

**PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

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

**9 November 2004  
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**Tuesday, 9 November 2004**

**The PRESIDENT (Hon. M. M. Gould) took the chair at 2.03 p.m. and read the prayer.**

**CONDOLENCES**

**Hon. Marie Therese Tehan**

**Mr LENDERS** (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death, on 1 November 2004, of the Honourable Marie Therese Tehan and places on record its acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by her to the Parliament and to the people of Victoria as a member of the Legislative Council for the Central Highlands Province from 1987 to 1992, member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Seymour from 1992 to 1999, Minister for Health from 1992 to 1996 and Minister for Conservation and Land Management from 1996 to 1999.

Marie Tehan passed away at her home in Nagambie eight days ago. All of us have seen the community and media comment about her life — about a very special life — and in my comments I will touch on her contributions in the areas of health, the environment and asylum seekers. We have certainly all seen in the obituaries reference to her involvement in the refugee committee of the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre and the Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace. It is quite clear that Marie Tehan was a person who showed unflinching courage when confronted with a disease that had also taken the life of her sister.

As the Premier will be saying in the other house as we speak, Marie Tehan was an amazing person who juggled a whole range of areas and skills. She was a politician, a lawyer, a wife, a mother, a grandmother and also a humanitarian. She juggled all of those things in her life, and she achieved a lot.

Marie Tehan was born in Melbourne on 19 June 1940. She was educated at Sacre Coeur and also at the University of Melbourne, where she completed a law degree in 1961. Following that she was a tutor in law at Newman College at the University of Melbourne and went on to become an assistant examiner in the law faculty at that university. Following that she went on to become a secondary school teacher at Sacred Heart College in Mansfield.

In 1970 she opened a legal practice and while running that practice went on to become a senior member of the Veterans Review Board, a board member of the Foster Parents Plan of Australia, the secretary of the Foster Parents Plan International, and also a board member of

the Goulburn-North East Regional TAFE Board. Whilst doing all of this, she also raised six children.

In 1987 she became the first resident of the Mansfield shire — as that shire's newspaper so proudly boasted at the time — to be elected to state Parliament, becoming a member for Central Highlands in this house through a by-election. I was not a friend of Marie Tehan's but I certainly remember that by-election and the attention and publicity she attracted when she became a new member of Parliament for that electorate.

In this place she was shadow Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands, shadow Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, and shadow Minister on the status of women. Later she obviously became shadow Minister for Health.

In 1992 she was elected as the first member for the new electorate of Seymour, when she moved from the Council to the Assembly. Upon her election to Seymour not only was she a new member but in its first few months she became Minister for Health in the first Kennett government. She had additional portfolios until the ministerial arrangements were completed and had responsibility for housing, aboriginal affairs and community services.

In the second Kennett government she was made Minister for Conservation and Land Management, a portfolio she held until her retirement from the Parliament at the 1999 election. In the health portfolio she oversaw the introduction of casemix funding — a method of funding that is now used across Australia. In conservation and land management she played a leading role in saving 13 000 hectares of old growth forest near Mount Hotham.

The election of the Bracks government saw her leave Parliament in 1999 and, though she was a political opponent of the government, it recognised her contribution to Victoria by appointing her to the board of Goulburn-Murray Water. We saw water management as a key agenda item for our government, and we wanted the best available person to fill that role. We saw Marie Tehan as the person to fill that role.

Summing up a life of 64 years in such a short time is difficult to do, but Marie Tehan was a person who has left a mark on a lot of people. She will be sorely missed by her family — her husband, Jim; her children, Kathryn, James, Daniel, Rachael, David and Patrick, and her grandchildren, Tom, Sam, Lily, Isabelle, Alice, Oliver, Maya and Henry. She will be missed by her community, and on behalf of the government I express sincere condolences at her passing.

**Hon. PHILIP DAVIS** (Gippsland) — Marie Tehan — what a personality! Just the mere thought of all her activities both before she entered Parliament, as a parliamentarian and minister — and, I think, incredibly in the short time she had available after her retirement from Parliament in 1999 — when she demonstrated a frenetic energy which put many of us to shame. She juggled so well her professional endeavours and her very large commitment to the community combined with an absolute undoubted resolve to put her family ahead of everything.

Marie Tehan was born on 19 June 1940 and died on 1 November 2004. She was the daughter of Frank and Alice O'Brien, who were in small business. Frank was a publican. She moved with her family around Victoria to East Kew, Shepparton and Dandenong. Marie had two brothers, Paddy and Denis, and a deceased older sister, Helen.

Marie had a wonderful education, but at one stage, as reported by members of the family at her funeral, the nuns at Sacre Coeur convent school where she was doing her matriculation questioned her career choices as she was unlikely to pass her matriculation. Obviously that was a great motivator because she indeed passed her matriculation with honours and was awarded a scholarship to Melbourne University. She went on to take a bachelor of laws at Melbourne and to be a member of St Mary's College, of which she became president. She passed her law degree with the fourth-highest ranking in her year.

Marie Tehan was a tutor in law between 1962 and 1966 at Newman College, Melbourne University; she was assistant examiner for the Melbourne University's law faculty; and she was for a period a part-time secondary school teacher at Mansfield at the Sacred Heart College in 1969, following which she established a part-time legal practice in Mansfield in 1970, which went on to become very significant with two full-time solicitors.

