that New South Wales law will apply to:

all of Lake Mulwala and that part of the Ovens River north of the Murray Valley Highway Bridge and also known as Paralos; and

the section of Lake Hume upstream of Bethanga Bridge.

Victorian law will continue to apply on the remainder of the Ovens River and on Lake Hume downstream of the Bethanga Bridge.

Under the agreement, officers of the Waterways Authority NSW will undertake the primary enforcement role. Victorian enforcement officers (Victoria Police and other authorised officers under the Marine Act 1988) will also enforce NSW boating safety laws in those areas that have been designated to have NSW laws applied to them.

The differences between NSW and Victorian boating laws are minor, with mutual recognition of boat operator licences and boat registrations in both states. The main differences relate to licensing, where in NSW only operators of vessels travelling over 10 knots

require licences, whereas in Victoria all powered recreational boat operators will require a licence.

The marine board does not envisage any safety problems in terms of on-water safety, and as such the main benefits would be greater certainty for boaters about the applicable law and more effective enforcement.

This legislation has been developed for introduction in the spring sittings 2001, both in Victoria and NSW, to enable the revised marine safety legislation to be in place for the 2001–02 boating season.

The legislation is a sensible approach to overcome the present confusing and administratively difficult situation. The agreement by both governments to proceed with corresponding legislation has been well received by the boating community. A community consultation campaign will be put in place to explain the benefits of this initiative.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. P. R. DAVIS (Gippsland).

Debate adjourned until next day.

MINERAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (FURTHER AMENDMENT) BILL*Second reading*

Debate resumed from 18 October; motion of Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources).

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — Without any delay I welcome the opportunity to support the passage of the Mineral Resources Development (Further Amendment) Bill, and in so doing say that this is a long-welcomed legislative change which the farming community in Victoria will applaud loudly.

It is the case, as I understand it, that with the formation of the Mineral Resources Development Act in 1990 by the then minister responsible for minerals, David White, peat was classified as a mineral rather than an extractive material and some problems have arisen as a consequence. To put it in perspective, peat is a material that tends to be found in areas of high agricultural value because it is generally associated with high rainfall and significantly higher levels of soil fertility and soil type than some other materials. The consequence is that when extraction of peat as a resource from the landscape is carried out on a geographically significant scale it can impact significantly on individual farms.

Peat is a material that is not presently utilised to a large extent in the state, and I understand there is only one peat mining operation in Victoria.

I had the opportunity to visit that location in November and December of last year at the urging of the honourable member for Polwarth, Terry Mulder, who made a fine contribution on this bill in the other place. On three occasions he mentioned my contribution on this matter. I am delighted to humbly note that during the course of the debate I took a great deal of interest in the subject. I met with Mr and Mrs Chris Smith at their property at Swan Marsh to talk about the problems associated with exploration licences and the potential for large-scale peat mining operations in their vicinity. I then inspected the adjoining property, where there was the peat mining operation.

I sympathise with the predicament where the land-holder, subject to the regulatory regime as set out by the Mineral Resources Development Act, has certainly the risk of an outcome which would be significantly deleterious to the farming operation. As I said, we are dealing with land where peat is identified to be found, which generally speaking is of high agricultural value because peat is a soil material which is derived over time through the breakdown of organic matter, and generally in areas of high rainfall and good soil type — areas that are generally used for more intensive agricultural production.

The consequences for the land-holder can be significant. There has been a long history of representation by the Victorian Farmers Federation on this matter, and therefore I am delighted to say that this small bill, which proposes to move the regulation of peat as a material to be extracted from the Mineral Resources Development Act to the Extractive Industries Development Act, is welcomed. I make the observation that it is surprising to me that this has taken so long to resolve. Notwithstanding the fact that when we were last considering amendments to the Mineral Resources Development Act the minister outlined in the second-reading debate that this would be considered, it has taken some time. This amendment could have been included in an omnibus bill dealing with a series of other small amendments.

The extent of the change that is occurring is not so significant that it should have been delayed for the sake of introducing a bill in its own right. My view therefore is that this could have been dealt with much earlier and that there was no need to take up the time of the Parliament in dealing with it in isolation.

Having said that, there will be benefits arising from the change as there are only a handful of affected exploration licences. I understand that from the proclamation of these provisions land-holders' rights will be protected to the extent that their recourse in dealing with any applications to extract peat on their properties will be dealt with under the Extractive Industries Development Act. At the same time effectively there are grandfather provisions on the existing licences for exploration granted to the one firm in the state that holds licences for 10 years, Biogreen Ltd, and those licences will continue. Without further ado, I am happy to support the bill and look forward to its speedy passage this afternoon.

Hon. D. G. HADDEN (Ballarat) — I support the Mineral Resources Development (Further Amendment) Bill. The bill is to amend the Mineral Resources Development Act of 1990 and the Extractive Industries Development Act of 1995 and for other purposes. The bill deals with peat, a soil resource and a developing industry, in particular in the south-west of Victoria. Peat is formed by the biological decomposition of vegetation and is geologically not a mineral. Peat is a dark fibrous material that is created when decomposition fails to keep pace with the production of organic matter. It is the first stage of the transformation of plant matter into coal. Although peat is created under specific conditions, such as waterlogging, lack of oxygen or nutrients, high acidity or low temperatures, peat can be found in many types of wetlands.

Where the peat deposits are greater than 300 to 400 millimetres in depth a distinctive variety of ecosystems are created. Known collectively as mires, these complex ecosystems, which include bogs and fens, are very susceptible to even the slightest change in hydrological regime, vegetation cover or grazing. Bogs form where rain and snow directly feed an already high water table. Fens on the other hand are fed by ground water or by interior drainage into hollows.

This bill will give farmers and land-holders an opportunity to have better control over the peat resources that exist on their own land. Historically, peat has been used as a source of fuel for heating in Europe and the United Kingdom. However, in Australia and particularly in Victoria's south-west, peat is used in the production of potting mix and for agricultural purposes.

In schedule 4 of the Mineral Resources Development Act peat is defined for the purposes of that act as being a mineral, and as such it gives ownership of the peat to the Crown and allows the Crown to issue licences to remove that material. For some years the Victorian Farmers Federation has recommended that peat should

not be a mineral; as it is part of the land on which a farmer or land-holder operates it should be controlled only by the landowner.

As honourable members heard from the previous speaker, Mr Philip Davis, the Minister for Energy and Resources referred in this house in November last year to the fact that there was a proposal at that time to remove the status of peat as a mineral and that there would be a review of the status of existing licences and appropriate transitional arrangements in relation to that status. That proposal was supported by the opposition parties.

Currently there are only four licences under the Mineral Resources Development Act relating to peat — three exploration licences and one mining licence — and all are located in the south-west. All four licences are issued to a company called Biogreen Ltd. Two of the exploration licences are located adjacent to a mining licence area in the Swan Marsh district near Colac in the south-west and the third exploration licence is located near Portland. This company, Biogreen, is currently mining and selling peat. It is a relatively small company which employs approximately 10 people. It is also developing new products and markets, including using peat to filter seepage from landfills and as a material to mix with herbicides and pesticides to optimise their use on broadacre farms. This company plans to develop a significant regional peat industry in the south-west, doubling its employee numbers from approximately 10 to approximately 20 people.

The amendment proposed by this bill will remove peat as a defined mineral in the Mineral Resources Development Act and include it as a defined stone under the Extractive Industries Development Act 1995, which will enable the further production of peat to occur and all stakeholders in that small industry to be protected. As I said, under the amendment any future peat extraction other than that covered by the existing mining licences will be controlled under the Extractive Industries Development Act in the same way as the extraction of dark soils and stone. All relevant planning approvals and safety standards will of course need to be met. The landowners will ultimately determine whether to allow the peat to be extracted from their land.

As I have said, Biogreen is a small developing business in the south-west of the state. It has assessed the potential of peat extraction to be a viable regional industry in the south-west region of Colac and Portland, and it is currently expanding and improving its operations, for which it is to be commended. I note that Biogreen fully supports the transitional arrangements

referred to in the bill as sufficiently protecting its interests.