Marie Tehan's community activities were significant. She was a member of the Veterans Review Board. She was a member of the Australian board and the international board of Foster Parents Plan from 1982. She was also a member of the executive committee of the TAFE regional board for north-eastern Victoria. Her husband, Jim Tehan, advises me that Marie's experience with the Foster Parents Plan in Australia and on the international board was the real opening of Marie's understanding of politics. She gained enormous experience in negotiating and dealing with complex policy agendas and people coming from a global position with different views on the same question. Jim

says that experience was very significant in forming her political skills.

Marie's involvement in Foster Parents Plan enabled her to have a clear look at the disadvantage in the Third World. From this base she developed a keen interest in refugees and a passion for investigating the world at large. She developed a passion for travel in which she tried to involve her family so that she could combine both her family commitments and family holidays with an education by seeing the world first hand.

When elected to Parliament at the 1987 by-election for Central Highlands, Marie Tehan entered a new phase of life. It was not a cakewalk by any means; it was a vigorously contested by-election. It would be fair to say it was contested equally vigorously by three parties represented in the Parliament, not just two. I recall some of the excitement from the fact there was a clear contest between the Liberal and National parties to see who would get a nose in front at that election. Marie Tehan came into the Parliament with an established reputation because of the focus that by-election created, and in her maiden speech she commented specifically on an emerging issue of significance, and that was the accumulated debt of the state of Victoria, then just short of \$20 billion, which she said was \$4000 for every Victorian.

Marie also made the observation that the regulatory burdens imposed by the government were a major problem, and said the following about the Victorian people:

They are telling us to stop and to let them do it their way for a while.

That was in reference to the increasing bureaucracy that she saw being imposed on the community. I make that point about her maiden speech, because of the burgeoning state debt that was evident largely in her first portfolio in government. Marie, as we know, held a number of shadow portfolios between 1987 and 1992. She was a shadow Minister for Conservation, Forests and Lands from 1987 to 1988; shadow Minister for Industry, Technology and Resources, and shadow Minister on the status of women from 1988 to 1989; and shadow Minister for Health from 1989 to 1992.

She was very well equipped, then, when the opportunity came to take up ministerial appointment with a change of government in 1992, and she took over the health portfolio. Before doing so she had to survive the next great political challenge in her career, which was to win a seat in the lower house because she had been encouraged by the then Leader of the Opposition to make that move. The new seat of

Seymour was being created, one which I well remember was vigorously contested by the three parties in the Parliament. Indeed, the National Party thought that it should lay claim to the seat of Seymour, but Marie Tehan thought differently, and she managed to win what was a difficult battle for that seat. I remind members that it is a difficult seat to hold because the Liberal Party lost it following Marie's retirement in 1999, and it is still held by the Labor Party.

Her appointment as Minister for Health was obviously a highlight in Marie's political career because it is the biggest spending portfolio in any state government, and at that time the pressures on government were significant. As I alluded to a moment ago, we had a circumstance where the incoming government made a policy decision that all departments would face a 10 per cent cut because it was the only way of restoring the budget position, and it was up to ministers to work out how to do that.

Marie within that context managed to achieve significant improvements in efficiencies of delivery of health care. In particular she mainstreamed psychiatric and mental health services so that it was possible to take a new approach to dealing with mental health as something that was a core business of medicine rather than something that was peripheral and not given the priority that other acute forms of health were given.

Particular tribute should be paid to her persistence and vision to introduce casemix funding, which, as the Leader of the Government has noted, is still the model which governments around Australia recognise to be the most effective form of delivering acute care in hospitals in Australia.

There is absolutely no question that Marie Tehan's record on this is significant. To put it in proper context, the *Age* editorial of 12 February 1994 states:

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

Further the editorial states:

This newspaper agrees with Dr Blewett's views on casemix funding.

Further, in conclusion it says:

... Mrs Tehan's changes were long overdue, especially because the system was swallowing so much money and often seemed to be run more for the convenience of unions than patients. Mrs Tehan, whatever her faults (her renowned

toughness and tenacity are, in this case, assets more than liabilities) must be given credit for producing greater efficiency and cutting waiting lists. In calling her changes 'the most imaginative set of reforms to deal with the hospital system in this country in the last half dozen years',

Dr Blewett not only speaks the truth, but gives a generous and genuine endorsement his former colleagues could do well to acknowledge.

That is a fine tribute by a Labor member of Parliament and by the *Age* to Marie Tehan's stewardship of health. Within a short time of introducing casemix funding, hospital waiting lists fell by 10 per cent. Indeed, in November 1994, the then shadow Minister for Health, the member for Albert Park in another place, announced that a state Labor government would retain casemix funding.

Between 1996 and 1999 Marie Tehan was the Minister for Conservation and Land Management. Her achievements in the portfolio were many, but I know that she would claim that the establishment of Parks Victoria in 1998 was a significant moment in the management of our national parks and reserves systems in Victoria, and she was enormously proud of that. She was also very committed to forestry management. She was proud of the additions to national parks and reserves during her time and of the implementation of regional forest agreements, the commonwealth-state agreements, which came as a result of a long period of negotiations through the 1990s. The establishment of catchment management, very much in its present form, was also a great achievement of Marie Tehan.

In 1997 the catchment land protection boards were merged with the river management authorities, and that merger was enabled by what was then existing legislation which was then consolidated in 1998 with a comprehensive legislative framework that established the Victorian Catchment Management Council.