Turning to the specifics of the bill, clause 3 removes peat from the coverage of the Mineral Resources Development Act and provides for its inclusion in the Extractive Industries Development Act under its true definition as a stone. Clause 5 inserts proposed section 131 into the principal act, the Mineral Resources Development Act of 1990. Clause 6 inserts proposed schedule 6 in the same act to ensure that the transitional arrangements arising from the proposed amendments safeguard the current leases. I have already referred to the four current licences and the transitional arrangements that will cover those licences. As I have said, this bill will give farmers and land-holders the opportunity to have better control over the extraction of peat resources that exist on their land.

This government is not a do-nothing government; it consults and it acts. This government shows that it is responsive to the needs of the community and industry, and has done so in particular by the introduction of this bill and the foreshadowing of it in November last year.

I will give an example of how the extraction of peat from a wetland can have catastrophic environmental and ecological effects. The Wingecarribee wetland collapse in the southern highlands of New South Wales back in 1998 is such an example. The Wingecarribee wetland was a unique peat swamp that was rich in flora and home to endangered plants as well as the rare giant dragonfly. In 1990 the Australian Heritage Commission listed the Wingecarribee swamp on the register of the national estate and in 1993 it was listed by Environment Australia as a wetland of national significance.

On 7 August 1998 heavy rain lifted an abandoned pontoon dredge that was used to extract peat from the swamp and washed it 1.5 kilometres through the buffer zone into the reservoir. As the dredge swept downstream into the reservoir its legs ripped a strip out of the buffer zone between the dredge pool and the reservoir. That buffer zone was there to protect the reservoir from peat mining. The dredge dug a channel through the peat about 1500 metres long by 10 metres wide and the result was that 5 million cubic metres of peat flowed into the Wingecarribee reservoir. That reservoir supplies water to 40 000 people in the Bowral and Robertson areas of the southern highlands of New South Wales and is a backup water supply for Wollongong and Sydney. The swamp collapse was, as I have said, an environmental and ecological disaster, and some experts have said it will take hundreds of years to fully rehabilitate the swamp.

Compare that to what this government is doing in its consultation and work with the farmers and agricultural landowners of the south-west and with the Victorian Farmers Federation. This government is a very different government. This government has a responsible attitude to balancing social, economic and environmental outcomes. To ensure that the government is sensitive and responsive the current peat operations in the south-west of Victoria on agricultural and farming land are suitably and properly managed. The control of the extraction of peat will be returned to the land-holders, farmers and owners of the land from which the peat is extracted. I commend the bill to the house.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — Isn't the Internet a wonderful thing and how one can use it to embellish one's speeches! I have to give the Honourable Dianne Hadden full marks for in a rather obscure and tenuous way relating the story about the collapse of a peat swamp to the Mineral Resources Development (Further Amendment) Bill. I think it was very clever of her to do that. As I said, I thought it was a rather tenuous link, but nevertheless we got through it.

Major amendments were made to the Mineral Resources Development Act in November last year. We in the National Party supported the amendments to the act, but at the same time we also insisted that the government take action on two further matters at the time of the debate. The first was an important issue for us — namely, the rehabilitation of agricultural land following open-cut mining, which was the subject of significant debate when the amendments were debated in November last year.

Our second issue of concern was about peat. We felt very strongly that peat mining should be controlled by the Extractive Industries Development Act and not the Mineral Resources Development Act. I am pleased to see that the government is acting on both the matters raised by the National Party during the course of last year's debate. This bill addresses the issues of peat and our concerns about it.

When we debated those significant amendments to the Mineral Resources Development Act the Victorian Farmers Federation approached the National Party about the peat issue. The VFF outlined the problem that peat is currently defined as a mineral under the Mineral Resources Development Act. I note the Honourable Dianne Hadden said that according to the dictionary definition peat is not a mineral, but the act defines peat as a mineral. Perhaps the dictionary definition and the definition that we use legally in Victoria need to concur. The National Party is pleased that the bill addresses this particular matter.

Because peat is currently defined as a mineral under the Mineral Resources Development Act the mining of peat is undertaken like any other mineral and there is no right of veto by the landowner. Peat is a surface material extracted in great quantity rather than quality, like most other minerals, and therefore the National Party believes — and this is agreed to by the VFF — that it should be more appropriately treated under the Extractive Industries Development Act in the same way as gravels, stones and quarries. We believe a peat mining operation should operate in the same way.

The current definition of a mineral provides no automatic right of payment for the material extracted for the landowner in that particular instance. However, if, as this bill does, the definition of peat were to come under the control of the Extractive Industries Development Act peat will be defined as a stone. It is probably a strange concept for some people to imagine that we could have a relatively soft-soiled substance like peat regarded as a stone, but it will be so under the Extractive Industries Development Act. Because it is under that act there is a right of veto on mining of peat for people who own that particular land and it is possible that a payment can be negotiated for the volume of the material extracted. We expressed our concurrence with the view of the VFF in November last year when the act was last amended. As I said, we are pleased the government is acting on it with this bill. The second-reading speech mentions the consistent position taken by the National Party during the course of the debate last November.

Hon. M. M. Gould interjected.

Hon. P. R. HALL — We are pleased the government is taking notice of our concerns. We are giving you a compliment here.

Hon. M. M. Gould — We couldn't get the same when you were in government though, could we?

Hon. P. R. HALL — I don't know about that. We have had a look at the transition provisions in the bill, and we believe they are appropriate. The arrangements are appropriate to protect the interests of the current licence-holders and land-holders.

We have consulted very widely on the bill. We have received confirmation from the VFF. Kate Lockhart emailed me on 28 September and her note says:

The VFF would also like to thank you and your party for your assistance in achieving practical amendments to the MRD act which further strengthen the farming communities' capacity to achieve equitable outcomes. Thank you.

We were pleased to receive that. The Victorian Minerals and Energy Council looked at the bill. Its October newsletter states:

The council has been involved in the development of this bill and has been assured that current licence-holders will have their interests protected.

We are thankful for the council's support of the bill. As an indication of the extent of the National Party's consultation I point out that my colleague in another place Hugh Delahunty, the honourable member for Wimmera, consulted with Basin Minerals Ltd of Western Australia. In a letter of 4 October as part of its response to this bill it states:

From the proposed amendment it would appear that all stakeholders (farmers and potential peat developers under current titles) are again being fairly dealt with in a manner that will assist their respective endeavours to the benefit of the general community.

I put on record my thanks to my colleague, who has extended our consultation beyond the state boundaries of Victoria.

The second-reading speech spoke about the amendments to the Mineral Resources Development Act which were debated in November last year. As I said at the start of my speech there were two concerns: the issue of peat and the rehabilitation of agricultural land, particularly after open-cut goldmining. At the time of the debate it was a very contentious issue.

I am aware that there is a requirement under the Mineral Resources Development Act to require rehabilitation of land after mining. Generally that works very well, but there was an issue with open-cut goldmining. I am also aware that the minister has honoured her commitment at that time to put in place a committee to look at that issue. I understand the minerals and energy council and VFF are two parties involved in the issue.

Although the minister responsible is not in the chamber, perhaps the Minister for Small Business, who is sitting in her place, could relay to her that it would be helpful if the house could receive a report at some time in the near future on how that committee is going and what its activities are towards trying to resolve some of those outstanding concerns about the rehabilitation of agricultural land, particularly following open-cut mining. That response would be appreciated.

However, that is not the direct subject of this debate, which concerns the definition of peat. We are pleased that the government is acting and we are more than happy to support the bill before the house.

Hon. R. F. SMITH (Chelsea) — I rise to speak in support of the Mineral Resources Development (Further Amendment) Bill, the purpose of which is to transfer peat from the ambit of the Mineral Resources Development Act 1990 and to allow it to be considered stone rather than a mineral. It has already been expressed to the house that some people struggle with this concept, but I am led to believe that it is an accurate description of peat and for the purposes of this bill it is treated as such. Peat will now come under the Extractive Industries Development Act 1995. This is a significant change, which all parties involved support. I suppose it is something the government wants to be noted. All parties, including those within and without Parliament, are supportive of the changes contained in this bill.

At present peat is considered to be a mineral and its mining is controlled by the government. Licences, work authorities and permits are controlled directly by the government and not by the farmers on whose land the peat exists. For quite some time farmers and their association, the Victorian Farmers Federation, have argued that peat is organic and therefore is not a mineral and should not be considered as such. It is not often that I get to say that I am in agreement with the VFF, but on this matter I think it is worth noting that it has come up with a sensible proposal, one which all parties in this place agree with.

The government did not just accept the argument of the VFF; we also did something about it. We consulted with all the relevant parties and stakeholders, which is something that the Bracks government makes much of, and people are quite pleased that we have done so. I remind the house that on 16 November 2000 this government gave a commitment to the Parliament to remove peat from the ambit of the Mineral Resources Development Act by amending the act, hence the introduction of this bill. Consequently it will allow farmers not only to harvest peat as an organic material for commercial purposes, but will also give them much more control of their land. In some way that demonstrates the rationale for the National Party's support for this bill, given that their traditional constituent base consists of farmers. As I said, I note that the National Party supports the bill strongly, and I have to commend its members for doing so.

The search for and extraction of peat will come under the Extractive Industries Development Act 1995, under which a farmer must consent to its extraction from his or her land. Another reason for this bill is to remove an anomaly that exists relating to differentiating between peat and soils with high organic content.

As I said, the government has conducted a comprehensive review, which included a review of the licences that currently exist within this industry. Interestingly only one such licence and three exploratory licences directly relating to peat exist, and they are all under the direct control of a subsidiary of a company called Biogreen, which is currently building an industry base on peat extracted from the Colac region. The company is processing peat, marketing the product and building a processing plant in the hope of employing up to 20 people.

In the large scheme of things this may not sound like a large number of new employees, but I suggest it is significant, particularly in rural Victoria, where jobs are at a premium. I wish them well. More than that, I wish any relevant union well in signing up those people. We know that union members do significantly better than non-union members. The company's interests have been protected — and this is extremely important for not only present but also future investors — and they must understand that it goes to proving the point that investors can feel comfort in coming to Victoria.

As I said, Biogreen's interests have been protected and its current mining licence is not only to continue but will be renewed. The bill will allow the company's exploration licences to be renewed for the next 10 years, although its licences will be restricted to the area covered by the current licence. It is an important part of this bill that states that if Biogreen wishes to extract peat from outside its current boundaries it will have to negotiate with farmers. The government sees this as a positive move, and I am sure it goes without saying that farmers do as well, because they now own that peat and will be compensated in some way for any peat that may be extracted from their land in the future.

It is important to note that Biogreen and the Victorian Farmers Federation support the changes proposed in this bill, and for that reason I commend this bill to the house.

Hon. C. A. STRONG (Higinbotham) — I support the bill and in a very few words will cover the essential elements. The bill transfers peat from being a mineral to a quarryable material. The whole process is interesting because historically, based on traditions in Europe and Ireland, peat has been a fuel or a low-grade coal and as a consequence has come under the Mineral Resources Development Act. However, Australia is not Europe and our use of peat has been, certainly in recent decades, quite different from the European use of peat. Here peat is used not as a fuel or as a low-grade coal — we have our own brown coal, which is a relatively low

grade — but as an agricultural product, for potting mix and similar uses.

For some time there has been an inconsistency in that peat has been classified as a mineral. The bill reclassifies peat from a mineral to a quarryable material to bring it under the Extractive Industries Development Act, which is eminently appropriate and is supported by me.

It is also highly appropriate that those few licences that exist under the Mineral Resources Development Act be taken over through saving provisions so that those people who have extracting and exploration licences for peat will not lose anything in the change. There is the potential for peat use to expand and for peat to be put to very good use in agriculture and other areas that were difficult while peat came under the Mineral Resources Development Act. With those few words I am pleased to support the Mineral Resources Development (Further Amendment) Bill.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — By leave, I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

In doing so I thank all opposition members, both from the Liberal Party and the National Party, for their support of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — I move:

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Wednesday, 7 November.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

South Oakleigh Primary School site

Hon. ANDREW BRIDESON (Waverley) — As the Minister for Sport and Recreation is not present, I refer an issue to the attention of the Minister for Small Business for the Minister for Education in another place concerning the South Oakleigh Primary School site. The South Oakleigh Primary School recently moved into the refurbished former South Oakleigh Secondary College, so the old South Oakleigh Primary School site has been vacant since September this year. The playground area has been fenced off. Obviously since that time there has been no maintenance on the grounds, and complaints have started to come in from neighbours in the area about not only the long grass but about rubbish being thrown over the fence. The site is generally unkempt and untidy. The neighbours would like to see the former school grounds kept in a neat and tidy condition in keeping with the rest of the neighbourhood.

Bunyip State Park

Hon. N. B. LUCAS (Eumemmerring) — I refer to the attention of the Minister for Energy and Resources, as the representative of the Minister for Environment and Conservation in the other place, an issue relating to the Bunyip State Park. I believe a management plan for that park came into being in 1998. That plan provides for a number of uses of the park, including the use of areas in the southern section of the park by trail bikes and four-wheel-drive vehicles.

In recent times there has been a lot of concern among members of the community who live on private land within the boundaries of the park and also adjacent to the sides of the park regarding the use of those vehicles. It is a fact that, particularly at weekends, there is continual noise from these vehicles in the park.

It appears that when the management plan was first put together there was very little, if any, discussion with local residents regarding the future plans. In fact, the trail bikes and four-wheel-drive vehicles apparently have been allowed to go into a particular area, which badly affects those living in the area. They have the constant sound of bikes and four-wheel-drive vehicles for the whole weekend.

I raise the matter because I chaired a recent meeting held in Gembrook where it was put to me that there needs to be a review of the management plan for the Bunyip State Park. Accordingly, I ask the minister to undertake a review of the management plan, particularly taking into account the views of residents in the area who have expressed their concerns regarding the noise from four-wheel-drive vehicles and trail bikes.

Snowy River

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Western) — I hope the Minister for Energy and Resources will not be too disappointed to learn that I want to again go to the issue of the government's specific commitments regarding increased environmental flows in the Snowy River, and more particularly the government's reporting of a \$40 million output initiative relating to this project in 2000–01. During the adjournment debate of 17 October the minister assured the house that it was:

... perfectly appropriate that the 2001–02 budget papers reported the \$40 million as an output initiative for 2000–01 even though the greater part of the funds ... were not expended in that year.

Employing the minister's own logic I suggest it also would have been perfectly appropriate to note that the \$40 million allocated the previous year had not been fully drawn down, and it would have been perfectly appropriate to report both the actual expenditure and the reason for the deferral.

I ask the minister in her perfectly appropriate mode to advise the house what part of the \$40 million was in fact expended in 2000–01 and where this is actually reported in the budget papers.

Smoking: rooming houses

Hon. ANDREA COOTE (Monash) — My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations for the Minister for Health in another place. A rooming house resident in my electorate recently contacted me. He was very concerned about the issue of smoking in the rooming house and the effect that was having on his comfort and health, and indeed that of some of the other members of the rooming house. A media release from the Minister for Health of 27 June quotes him and states:

Second-hand smoke can be fatal —

he was launching smoke-free dining with restaurateur Stefano di Pieri, who presented the television series *A Gondola on the Murray* —

and smoke-free dining is an important step towards protecting the health of restaurant patrons and staff.

Second-hand smoke is also of concern in rooming houses, which are in a unique position because not only do they have communal areas but also they are people's homes. Many people have difficulties because they cannot join in activities in communal areas; if they are concerned about smoke they have to stay in their rooms. Given the government's commitment to smoke-free environments, with the banning of smoking in restaurants and cafes in June, is the government committed to protecting the health of all Victorians and, if so, when will smoke restrictions be imposed on rooming houses?