Marie would probably not talk about it, but one of her greatest achievements was the rabbit busters program. Some members might not understand how significant this is, so I will put it in context. Rabbit busters was an initiative that came coincidental to the introduction and release of rabbit calicivirus in Victoria in 1996. Bearing in mind rabbits are probably the most significant terrestrial pest and do the greatest damage to our environment and cause millions of acres of erosion, to deal with rabbits comprehensively was certainly a major achievement.

Members representing urban electorates may not understand this well, but recent research undertaken by the Department of Primary Industries found that a decline in rabbit numbers between 1996 and 2002 in 18 monitoring sites around the state ranged from

74.9 per cent to 99.8 per cent. I repeat that the reduction was as much as 99.8 per cent at a place called Piambie in north-west Victoria. It appears that while it was an unsung achievement as a policy initiative to develop the rabbit busters program and introduce rabbit calicivirus, the legacy of that initiative by Marie Tehan will be well remembered long after this day and should be noted for the record as a significant achievement.

Marie herself would indicate that she was very proud of her commitment to attacking the weed problem in Victoria. Like all ministers responsible for that portfolio she was frustrated by the entire result, but she was committed to battling weeds. Her campaign, the War on Weeds, where she committed \$12 million over three years in additional weed funding, was very significant.

As I said earlier, Marie's career not just as a parliamentarian but post Parliament is impressive and just following her career is a career in itself. After Parliament she gave a further commitment to the Foster Parents Plan. She was very involved in refugee welfare, which remained a significant and continuing interest, and she recently had been championing the rights for asylum seekers and was a critic of mandatory detention policies. She was a board member of the refugee committee of the St Vincent de Paul Society, a board member of the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre, a board member of the Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace and she was recently appointed chairperson of Jesuit Publications. She was active in the Melbourne Cancerians, and in June she was appointed to the board of Goulburn-Murray Water.

It is fair to say that I have known Marie well for a long period of time. I had the privilege to know her by an association with her late father-in-law, Jim Tehan, who was president of the Victorian Farmers Federation Industrial Association, and I knew her through her husband, Jim Tehan, whom I regard as a friend. He was my deputy and successor as president of the Victorian Farmers Federation Industrial Association. I also knew her as a parliamentary colleague. I was perhaps initially a little overawed by her when she was Minister for Health, but I became much more familiar with her when I became the Parliamentary Secretary for Natural Resources when she was Minister for Conservation and Land Management.

I have to say that I found Marie an enigma. She was able to deal with the most complex and detailed policy discussions at one time, and then if the phone rang and it was one of the children, immediately change gears and focus from the inevitably significant policy debate that was going on at her desk or conference table into a different mode — of being a mother. You would hear,

'Hello, darling', and automatically you knew that it was time to give up the argument about the policy issue and just give over to the more important issue of the moment which was — —

**Hon. E. G. Stoney** interjected.

**Hon. PHILIP DAVIS** — It was Marie talking to her children — whichever one of the six it was. As my colleague the Honourable Graeme Stoney interjected, she probably arranged for the kids to ring at those particular moments so she could press on with her agenda rather than be distracted by all the advisers and others who were wishing her to do something else, because Marie was absolutely focused.

One of the better examples I have of that was from a time early in her role as health minister. She was doing what she did very well — she was at a function supporting her husband, Jim, who had succeeded me as president of the Victorian Farmers Federation Industrial Association when I came to Parliament. It was a traditional function where the incoming president hosted a function for the outgoing president, and of course I retired when I came to Parliament. So Marie was there as wife of the host.

In the middle of the dinner in a boardroom or meeting room at the RACV Club, somebody — a guest, whom I will not name today — had a very challenging event. The guest had a fit and was choking on some food and was in a lot of trouble. Marie made some suggestions about some action to be taken and issued some directions, which were immediately responded to. This particular guest was just taken out of the function room and laid out on a couch, and the ambulance was called.

At that time Marie had been introducing new benchmarks for ambulance response times. As I was sitting next to her I could see that from the moment she gave the instruction that an ambulance was to be called immediately she was watching the clock. Fortunately the ambulance arrived 2 minutes short of the benchmark, which meant that the Minister for Health was very pleased with the performance, but more importantly, that the guest at the function was well cared for.

That is just an example of what I saw in Marie all the time — irrespective of the occasion, irrespective of the moment and irrespective of the multiple distractions that a Minister for Health is faced with, she was able to balance it all. She was able to balance her commitment to her family and continued support of her children, her husband, and in later years her grandchildren, with

being professionally engaged in everything she was doing.

In fact Marie had an opportunity to do many things which many people would envy, but she did them because she had an enormous capacity in terms of energy. She was committed to her family, she had an extraordinary faith, she was committed to everything she did, she was articulate, she was compassionate, she was resolute and she was loving — she was loving of her husband, her children and her grandchildren.

To Jim Tehan, her husband; to her six children, Kathryn, James, Daniel, Rachael, David and Patrick; and to her eight grandchildren I extend my deepest sympathy and highest regard, because Marie Tehan was an icon who represented all Victorians in a prodigious way, which we should all hold out as an example.

**Hon. P. R. HALL** (Gippsland) — Today I join with the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition in expressing the sincere condolences of The Nationals at the sad passing of Marie Therese Tehan.

Marie Tehan was a member of the Legislative Council when I arrived here in 1988. When you present yourself in a new and very unfamiliar environment you look for guidance from others; you look for role models. Despite Marie being in a different party to me, I soon adopted her as one of my role models. I did that because it did not take me long to assess that she was a person who had characteristics which I admired greatly. Her presentations in this house were articulate and confident without any signs at all of arrogance. The constructions of her arguments and speeches were delivered with a degree of logic rarely seen in this house then or in fact today.