Retail tenancies: tenure

Hon. W. I. SMITH (Silvan) — The matter I refer to the Minister for Small Business concerns retail tenancies. I have received a letter from a constituent expressing an understanding that the proposed bill for retail tenancies does not include security of tenure for small businesses in shopping centres. I raise this matter with the minister because Tim Piper, president of the Australian Retailers Association, has publicly said he also did not believe security of tenure was on the government's agenda.

Given that the minister and the government have criticised the former Kennett government in the past for not providing roll-on, 10-year leases and security of tenure, given the concern in the industry — the person who has written to me is very prominent in the newsagents association — and given that Tim Piper is making some fairly loud comments about this not being included, will the minister confirm that she will introduce security of tenure and outline the form it will take?

Fishing: Corner Inlet licence

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — The matter I raise for the attention of the Minister for Energy and Resources concerns the matter I raised on the adjournment of 26 September this year about my constituent Noela Cripps and the transfer of the Corner Inlet fishery access licence held under the name of her late husband. The minister and I spoke about this matter and I know we are all working together to try to have this matter resolved as quickly as possible. I appreciate that it is now more than a month on and to this day Ms Cripps still has not had an official confirmation of what the minister proposes regarding the licence.

I understood that an answer may have been available from the minister this week, and I now ask whether she

has made a decision about the application to transfer the fishing licence and, if so, to inform the house of that decision.

Liquor: Woolworths

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — I raise an issue for the attention of the Minister for Consumer Affairs. On 24 May this year the minister put out a press release about new liquor laws to protect small retailers, saying:

The Bracks government has delivered on its promise to close liquor loopholes undermining laws aimed at preventing the domination of the packaged liquor industry by the major supermarket chains ...

...

This is good news for small liquor retailers ...

...

When the Bracks government said in January that we would enforce an effective 8 per cent cap, we meant it. Today we have closed the remaining loopholes so that both small retailers and the public will continue to enjoy a diverse range of liquor outlets.

Ms Thomson said the maintenance of an effective 8 per cent cap would provide small retailers a period of certainty to allow discussion —

et cetera, et cetera.

The minister is aware that Woolworths is about to open three new Dan Murphy Stores — one in Vermont, one in Frankston and one in Eltham. She is also aware that Woolworths intends to close Franklin grocery stores and turn them into Dan Murphys. I have a simple question: is she going to stop them?

Member for Chelsea Province: statements

Hon. B. C. BOARDMAN (Chelsea) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Sport and Recreation which I ask him to pass on to the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment. The minister would be aware of the Community Jobs program, which is a state government initiative — following from the Kennett government's initiative — offering paid work and training to the unemployed. The minister would also be aware that last Friday there was a graduation ceremony for some graduands, mainly female, ranging in age from 18 to 50, who were coordinated in this program by Skills Plus Peninsula. The minister, Lynne Kosky, decided — in hindsight, through an error of judgment, I guess — to be represented by the Honourable Bob Smith on this particular occasion.

On being introduced as the Honourable Bob Smith, Mr Smith made light of the title, spoke about the Labor Party wishing to reform the upper house and said the ALP did not approve of the title 'Honourable', claiming it was something from the past. Because this particular graduation was being orchestrated at the Mahogany Community Centre at Frankston North, he made reference to his memory of the night Labor won government and what a proud member of the Labor Party he was.

Mr Smith interrupted his prepared speech on a number of occasions to refer to Labor Party philosophy, giving particular reference to its social justice philosophy. On a number of occasions he interrupted his prepared speech to refer to the Labor Party instead of the government and make disparaging comments about the former Kennett government. That is to be expected. But probably what the crowd found most offensive was the reference to his time as secretary of the Australian Workers Union, when he encouraged all participants to join a union.

Considering that a number of these participants have contacted me expressing their outrage at the blatant politicising of a very important program, will the minister rebuke Mr Bob Smith and ask him to issue an apology to all those people who were offended by his comments?

Country Fire Authority: volunteers

Hon. I. J. COVER (Geelong) — I raise a matter for the attention of the Minister for Sport and Recreation for reference to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place. It concerns volunteer fire brigades. As honourable members on both sides of the house would recognise, the fire season is just around the corner, with summer only a month away. In that context it is concerning to note that in Geelong volunteer fire brigades in some areas are struggling to field daytime crews because of a severe shortage of available members. Indeed, the Country Fire Authority (CFA) regional officer in Geelong, Bob Barry, was reported in the *Geelong Advertiser* yesterday as saying there had been a decline in the number of people turning out during working hours. Among areas hardest hit are St Leonards, Lovely Banks and several coastal brigades. In some towns the local CFA branches struggle to field adequate crews during working hours, a shortage blamed on an ageing volunteer base and the drain of young people from rural communities. The article states:

'A lot of brigades are suffering', he said. 'It is putting a huge strain on the people that we have'.

Of course, it is not just the work the volunteers do as firefighters, which is to be commended, but there is also the opportunity for people to be active members in their local brigades by taking part in education, awareness and social activities.

As always all honourable members commend the work that volunteers in the CFA branches do, not only in the Geelong Province, which I represent, but in all areas of Victoria. Through the good auspices of the newspaper the CFA was able to include a telephone number that it asked people to ring to contact the local brigade. What action will the minister and the government take to assist in remedying this situation for CFA brigades?

Ministers: staff

Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern) — I raise a matter with the Minister for Industrial Relations for referral to the Premier. I would like the Premier to advise staff who work in ministerial offices that north-eastern Victoria, despite its being in the 02 telephone zone, is part of the state of Victoria and comes under the jurisdiction of the government of Victoria. In the past couple of weeks I have had the unfortunate experience in dealing with two ministerial offices where there was a grave reluctance to telephone me back when I gave my phone number on the basis that I was a New South Wales member of Parliament because I had an 02 phone number.

I find that quite disgusting. I know that this is a citycentric government and I know that ministerial staffers have absolutely no idea at all of the geography of Victoria, but if that is the treatment they are giving me in declining to return calls from 02 phone numbers, what is being done to the tourism industry, including the motels and the other businesses in north-eastern Victoria that similarly have 02 phone numbers? It shows a gross misunderstanding of the geography of Victoria. I invite the Premier to give a geography lesson to his staffers.

Waverley Park

Hon. G. B. ASHMAN (Koonung) — I address a matter to the attention of the Minister for Sport and Recreation. I note that the Australian Football League (AFL) draw came out today. I draw his attention to the ALP policy on Waverley Park — which is now better known as Thistle Park — released prior to the last election:

Preliminary legal advice indicates that the state government has substantial powers to save Waverley Park from closure. These include the power to rezone the land as a site of significance to the community and powers under the MCG

Trust and Docklands Authority acts to limit the number of games at these venues to enable more fixtures to be scheduled at Waverley.

Was this advice provided to the incoming government? If it was, the opposition would be interested in seeing that advice. If it was provided to the incoming government, why was it not acted upon and why we are not now having games at AFL park?

Casey: maternal and child health funding

Hon. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS (Eumemmerring) — I raise a matter with the Minister for Consumer Affairs for the Minister for Community Services in the other place. It relates to the issue of maternal and child health service funding. I refer specifically to the City of Casey. The City of Casey receives state funding for maternal and child health services, but the basis of the funding is largely the number of births in the previous year — that is, current financial year funding is based on the number of births in the previous year. The difficulty with that is that Casey is a growth area, where there is an enormous number of young families and where an enormous number of children are born. The City of Casey is funded based on the number of births last year, which is inadequate to deal with the number of births this year, so there is a shortage of funding for maternal and child health services in the city. As a result Casey has had to prioritise the number of services it can offer under the program to newborn children at the expense of older children.

The City of Casey has requested a meeting with the Minister for Community Services, who unfortunately has told the city that she does not have the time to meet with its representatives. Casey has inadequate funding for maternal and child health services and the minister is not willing to meet with its representatives to discuss the issue. Given that this is a critical issue in a growth area with many newborn children, I ask the minister to reconsider and to meet with the City of Casey to discuss the issue.