She always spoke with a great deal of passion about the particular topic of conversation at any point in time. Marie Tehan was a person well worth listening to. Even if you did not always agree with her views, you always learnt a great deal by listening to the content of her speeches and the passion with which she delivered them. I feel extremely privileged to have spent the best part of four years serving as a colleague of Marie Tehan in this house.

I once told her that she was one of my role models and that I enjoyed her speeches in this Parliament. But her being a role model and there being two separate parties — there was no coalition in those days — meant that I often had to stand up in this house after Marie Tehan and speak from a contrary position to the one she had just espoused in the house. As I said, the way Marie

Tehan constructed and delivered her speeches meant it was often a very formidable task to speak against her.

In those times Marie was in opposition, and her real test came when she became part of government, and, as has been said, she did not let anybody down in her roles as part of government. She was the Minister for Health between 1992 and 1996 and the Minister for Conservation and Land Management between 1996 and 1999. The challenges she had in both those portfolios were enormous. I thought in those times she showed real strength of character and great resolve, but she never abandoned the compassionate side of her personality, which has been amplified in some of the contributions today.

I acknowledge that the issues she grappled with as minister were difficult, and I have to say that I did not always share her judgments on many of the issues she had to deal with, particularly in the area of conservation and land management. But I will say unequivocally that that did not diminish in any way my admiration for the professional manner with which she conducted herself and carried out the various tasks that were assigned to her.

Marie also made an outstanding contribution in other aspects of her life. They have been well documented today by the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition, by the people who spoke at her funeral, by the many people who wrote obituaries for her in the newspapers and by the wealth of death notices that individuals published in the papers. I do not wish to repeat them, except I think it is extremely important to acknowledge her commitment to her family: her husband, Jim, her six children, her grandchildren and her extended family. The greatest commitment any of us can give is to our families. Sadly that is something we sometimes forget. I can honestly say that Marie Tehan never forgot the responsibility involved in being a mother.

Marie's life was sadly terminated prematurely, but in my eyes and those of my colleagues in The Nationals she will be remembered as a gracious, dignified, compassionate and courageous person. Those memories will live long in the minds of all of us who knew Marie Tehan.

To her husband, Jim; her children, Kathryn, James, Daniel, Rachael, David and Patrick; her eight grandchildren and her extended family, we in The Nationals express our sincere condolences.

**Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS** (Minister for Energy Industries) — I want to associate myself with this

condolence motion. Like the Honourable Peter Hall, I came into this place in 1988 and of course Marie Tehan had already been elected in a by-election as a member for Central Highlands Province. She was, if you like, an old hand, having been here for a year or so before I and others who were elected in 1988 came to this place.

During that time she was opposition spokesperson for conservation, and I have to say that she was a formidable debater in this house. In fact from 1988 to 1992 I was a humble backbencher at the beginning, but in that last year I was a minister and sat in exactly the same place as I currently sit. I have to say, President, that when I looked across at the opposition at that time I saw a pretty formidable team, which included the honourables Mark Birrell, Rob Knowles, Roger Hallam and Marie Tehan. I can tell the house that as a minister in that government it was sometimes a fairly terrifying thing for me to come into Parliament during question time and face people of that competence and ability.

Marie was articulate. She was a good debater. She was politically astute and could differentiate issues — fine-line issues, sometimes — that needed to be differentiated. I had a look at some of the exchanges that she and I had at that time, and I found one in particular during debate on a bill which was essentially to privatise the State Insurance Office; it was opposed by the then opposition despite the fact that it had a policy of privatisation. When speaking in debate in the house, pulling out the differences as to why you would oppose a bill when you had your own policy of privatisation, is the time for good members to be able to make that distinction.

I remember Marie saying that the opposition opposed the bill because the people did not want this government — referring to the then Labor government — selling off the people's assets for some unknown purpose. She was then able to highlight how her government would sell them for a purpose whereas my government was doing it for an unknown purpose. A good debater — a person who is able to differentiate between those fine points — is someone who becomes formidable in this place. Marie Tehan certainly was that.

The other thing I want to say is that in this place you come to understand something about the fact that you have opponents. The people on the other side of the chamber are your opponents, but that does not mean that you do not develop respect for each other. It may not be for everyone, but you do gain respect for people, sometimes for the people with whom you engage the most, and it is for the people who are the most challenging that you gain the most respect.

Marie was certainly in that kind of category for me. I got to respect her ability; I respected that she was able to juggle so many things. I have four children, and I find it extremely difficult to juggle the demands of family life — and she had six. I think mothers have it harder than fathers anyway in this kind of job. I do not know what further can be said about her competence and ability.

I also gained respect for Marie when she left the Parliament because, as the Leader of the Opposition has already indicated, she went and joined boards. Among others she joined the board of the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre, the Catholic Mission for Justice, Development and Peace, and the refugee committee of the St Vincent de Paul Society — and that is because she had a concern for human rights which went beyond her role as a politician. We could all probably learn from that.

Later on, when the Minister for Water in the other place, the Honourable John Thwaites, appointed her to the board of Goulburn-Murray Water, I supported that appointment, and I have to say that those people in the Labor Party who criticised her appointment were in my opinion way off the mark. That criticism was totally misplaced, because if there is not a role for governments to use the talents of people from the opposition in those kinds of situations, then we will become a very divided society.