Responses

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — The Honourable Neil Lucas raised a matter for referral to the Minister for Environment and Conservation with respect to trail bikes and four-wheel-drive vehicles in the Bunyip State Park and asked that the minister look at the management plan. I will ask the minister to respond to the honourable member in the usual manner.

The Honourable Andrea Coote raised a matter for the Minister for Health regarding smoking in rooming

houses. I will ask the minister to respond to her in the usual manner.

The Honourable Bill Baxter is concerned that no-one knows who he is and raised a matter for the Premier about 02 phone numbers. I will raise that with the Premier and ask him to respond in the usual manner.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — In response to the Honourable Roger Hallam and in relation to the matter of the \$40 million made available by way of Treasurer's advance in 2000–01 for restoring environmental flows to the Snowy River and the matter of what the actual expenditure was in relation to those funds, I do not have those details, but if it is possible to provide that information on actual expenditure to the honourable member I will seek that information and provide it to him.

In response to the Honourable Peter Hall and the matter he referred to in relation to Ms Noela Cripps's situation, I am advised that advice is coming to me very shortly from the Fisheries Co-management Council and Seafood Industry Victoria, in addition to the legal advice I have sought on this matter. I am very hopeful that I will be able in considering that advice to make a decision about this soon and to notify both Ms Cripps and the honourable member very shortly in response to that advice, which I am told is now available.

Hon. M. R. THOMSON (Minister for Small Business) — The Honourable Wendy Smith raised a matter of the retail tenancies review and concern by newsagents about security of tenure in shopping centres. I suggest that they have a good look at that section of the report that is out for public consultation now, and that they take advantage of the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the recommendations around reasonable security of tenure.

The Honourable Bill Forwood raised the 8 per cent liquor laws and the amendments which were passed through this house and were supported by the opposition at the time. Those laws are in place and will be effected by Liquor Licensing Victoria. Just as a reminder to honourable members in case they have forgotten, if any liquor suppliers or businesses are over the 8 per cent limit — in this case Woolworths is being mentioned as being over 8 per cent — they cannot gain a new licence nor move existing licences whilst they are over 8 per cent, and that remains the case.

The Honourable Gordon Rich-Phillips raised an issue for the Minister for Community Services in relation to maternal and child health services and the unique

situation of the high birth rate in the City of Casey. The City of Casey is seeking a meeting with the minister to discuss funding shortfalls due to those circumstances. I am not sure the honourable member understands what kinds of services are provided by those maternal and child health facilities, but I will pass that on to the minister for her direct response.

Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — The Honourable Andrew Brideson raised an issue regarding the site of the former South Oakleigh Primary School and the maintenance of its grounds. I will refer that to the Minister for Education in the other place.

The Honourable Cameron Boardman raised the Community Jobs program and a particular graduation occasion. I will refer that to the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment.

In relation to the matter raised by the Honourable Ian Cover regarding volunteer fire brigades, the outstanding work they do and the issue of daytime crews and associated demands and potential assistance, I will refer that to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services in the other place.

The Honourable Gerald Ashman raised a matter regarding Waverley Park. I have again and again reiterated the government's policy position regarding Waverley Park. I will reinforce that the government will fight to retain Australian Football League games at Waverley Park. It is a fight the government has maintained, but the Australian Football League has maintained its position that it is no longer playing AFL games at Waverley Park.

Mr Ashman's suggestion of limiting games at Docklands and the Melbourne Cricket Ground, appreciating the dynamics of the facilities, would no doubt diminish the potential viability of both Docklands and the MCG. I also remind the honourable member that taking that ham-fisted approach may not result in AFL games being played at Waverley Park, but may ensure that the AFL fixtures additional games either interstate or at other venues in this state.

Waverley Park is heritage listed. The AFL has not yet made a planning application. I understand the AFL will soon release the results of the expressions of interest process and I look forward with interest to see the results of the process and the potential public benefit that may be derived from it.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 4.02 p. m. until Wednesday, 7 November.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.

Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Council.

Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.

The portfolio of the minister answering the question on notice starts each heading.

Tuesday, 30 October 2001

Racing: Victorian Workcover Authority chairman

1956. THE HON. BILL FORWOOD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Racing): Does Mr James MacKenzie, current Chairman of the Victorian Workcover Authority, or any company associated with him, have a contract or a retainer with the Minister's department; if so, what are the costs of the arrangement.

ANSWER:

I am advised that the Department of State and Regional Development has not entered into a contract with Mr James MacKenzie to the date of the Question on Notice, 20 June 2001. In relation to companies with which Mr MacKenzie may be associated, the Member may wish to specify any companies with which he has a concern.

Manufacturing Industry: Victorian Workcover Authority chairman

1957. THE HON. BILL FORWOOD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Manufacturing Industry): Does Mr James MacKenzie, current Chairman of the Victorian Workcover Authority, or any company associated with him, have a contract or a retainer with the Minister's department; if so, what are the costs of the arrangement.

ANSWER:

I am advised that the Department of State and Regional Development has not entered into a contract with Mr James MacKenzie to the date of the Question on Notice, 20 June 2001. In relation to companies with which Mr MacKenzie may be associated, the Member may wish to specify any companies with which he has a concern.

State and Regional Development: ministerial staff

2044. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development): As at 30 May 2001, how many staff were employed by the Minister — (i) in the Minister's office as Ministerial staff, what are their names and what is the cost; and (ii) on secondment from the Victorian Public Service, what are their names and what is the cost.

ANSWER:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore, there are no Ministerial staff employed by me working in my office.

As at 30 May 2001, one member of staff working in my office was on secondment from the Victorian Public Service.

The Member may wish to refer to the Budget Papers for details on expenditure.

Workcover: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2071. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister assisting the Minister for Workcover: Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

Two contracts have been entered into for the period in question with Shannon's Way

- (i) 15 April 2001
- (ii) \$6,770.50 and \$9,385.20 (GST Inc)
- (iii) Provision of a press campaign and a radio campaign for the State Government "Better Business Taxes Initiative"
- (iv) The Department of Treasury and Finance has complied with section 54L of the *Financial Management Act* 1994. Supply policies and the associated best practice guidelines are publicly available on the Victorian Government Purchasing Board's web site at www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/polguid/polmenu.htm.

Premier: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2072. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Premier): Will the Premier provide details of every contract entered into between the Premier's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Workcover: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2073. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Workcover): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Two contracts have been entered into for the period in question with Shannon's Way

- (i) 15 April 2001
- (ii) \$6,770.50 and \$9,385.20 (GST Inc)

- (iii) Provision of a press campaign and a radio campaign for the State Government “Better Business Taxes Initiative”
- (iv) The Department of Treasury and Finance has complied with section 54L of the *Financial Management Act* 1994. Supply policies and the associated best practice guidelines are publicly available on the Victorian Government Purchasing Board’s web site at www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/polguid/polmenu.htm.

Finance: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2074. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Finance): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister’s department and the firm Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Two contracts have been entered into for the period in question with Shannon’s Way

- (i) 15 April 2001
- (ii) \$6,770.50 and \$9,385.20 (GST Inc)
- (iii) Provision of a press campaign and a radio campaign for the State Government “Better Business Taxes Initiative”
- (iv) The Department of Treasury and Finance has complied with section 54L of the *Financial Management Act* 1994. Supply policies and the associated best practice guidelines are publicly available on the Victorian Government Purchasing Board’s web site at www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/polguid/polmenu.htm.

Arts: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2075. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for the Arts): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister’s department and the firm Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet, including Arts Victoria, has not entered into any contracts with Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Health: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2076. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister’s department and the firm Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd for the period from 1 March 2001 until 30 June 2001.

Health: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2077. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister assisting the Minister for Health): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd for the period from 1 March 2001 until 30 June 2001.