I gained respect for Marie over a long period of time. After four years in this place she was elected to the other place. But she had the toughest portfolio once she became minister and, as has already been said, she nevertheless managed to introduce, within the context of what we considered on our side of the house to be over-severe cuts in those important areas, some important reforms in all her portfolios as a minister.

It is very sad to see her early death. From my own point of view, and on behalf of many people in the Labor Party who had dealings with Marie, I pass on my condolences to her family, her husband and her six children. She was somebody we respected and continue to respect.

**Hon. E. G. STONEY** (Central Highlands) — Marie Tehan was a strong and articulate woman. She commenced her political career as a member for Central Highlands Province between 1987 and 1992. I was privileged to be elected as a member for Central Highlands in 1992 when Marie stepped down from the Central Highlands seat and ran for the seat of Seymour in the other place — which of course she won. As we have heard, she carved her political career as the

member for Seymour, but before that she really became known around the electorate for strongly representing Central Highlands. She had her first office at Kilsyth, and as the member for Seymour she went on to be a well-known and respected Minister for Health and later Minister for Conservation and Land Management. She left politics at a time of her own choosing, which is sometimes rare for politicians, and she really made a difference to the lives of Victorians. The tributes both in the editorial and letters columns of the papers over the last week indicate that she made a lot of difference to a lot of people, and for the better. I think people recognise that.

When Marie married Jim in Mansfield I got to know her very well. Our families both had young children, and we saw them a lot socially. She founded, as we heard, her law firm in 1971. I have to tell the house that this was no mean feat. There was a traditional firm of solicitors in the town. It had been there for a long time and had all the business, and this slip of a girl — as I think one of the principals referred to Marie — dared to come along and open up an opposition law practice! So it was tough, but she stuck it out and the business flourished, and the law firm is now known as Williams Hunt. It was only in recent times that Marie relinquished the title of consultant for the firm, as from time to time she did work for them.

This little move by Marie did cause some discussion around the town at the time. She was involved in many other community activities and was starting to make her mark. It was a bit like Parliament — when you referred here to ‘Marie’, people had no doubt about to whom you were referring, and around the town of Mansfield whenever you spoke about ‘Marie’, it was exactly the same! Marie ruffled a few feathers and shook a few cages. She became well known around the town, and she jerked the community into action on a few occasions. At that time Mansfield was a bit sleepy, but it is certainly no longer sleepy, and in some ways Marie changed an attitude there, because she brought a fresh approach to many of the issues then running.

At that time hospitals had a big say as to who was to be on their boards. Marie decided that when a vacancy occurred, she would apply. She was knocked back, and this absolutely stirred Marie up, so she applied again and was knocked back again. Eventually she became Minister for Health, and of course there was some consternation then around the hospital circles in Mansfield about what Marie might do to the Mansfield hospital — and it served them right, quite frankly.

But to Marie’s credit, and I understand after some private high-level and very intense discussions — I will

not go any further than that — Marie became a big supporter of the hospital. It was at the time when smaller hospitals had to create a critical economic mass, and Marie assisted the hospital in enlarging the nursing home to get this critical mass, and Mansfield District Hospital has gone on to be a very successful regional hospital in quite a remote area. A lot of that is no doubt due to Marie’s support as minister — not in any way related to the fact that she was not appointed to the hospital board.

When Marie ran for the seat of Central Highlands Province, it was due to the ill health of the now late Fred Grimwade. Marie used to tell a little story on herself: that when she was campaigning in that very high-profile by-election she used to go around with the then opposition leader, Jeff Kennett, and on this particular day she knew they would be coming up through Maingable and she thought, ‘I’ll set this up’. She arranged the itinerary so that they would be coming through Maingable — and hence the turnoff to her property, Wappan — at just about lunchtime. Just as they drove up through Bonnie Doon, Marie said, ‘Jeff, would you like some lunch? We could drop in at Wappan’. ‘Lunch? Lunch?’, he cried, ‘It’s votes we want, not lunch!’.

Another story is one she would tell on her son: that when she was Minister for Conservation and Land Management her son James, who was by that stage running Wappan, said to her, ‘Mum, what are you going to do about weeds?’ And she said, ‘James, I am actually doing quite a lot about weeds; but what are you doing about weeds?’. That example shows how she used to challenge her children and turn things around. As Mr Theophanous said, she was a really good debater, even with her children. She made them sit up and think, and that is a very good example.

Some years before she was elected, Marie was always at me to take her to the high plains. She wanted to go up and have a look at the cattle. She had heard all about it and had been to a lot of other places with some of her friends, but not to the Bluff. So one day I said, ‘I’m going up to have a look at the cattle. You had better come along’. On that occasion Marie was late — actually she was often late, but we will not go into that — and after a while she turned up, a bit flustered, and said, ‘I got halfway up the Wappan road’ — which was notoriously bad — ‘and had a flat tyre’. I said, ‘What did you do?’, and she said, ‘I just turned around, drove back down, and Jim changed it’. That is another example of how she cut through problems. She drove back down, wrote the tyre off, had the tyre changed and ended up being not that late. We went to the high plains for the day, and it was a good day.

On the way home I said, ‘Would you like to go fishing? We have half an hour to spare. Do you want to drop in at the Howqua, and we’ll catch a fish for tea?’. In those days you were always guaranteed of catching a couple of trout in no time at all, but not any more. That day I came down the Sixteen Mile Creek with Marie. We stopped by the river and to get to my favourite pool, we had to jump onto a rock in the middle of the Howqua, which runs quite swiftly, and then jump across to the other side, walk through a bit of scrub to a favourite pool of mine and catch a couple of fish. I said to Marie, ‘This is what you have to do’. There was a bit of a squawk and she was not very happy with that. I said, ‘I’ll show you’. So I jumped across onto the middle and then jumped across again. She gave a bit of a giggle and she did the same. She was a bit trembly and she said, ‘I don’t know how I managed that’. We went up and caught a couple of fish, but when we got to the spot to come back, she said, ‘I’m going to do this’, so she pushed me aside and jumped herself, led the way, jumped again. I went across and said to her, ‘Marie, we’re going to call that Marie’s Rock’. That rock is still there today.

It was obvious that she loved that alpine area. She made many trips into the alpine area with many of her friends, including David and Jenny Yencken. They used to go camping with their families to Pineapple Flat and up to the Wonnangatta and the Howitt Hut, and her contributions to Parliament are littered with reminiscences of the time that she spent learning about the high plains and about the area which became the Alpine National Park. For example, when she spoke on the Alpine National Parks Bill in 1989 she spoke passionately about the high country. She mentioned its conservation and environmental values.

Marie talked about hiking, she talked about cross-country skiing; she talked about the deer hunters and the necessity to hunt deer because they were becoming an increasing pest even then. She talked at length about the traditions and the culture of the mountain cattlemen, and said:

Each and every one of those traditional users and each and every one of those representative people must have full access to the park.

People must understand the value of this park. People must be educated about the right and proper use of it. This park should not be, and I pray it will not be, a park that is regulated for people. It must be a park that is available for educated people, for people who understand and love its values.

Then she went on to talk about fishing, and in this little extract she almost mentioned her rock — but not quite:

People always immensely enjoy fishing in the streams. There are spectacular streams of the Howqua and Delatite rivers in the remote parts of that park where people can fly-fish. It is possible to stand on one bank and watch a professional fly-fisherman hopping from boulder to boulder, stopping in the middle to throw in the line, knowing where the fish are and being able to see that they are under a rock. An amateur cannot see them, but professional fishermen know exactly where to find them.

A bit later she said:

The fishermen may throw back the trout or take them home and eat them, but the joy and thrill are being in the stream, up to the knees in water, and being able to tell one’s companion to jump. One is likely to get wet, but one knows the fish are in the stream.

She said that years later — it was probably 10 years before when she had jumped across on Marie’s Rock; that was shaping how she felt about the high country. It gave her, after all that time in the high country with her family and her various friends, a basic understanding that the high country had to be managed practically and it had to be done with knowledge and balance. Marie’s stance on the East Gippsland forest, where she actually went against her own constituency and promoted it, even when she was in opposition, was that there should be an extra section locked up, and that showed she was her own woman and she used her own judgment to judge what she felt was right on conservation issues.

Marie’s funeral last week was a most moving day. Her family rallied around here throughout her very short illness of only three months. They were all there on Friday — the children, the grandchildren, the babes in arms, and of course it makes it even more poignant that there is another grandchild arriving very soon. I think the closeness of the family at the service and the tributes explained a lot about how Marie operated, and I know Mr Davis touched on that. She was a tough, uncompromising minister one minute and a loving wife and mother the next.

Marie showed enormous courage before politics, during politics and after politics with the Intergraph royal commission, where she was exonerated, and especially — I say especially — during her final illness. To Jim and the family, I offer my condolences on the passing of Marie Tehan — a very special person.

**Hon. R. G. MITCHELL** (Central Highlands) — I wish to contribute to the condolence debate on the passing of Marie Tehan, who was a former member for Central Highlands Province and also a former member for Seymour in the other place. I did not really know Marie all that well, but in the times I had met and spoken with her I always found her to be both friendly and very courteous. Most of the people that I speak to



across the electorate and who I have bumped into who knew Marie well have always spoken highly of her genuineness and her commitment to issues, and whatever she was up to at that particular time.

She was particularly passionate about the refugees and social justice issues, and she acted on a non-partisan basis. That was evident by her request for donations to refugee causes in lieu of flowers at her funeral last Friday, which I attended and found to be a very sad occasion, to see so many family and friends there to farewell someone whose life had been so unexpectedly cut short. It is a sad occasion to rise and speak on a condolence motion, particularly if it is someone you have met, someone you knew and someone who was very close to members still in this chamber today.

I offer my sincere, heartfelt condolences to her family, to her many friends and to colleagues on the other side of the house who have lost a friend as well as a colleague.

**Hon. ANDREA COOTE** (Monash) — The last speech I heard Marie Tehan make was at the jazz event held by Melbourne Cancerians at Parliament House on 18 July this year. Marie was the inaugural chairman of the Melbourne Cancerians, which was established in memory of her friend and colleague, Ann Henderson. Ann had asked Marie and I to assist in raising funds for cancer research. In her indomitable way, Marie not only established the Melbourne Cancerians, but she formulated a hardworking and successful fundraising team around her. She set standards, and we worked really hard to achieve a very high benchmark. That event was to acknowledge Marg Stribling, a friend of Marie's who had attended the same event the year before but had in the interim died of cancer.