Multicultural Affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2078. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Multicultural Affairs): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Multicultural Affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2079. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister assisting the Minister for Multicultural Affairs): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Energy and Resources: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2080. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources: Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the

firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

During the specified timeframe, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment entered into the following four contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd dealing with Marine National Parks issues:

(i), (ii), (iii)

June 2001

Concept development and press advertisements. Value \$20,198.75 (including GST).

June 2001

Fact sheets including printing and reprinting, strategy development and implementation. Value \$28,750.70 (including GST).

June 2001

Further press advertisement and reprint of base sheets. Value \$10,865.25 (including GST).

June 2001

Banners. Value \$4,077.45 (including GST).

(iv) I am advised that the Department of Natural Resources and Environment has complied with section 54L of the *Financial Management Act 1994*. Supply policies and the associated best practice guidelines are publicly available on the Government Purchasing Board's web site at www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/polguid/polmenu.htm.

Ports: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2081. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Ports: Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure has not entered into any contracts with the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Treasurer: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2083. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): Will the Treasurer provide details of every contract entered into between the Treasurer's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Two contracts have been entered into for the period in question with Shannon's Way

- (i) 15 April 2001
- (ii) \$6,770.50 and \$9,385.20 (GST Inc)
- (iii) Provision of a press campaign and a radio campaign for the State Government “Better Business Taxes Initiative”
- (iv) The Department of Treasury and Finance has complied with section 54L of the *Financial Management Act 1994*. Supply policies and the associated best practice guidelines are publicly available on the Victorian Government Purchasing Board’s web site at www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/polguid/polmenu.htm.

Environment and Conservation: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2085. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister’s department and the firm Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

During the specified timeframe, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment entered into the following four contracts with Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd dealing with Marine National Parks issues:

(i), (ii), (iii)

June 2001

Concept development and press advertisements. Value \$20,198.75 (including GST).

June 2001

Fact sheets including printing and reprinting, strategy development and implementation. Value \$28,750.70 (including GST).

June 2001

Further press advertisement and reprint of base sheets. Value \$10,865.25 (including GST).

June 2001

Banners. Value \$4,077.45 (including GST).

(iv) I am advised that the Department of Natural Resources and Environment has complied with section 54L of the *Financial Management Act 1994*. Supply policies and the associated best practice guidelines are publicly available on the Government Purchasing Board’s web site at www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/polguid/polmenu.htm.

Agriculture: Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2086. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister’s department and the firm Shannon’s Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

During the specified timeframe, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment entered into the following four contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd dealing with Marine National Parks issues:

(i), (ii), (iii)

June 2001

Concept development and press advertisements. Value \$20,198.75 (including GST).

June 2001

Fact sheets including printing and reprinting, strategy development and implementation. Value \$28,750.70 (including GST).

June 2001

Further press advertisement and reprint of base sheets. Value \$10,865.25 (including GST).

June 2001

Banners. Value \$4,077.45 (including GST).

(iv) I am advised that the Department of Natural Resources and Environment has complied with section 54L of the *Financial Management Act 1994*. Supply policies and the associated best practice guidelines are publicly available on the Government Purchasing Board's web site at www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/polguid/polmenu.htm.

Transport: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2087. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure has not entered into any contracts with the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Transport (Roads): Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2088. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister assisting the Minister in Transport (Roads)): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm. Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — consultancies

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure has not entered into any contracts with the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Local Government: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2089. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Local Government): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001

and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure has not entered into any contracts with the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Planning: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2092. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister assisting the Minister for Planning: Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure has not entered into any contracts with the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Police and Emergency Services: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2095. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I understand the Department of Justice has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Corrections: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2096. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I understand the Department of Justice has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Planning: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2097. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Ministers department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June

2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Infrastructure has not entered into any contracts with the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Gaming: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2101. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Gaming): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Two contracts have been entered into for the period in question with Shannon's Way

(i) April 2001

(ii) \$6,770.50 and \$9,385.20 (GST Inc)

(iii) Provision of a press campaign and a radio campaign for the State Government "Better Business Taxes Initiative"

(iv) The Department of Treasury and Finance has complied with section 54L of the *Financial Management Act 1994*. Supply policies and the associated best practice guidelines are publicly available on the Victorian Government Purchasing Board's web site at www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/polguid/polmenu.htm

Consumer Affairs Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2103. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I understand the Department of Justice has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Attorney-General: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2104. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): Will the Attorney-General provide details of every contract entered into between the Attorney-General's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Justice has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Women's Affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2105. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001.

Community Services: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2106. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Community Services): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd for the period from 1 March 2001 until 30 June 2001.

Housing: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2107. THE HON P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd for the period from 1 March 2001 until 30 June 2001.

Aged Care: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2108. THE HON P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Aged Care): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services has not entered into any contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd for the period from 1 March 2001 until 30 June 2001.

Aboriginal Affairs: Shannon's Way Pty Ltd — contracts

2109. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): Will the Minister provide details of every contract entered into between the Minister's department and the firm Shannon's Way Pty Ltd between 1 March 2001 and 30 June 2001 including — (i) the date the contract was entered into; (ii) the value of the contract; (iii) the nature of the tasks performed under the contract; and (iv) the process undertaken to award this contract to the firm.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

During the specified timeframe, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment entered into the following four contracts with Shannon's Way Pty Ltd dealing with Marine National Parks issues:

(i), (ii), (iii)

June 2001

Concept development and press advertisements. Value \$20,198.75 (including GST).

June 2001

Fact sheets including printing and reprinting, strategy development and implementation. Value \$28,750.70 (including GST).

June 2001

Further press advertisement and reprint of base sheets. Value \$10,865.25 (including GST).

June 2001

Banners. Value \$4,077.45 (including GST).

(iv) I am advised that the Department of Natural Resources and Environment has complied with section 54L of the *Financial Management Act 1994*. Supply policies and the associated best practice guidelines are publicly available on the Government Purchasing Board's web site at www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/polguid/polmenu.htm.

Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: nurses — training

2171. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment): How many undergraduate student nurses were undertaking clinical training in rural areas as at 30 June 2001.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

As the Commonwealth Government is responsible for the funding of undergraduate student places, so it is also responsible for the collection of student profile information through the annual university education profiles.

Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: nurses — training

2172. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment): How many undergraduate student nurses were undertaking aged care clinical training in rural areas as at 30 June 2001.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

As the Commonwealth Government is responsible for the funding of undergraduate student places, so it is also responsible for the collection of student profile information through the annual university education profiles.

Aged Care: personal care workers

2173. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing and Aged Care): How many personal care workers in Victoria were working in aged care as at 30 June 2001.

ANSWER:

The Commonwealth Government does not require the collection of data on the number of Personal Care Workers working in either residential aged care or the joint Commonwealth/State funded community aged care services. As a consequence, it is not possible to provide the information requested.

Aged Care: personal care workers

2174. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing and Aged Care): How many personal care workers were required to work in Victoria in aged care as at 30 June 2001.

ANSWER:

As the Commonwealth Government does not stipulate staffing levels for Personal Care Workers in either residential aged care or the joint Commonwealth/State funded community aged care services it is not possible to provide the information requested.

Aged Care: personal care workers

2175. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing and Aged Care): How many personal care workers were working in aged care as at 30 June 2001 in metropolitan Melbourne and rural and regional areas of Victoria, respectively.

ANSWER:

The Commonwealth Government does not require the collection of data on the number of Personal Care Workers working in either residential aged care or the joint Commonwealth/State funded community aged care services. As a consequence, it is not possible to provide the information requested.

Aged Care: personal care workers

2176. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing and Aged Care): How many personal care workers in aged care as at

30 June 2001 were required to work in metropolitan Melbourne and rural and regional areas of Victoria, respectively.

ANSWER:

As the Commonwealth Government does not stipulate staffing levels for Personal Care Workers in either residential aged care or the joint Commonwealth/State funded community aged care services it is not possible to provide the information requested.

Aged Care: personal care workers

2177. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing and Aged Care): What was the required level of training for personal care workers working in aged care in Victoria as at 30 June 2001.

ANSWER:

The minimum training requirement for personal care workers employed through the Home and Community Care program, and for personal care coordinators of supported residential services, is Certificate III in Community Services (Aged Care work) or an equivalent qualification.

There is no training requirement for personal care workers employed in Commonwealth funded residential aged care facilities or the Community Aged Care Packages program.

Aged Care: personal care workers

2178. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing and Aged Care): What was the level of training achieved by personal care workers working in aged care in Victoria as at 30 June 2001.

ANSWER:

The Commonwealth Government does not require residential aged care services or the joint Commonwealth/State funded community aged care services to report on the level of training achieved by their workers. As a consequence it is not possible to provide the information requested.

Aged Care: personal care workers

2179. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing and Aged Care): What was the level of training achieved by personal care workers working in aged care as at 30 June 2001 in metropolitan Melbourne and rural and regional areas of Victoria, respectively.

ANSWER:

The Commonwealth Government does not require residential aged care services or the joint Commonwealth/State funded community aged care services to report on the level of training achieved by their workers. As a consequence it is not possible to provide the information requested.

Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: staff

2192. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment): How many staff of the Office of Training and Further Education, Department of Employment, Education and Training were employed prior to September 1999.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The total number of staff employed by the Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE), Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) as at 30 June 1999 was 200.44 (Equivalent Full Time).

Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: staff salaries

2194. THE HON. B. N. ATKINSON — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment): What were the salary levels for those employees employed by the Office of Training and Further Education, Department of Employment, Education and Training prior to September 1999 who no longer work for the Department.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The salary levels for those employees employed by the Office of Training and Further Education, Department of Employment, Education and Training prior to September 1999 who no longer work for the Department are confidential to them.

Energy and Resources: Latrobe aquifer

2196. THE HON. P. R. HALL — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources: What action is the Government planning to address the economic impact falling water levels is having on both current and potential users of the Latrobe aquifer.

ANSWER:

I am informed that under the *Water Act 1989*, management of ground water issues does not fall within my portfolio responsibility and the question should more appropriately be addressed to the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

Premier: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2213. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Premier): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Premier signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

All ministerial officers currently employed by me have completed a declaration of pecuniary interest form.

Multicultural Affairs: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2214. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Multicultural Affairs): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

I wish to advise that in my capacity as the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I do not employ staff.

Treasurer: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2216. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Treasurer signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Workcover: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2219. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Workcover): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Community Services: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2220. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Community Services): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Environment and Conservation: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2223. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am advised that:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Police and Emergency Services: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2225. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Police and Emergency Services): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Corrections: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2226. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Corrections): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Agriculture: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2227. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Aboriginal Affairs: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2228. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Attorney-General: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2229. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Attorney-General signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Health: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2238. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Ports: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2240. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Ports: Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Energy and Resources: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2242. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources: Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Consumer Affairs: ministerial staff — pecuniary interest

2245. THE HON. G. K. RICH-PHILLIPS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: Have all ministerial officers currently or previously employed by the Minister signed a pecuniary interest form; if so, on what date — (i) was the declaration signed; and (ii) did the employee commence employment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

All staff working in my office are employed by the Premier. Therefore there are no ministerial officers employed by me.

Treasurer: net state debt

2253. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What was Victoria's net state debt (excluding Growing Victoria) at the end of 2000-2001.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The information is to be released in the *2000-2001 Financial Report For The State Of Victoria* which will be tabled in Parliament in accordance with Section 27D of the *Financial Management Act 1994*.

Treasurer: unfunded superannuation liability

2254. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What was Victoria's unfunded superannuation liability at the end of 2000-2001.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The information is to be released in the *2000-01 Financial Report for the State of Victoria*, which will be tabled in Parliament in accordance with Section 27D of the *Financial Management Act 1994*.

Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund

2255. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What were the total assets of the Growing Victoria Fund at the end of 2000-01.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Appendix G of the *2001-02 Budget Paper No. 2 Budget Statement* notes that the total Growing Victoria infrastructure reserve is \$1,175 million. A total of \$57 million was allocated for expenditure in 2000-01 on modernisation/upgrade of facilities in schools, of which \$54 million was expended. Therefore the balance of Growing Victoria infrastructure reserve as at 30 June 2001 was \$1,121 million.

Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund

2256. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What were the total liabilities of the Growing Victoria Fund at the end of 2000–01.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

100% of the Growing Victoria infrastructure reserve has been invested in liquid financial assets and there are no liabilities for the reserve as at the end of 2000–01.

Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund

2257. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What were the net assets of the Growing Victoria Fund at the end of 2000–01.

ANSWER:

I refer to the answer provided for Question No. 2255.

Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund

2258. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What percentage of the Growing Victoria Fund assets has been committed by actual contracts signed by the Victorian Government.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Appendix G of the *2001-02 Budget Paper No. 2 Budget Statement* identifies all asset investment projects approved for funding from the Growing Victoria infrastructure reserve.

Actual delivery of Growing Victoria projects is the responsibility of the relevant Portfolio Ministers. Any queries regarding contractual details of Growing Victoria projects should be more appropriately directed to the responsible Portfolio Minister.

Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund

2259. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What was the value of each contract signed by the Government during each of the financial years 1999–2000, 2000–01 and 2001–02 that required or will require a contribution from the Growing Victoria Fund and what is the size of that contribution to each of those contracts.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Appendix G of the *2001-02 Budget Paper No. 2 Budget Statement* identifies all asset investment projects approved for funding from the Growing Victoria infrastructure reserve.

Actual delivery of Growing Victoria projects is the responsibility of the relevant Portfolio Ministers. Any queries regarding contractual details of Growing Victoria projects should be more appropriately directed to the responsible Portfolio Minister.

Treasurer: Growing Victoria Fund

2260. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What is the value of liquid assets held by the Growing Victoria Fund at 30 June 2001 and in what form are those assets held.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Honourable the Treasurer: I refer to the answer provided for Question No. 2255 regarding the value of liquid assets of the Growing Victoria infrastructure reserve at 30 June 2001. The Budget Sector long-term investments (which include the Growing Victoria infrastructure reserve) are comprised of 100 per cent Australian Fixed Interest securities in government, semi-government and corporate securities, and cash deposits.

Health: registered nurses — salaries

2268. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What is the total number of registered nurses employed by public hospitals that are operated and/or funded by the Government at the end of 1996–97, 1997–98, 1998–99, 1999–2000 and 2000–01 respectively, and what is the total salary and benefits paid (excluding superannuation) by the Government to all the above registered nurses employed in each of those financial years.

ANSWER:

The Department of human Services collects payroll data on the number of equivalent full time (EFT) staff employed in public hospitals and aged care centres.

	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT	EFT
Total nurses	19,798	20,141	21,154	21,684	23,952

The total number of nurses includes those employed under various awards, mainly Registered Nurses, State Enrolled Nurses, and Psychiatric Services but also including Mothercraft Nurses, Nurse Bank and miscellaneous classifications.

Benefits paid to staff (excluding superannuation) are coordinated and implemented by individual agencies and include a range of options that are not limited only to salary. Data at this level is generally not provided in the Annual Reports of agencies and is not available to the Department.

Health: registered nurses — salaries

2270. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What salary and benefits (excluding superannuation) are estimated to be paid by the Government to registered nurses employed by public hospitals that are operated and/or funded by the Government in 2001–02.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services does not have information relating to all benefits paid by individual agencies to nursing staff. Benefits paid to staff are coordinated and implemented by individual agencies and include a range of options that are not limited only to salary. Data at industry grouping level is generally not provided in the Annual Reports of agencies and is not available to the Department.

Health: registered nurses — superannuation

2271. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What superannuation is estimated to be paid by the Government to registered nurses employed by public hospitals that are operated and/or funded by the Government in 2001–02.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services within its funding arrangements provides for payment of the employer's statutory superannuation contributions and additional payments in respect of defined benefit superannuation schemes. Data is not collected on payments by agencies for individual industry groupings.

However, on the basis that nurses are representative of the total hospital employee population the estimated employer superannuation contribution for 2001–02 is \$117 million.