Marie had just returned from a wonderful tour of Canada and the United States. She had been there with several of her very best friends. She was full of stories about her visit, and especially how impressed she was with the J. F. Kennedy Centre in America. She returned from that visit to her loving husband of 41 years, Jim, and to her large, talented, adoring and close-knit family of James, David, Rachael, Kathryn, Patrick and Daniel and to her eight lively and happy grandchildren.

At that jazz day in this very building three months ago Marie Tehan spoke of celebrating life. In essence, in her speech she said to the assembled audience to go out and make the very most of every moment. She spoke about the contribution to life that her friend Marg had made and said that she had lived life to the very fullest right until the very end of her life.

None of us who were there and who saw Marie toe-tapping to that jazz — she knew every word, she loved the jazz — or dancing around with her baby grandson Henry, mixing with all the guests and giving a lively, funny and timely speech, would have ever imagined that she would have died within three months.

It was a privilege to be at Marie's funeral last Friday in Nagambie. Her family managed to combine the formality of a state funeral with the intimacy of a family funeral. It was a fitting tribute to a wonderful Australian who gave so much to her community through the entirety of her life.

Those of us in this chamber who knew Marie via her parliamentary career knew her to be a professional, determined, courageous politician who was not afraid to make hard decisions, who had strong convictions and whose hallmark was the highest of standards, actions and results — but at her funeral we were all privileged to see the other side of Marie's life.

Together with her husband, Jim, Marie raised six children and had eight grandchildren, and in a very poignant eulogy Jim paid tribute to his life's partner. He showed what a wonderful, united team they were. He told of the fun they had had, the love of holidays, her involvement with her community. He explained how she had set up a successful legal practice, which the Honourable Graeme Stoney has given us great insight into, in Mansfield, how she had been passionate about the refugees and how more recently she had been involved with the Hotham Mission and the asylum seeker project.

As has been said before, she entered politics in the upper house as a member for Central Highlands in a by-election in 1987, and she went on to become the lower house member for Seymour in 1992.

Jim said something at the funeral that all of us in this chamber can relate to. It was somehow quite comforting to think that it related to Marie Tehan, who had such composure, talent and professionalism, and it was interesting to note that she felt this way. He said:

Politics was a steep learning curve for her, and she always said that there was no-one there to help, and not many rules and guidelines to follow.

He went on to say:

She survived, and she went on to one of the most difficult cabinet positions, health, and later the environment.

Marie's six children and her brother Paddy O'Brien gave some insightful, poignant, sad and amusing

glimpses of Marie's very full and encompassing family life outside of the political life in which we knew her.

My own personal involvement was something quite different. Through the Liberal Party I had known Marie for a considerable time, and both she and Jim were at all the Liberal Party functions. I had many occasions to speak to Jim. It was enlightening to see the supportive, humorous, warm and total commitment they had towards each other: he was beside her all the time.

Marie was a great supporter and mentor to so many people, and she encouraged me at a time in my own life when I was feeling particularly fragile. She took me into her orbit, and she was a very supportive mentor.

When she was the Minister for Health, Marie asked me to chair the health services review committee. The health services commissioner scrutinises the government and all health services, reporting ultimately to the health minister. Marie was not concerned about scrutiny of the health department — in fact she encouraged it. She wanted this position to be sharper, to have better scrutiny and better reporting, and she wanted all Victorians to feel there was transparency in the health services within this state. Under her guidance we transformed the position. We reformed the committee and appointed the health services commissioner, Beth Wilson. The success of the health services commissioner is a legacy to Marie Tehan, and Victoria is a better place because of that.

Marie was especially supportive of women, and she held regular lunches for women in positions of responsibility at her ministerial office. These were no normal ladies lunches. In fact the discussions were very lively, challenging and in many respects, visionary. Everyone who attended those lunches left with the feeling that they had made a contribution and that they had been listened to. Marie paid me the highest compliment by believing sufficiently in my abilities to appoint me to the board of Melbourne Parks and Waterways, which as we know went on to become Parks Victoria. The Honourable Graeme Stoney gave a very good insight into the depth of feeling Marie Tehan had for parks. I would like to read what she said about parks in her second-reading speech for the Parks Victoria Bill, which would:

... establish ... a public authority. In doing so it will create a world-class organisation able to deliver park management services for the states parks, reserves, open space and other related management functions.

She said:

In conclusion the establishment of Parks Victoria heralds a new era in the management of the state's magnificent system

of parks and reserves. It is fitting that this new integrated organisation is formally established during the centenary year of Victoria's two oldest existing national parks, Wilsons Promontory and Mount Buffalo.

I remember her at Mount Buffalo at the centenary celebrations. Not only did she know all the areas of Mount Buffalo and some of the challenging walks and areas of the park but she knew the local identities and had a very deep love for the terrain. She said in the debate on the National Parks Bill, which was also amended because of the Parks Victoria Bill, that she would bring in a number of parks. It is interesting to know that she had a very deep feeling for the variety of parks that we needed in the state. She made it very clear to us on the board that it was important that we did not look only into traditional national parks but that we made certain we had a park system that showed diversity. For example she mentioned the Terrick Terrick National Park, which had grassland, grassy woodland reserves, granite outcrops and high native grassland values.

At the time this was quite controversial, but it is a very good legacy so that we can see what the grasslands were like. Thanks to Marie Tehan that park was established. In East Gippsland she preserved damp and wet old-growth forests and enhanced the protection of the rainforests and box-ironbark forests. A further example of the variety of national parks she was keen to see established was the Basalt Hill Quarry located in the Alpine National Park adjacent to the Bogong High Plains Road. She was very aware that we needed diversity, and the legacy of Parks Victoria will always be synonymous with Marie Tehan.

Today we have heard many members describe what Marie went on to do after she left politics. One of those was to confront the Intergraph inquiry. Marie Tehan was totally exonerated by the royal commission, and it is really important to note that the commissioner himself paid her the highest of compliments when he said:

Marie Tehan was a woman of integrity, a most unusual thing for a politician. She was a politician who told the truth.

What a wonderful epitaph. On Friday her son David gave a reading from chapter 7, verses 7 to 11, of the Book of Wisdom, which describes the attributes of wisdom. It is very pertinent to the Marie Tehan that so many of us knew, and I would like to read what he said:

What I have learnt without self-interest I pass on without reserve. I do not intend to hide her riches for she is an inexhaustible treasure to all people, and those who acquire it win God's friendship, commended as they are to Him by the benefits of her teaching.

Marie Tehan lived a life of integrity, love and community spirit. In her own words, she truly did celebrate life.

My condolences go to Jim, James, Daniel, Rachael, Kathryn, David and Patrick, and to her eight little grandchildren, Tom, Sam, Lily, Isabelle, Alice, Oliver, Maya and Henry. It was a privilege to have known Marie Tehan.

**Hon. D. McL. DAVIS** (East Yarra) — I wish to join this condolence motion and in doing so I pass on my condolences to Jim Tehan and the family — to both the children and the grandchildren. Marie Tehan was a remarkable woman who committed her life to community service. I note that that commitment flowed through the period before her election to Parliament, and during and after her parliamentary service. She was committed to reform and to improving the life of the community through the processes of this place and more broadly.

It is important to place on the record her remarkable intellectual capacity and ability to see clearly what was important. I note the reflections of a number of members who have contributed to this very important motion, such as the comments by Mr Hall about the welcome she extended to new members in this place. Whilst she was obviously not a member of this place when I was here, I certainly found that when I was elected to the Parliament in 1996 she was someone you could talk to and someone who was able to make a remarkable contribution to your processes in your understanding of this place and the community.

There are a number of areas where she made a remarkable contribution, and I do not propose to cover ground that has already been covered. Her time as conservation and environment minister has been very well covered by the Honourable Philip Davis, the Honourable Andrea Coote and others. The Honourable Graeme Stoney has given a very good description of the local manifestation of her commitment to the environment and conservation.

But it is important to put on record something of the commitment she brought to the reform of our health system. It has been an opportunity to go back and reread things that people saw, heard and understood through the period in which she made her great contribution to the Victorian health system. There are a few points that should be on the public record. Her *New Directions for Victorian Health, Welfare and Aged Care Services* from 1993 led with four key principles. It is worthwhile for us to reflect on this contribution and what we can learn from a contributor like Marie Tehan.

The four principles that she laid out in the document were:

First: to focus on people — not institutions or systems.

Second: to ensure value for taxpayers' money.

Third: to ensure a fairer sharing of the limited health and welfare dollar through more equitable distribution.

Fourth: to improve the health and wellbeing, through better outcomes, of all Victorians, noting that women are the main recipients of many of the health and welfare programs.

You do not have to agree with every step that Marie Tehan took in either of her ministries to appreciate the strength of the contribution overall. It is worth putting on record her commitment to a balanced system in Victoria and generally. She had a strong commitment to seeing the private sector involved in health care in Australia. She said, and I am quoting here in a neat encapsulation of her views in the *Bulletin* of 23 November 1993:

The strength of this country's health facility is a balanced public/private health system. If we go total public, we get the UK's system; if we go total private, we get the US's problems.

I think she saw at that period the need to commit our state and the country generally. She was prepared to advocate strongly nationally for involvement of the private sector through private health insurance in particular in our system. That commitment to a balanced system stands us in a good situation now and into the future.

In conclusion, I want to put on the record my condolences to Jim and the family and to mark the passing of someone who I think was a great Victorian.

**Hon. R. H. BOWDEN** (South Eastern) — I rise to associate myself with this motion of condolence on the passing of Marie Tehan. When I arrived in this chamber in 1992 Marie Tehan had moved at that election to the Legislative Assembly as member for Seymour. I recall with gratitude the access and the hearings that Marie Tehan gave me and my colleagues on several occasions when she was Minister for Health.

I am grateful because at times we had difficult issues facing the electorate that I represent. On one memorable occasion Marie Tehan as minister received a deputation by several members of Parliament including me. We were expressly concerned about the emergency resources at Frankston Hospital. As minister, Marie listened patiently and carefully and accepted the thrust of what we were saying. Without any further argument she initiated moves that resulted in a substantial upgrading of the capability and

resources of the emergency department of Frankston Hospital. I give that as example of the willingness of Marie Tehan to be open minded and receptive and when action was needed, to understand that it had to be done and to do it. We are all very much the better for the decision she made in that one example.

During the time Marie was Minister for Conservation and Land Management she faced several difficult situations in South Eastern Province, particularly on the Mornington Peninsula. One involved a substantial amount of government funds as part of funding for a retaining wall at the Somers Yacht Club. This yacht club was facing enormous problems. If the wall were not provided, the club would definitely be lost to ocean attack and erosion. She saw the need; she provided the funds in association with other financial sources that were part of the proposal, and were it not for her very constructive and positive approach to this problem the