Health: registered nurses — salaries

2272. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What is the total number of registered nurses employed by public institutions (excluding public hospitals), that are operated and/or funded by the Government at the end of 1996–97, 1997–98, 1998–99, 1999–2000 and 2000–01 respectively, and what is the total salary and benefits paid (excluding superannuation) by the Government to all the above registered nurses employed in each of those financial years.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services collects information regarding the equivalent full time nursing staff employed by public hospitals and aged care centres. Details of these staffing levels has been given in the response to Question No. 2268. Data on staffing levels of other public institutions is not consolidated centrally by the Department and is not readily available.

Health: registered nurses — superannuation

2273. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What is the total contribution made by the Government to the superannuation of registered nurses employed by public institutions (excluding public hospitals), that are operated and/or funded by the Government at the end of 1996–97, 1997–98, 1998–99, 1999–2000 and 2000–01 respectively, and what is the total number of registered nurses employed by public institutions (excluding public hospitals), that are operated and/or funded by the Government on whose behalf these contributions were made in each of those financial years.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services within its funding arrangements provides for payment of the employer's statutory superannuation contributions and additional payments in respect of defined benefit superannuation schemes. Data is not collected on payments by agencies for individual industry groupings.

Health: registered nurses — salaries

2274. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What salary and benefits (excluding superannuation) are estimated to be paid by the Government to registered nurses employed by public institutions (excluding public hospitals), that are operated and/or funded by the Government in 2001–02.

ANSWER:

The Department of Human Services does not have information relating to all benefits paid by individual agencies to nursing staff. Benefits paid to staff are coordinated and implemented by individual agencies and include a range of options that are not limited only to salary. Data at industry grouping level is generally not provided in the Annual Reports of agencies and is not available to the Department.

Health: registered nurses — superannuation

2275. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What superannuation is estimated to be paid by the Government to registered nurses employed by public institutions (excluding public hospitals), that are operated and/or funded by the Government in 2001–02.

ANSWER:

Whilst the Department of Human Services within its funding arrangements allows for the payment of superannuation contributions, it does not specify fund superannuation contributions and has no access to data that would provide details of what super contributions have been or are expected to be paid by the individual agencies that are funded.

Treasurer: country rail services — funding

2296. THE HON. R. M. HALLAM — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): Further to the answer to Question No. 1880, given in this House on 18 September 2001, what are the particular rail infrastructure works included in the funding allocation of \$32.7 million to enable the restoration of passenger rail services to the regional centres of Mildura, Bairnsdale, Ararat and South Gippsland.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The infrastructure works generally relate to rail track upgrading (including sleeper replacement), bridge and culvert renewal and/or upgrade, signalling works, rail level crossing improvements and station restoration works.

The proportionate allocation of the investment is as follows

– Mildura line	\$7.7m
– Bairnsdale line	\$14m
– Ararat line	\$5.4m
– South Gippsland	\$5.6m
	<hr/>
	\$32.7m

Treasurer: Transport Accident Commission — dividend

2297. THE HON. R. M. HALLAM — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): Further to the answer to Question No. 1903, given in this House on 18 September 2001, relating to anticipated dividend yields from the Transport Accident Commission that “In the framing of the 2001–02 budget, and out years, the forecast dividend payments are based upon the benchmark of 50 percent of her operating profit after tax”, what dollar value of (TAC) dividend was included in the 2001–02 budget and out years.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The dividend payments from the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) in the subject financial years include an interim dividend relating to that financial year, a final dividend relating to the previous financial year and an accident prevention black spot dividend (only payable in the 2001–02 and 2002–03 financial years).

The estimated payments from the TAC incorporated in the forward estimates for future years are \$135 million in 2001–02, \$244 million in 2002–03, \$119 million in 2003–04 and \$126 million in 2004–05.

As indicated in my previous response, these estimates are highly variable, dependent as they are on fluctuations in investment markets and domestic bond rates. Regular revisions of these figures are expected.

Local Government: debt

2298. THE HON. R. M. HALLAM — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Local Government): Further to the answer to question no. 2032, given in this House on 25 September 2001 and the term ‘level of borrowings’ do the figures provided in respect of the debt levels across local government, denote the level of debt outstanding at the closing date of each financial year as cited.

ANSWER:

The information on the aggregate level of borrowings of the local government sector provided previously refers to the total level of loan borrowings only outstanding at the closing date of each financial year.

Industrial Relations: unions — use of members’ funds

2300. THE HON. D. McL. DAVIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations: In relation to the Minister’s article that appeared in the Weekend Focus of the *Herald Sun* on Saturday, 28 May 2001 titled ‘Union torn from within’ in which it states ‘the Victorian faction has hired a spin doctor’, what protections are in place to prevent the inappropriate use of union members funds on public relations campaigns designed to assist internal factional battles and/or union elections.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

This question does not relate in any way to the administration of the state of Victoria and as such, no reply will be offered. If the honourable member is referring to an article in the *Herald Sun* on Saturday 26 May 2001, it was not written by me but by that paper’s industrial reporter, Mark Phillips.

Premier: Latrobe Valley projects

2325. THE HON. BILL FORWOOD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Premier): In relation to the announcement of a \$105.8 million plan for the Latrobe Valley on 22 June 2001:

- (a) Who are the members of the Investment Facilitation Committee.
- (b) When will the Regional Investment Tour of the Latrobe Valley take place.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (a) The following persons have accepted an invitation from the Hon John Brumby MP to be a member of the Investment Facilitation Committee:

Cr. Brendan Jenkins, Mayor, Latrobe City
 Mr Bill Barber, Senior Economic Development Officer, Latrobe City
 Mr Ian Kennedy, Director, Regional Industries, Department of State and Regional Development
 Mr Mike Churchin, Assistant Director, Industrial Supplies Office
 Ms Diane Carson, Regional Manager, Department of State and Regional Development
 Mr Graeme Middlemiss, Gippsland Trades and Labor Council
 Mr Graeme Pearce, Acting CEO, Gippsland Development Limited
 Mr Tom Inglesman, CEO, Australian Paper
 Mr John Mitchell, CEO, Gippsland Water
 Professor Barry Dunstan, Director, EEA Group
 Mr Alan Freitag, Regional Manager, Department of Infrastructure
 Mr Peter Wood, Managing Director, The Geo-Eng Group

- (b) The date for the Regional Investment Tour of the Latrobe Valley has not been finalised but will proceed as soon as practicable.

Workcover: Transport Accident Commission — chairman

2375. THE HON. BILL FORWOOD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Workcover): Further to the answer to question no. 1931, given in this House on 18 September 2001, within what band was the remuneration for Mr James McKenzie as Chair of the Victorian Workcover Authority to be paid as set by the instrument of appointment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

In accordance with the response previously provided to the Hon. P. A. Katsambanis (Question No. 1970), I restate the following:

Under section 26(3) of the *Accident Compensation Act 1985* a part-time Director is entitled to be paid:

- (a) such remuneration as is specified in the instrument of appointment or as may be fixed from time to time by the Governor in Council; and
 (b) such travelling and other allowances and expenses as may be fixed from time to time by the Governor in Council.

The annual remuneration package of the Chairperson of the Victorian Workcover Authority is within the band of \$70,000–\$79,999.

Workcover: Transport Accident Commission — chairman

2376. THE HON. BILL FORWOOD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Workcover): Further to the answer to question no. 1932, given in this House on 18 September 2001, within what band was the remuneration for Mr James McKenzie as Chair of the Transport Accident Commission to be paid as set by the instrument of appointment.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

In accordance with the response previously provided to the Hon. P. A. Katsambanis (Question No. 1969), I restate the following:

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Tuesday, 30 October 2001

COUNCIL

1075

Under section 16(6) of the *Transport Accident Act 1986* a Director is entitled to be paid such travelling and other allowances and expenses as may be fixed from time to time by the Governor in Council.

The annual remuneration package of the Chairperson of the Transport Accident Commission is within the band of \$70,000-\$79,999

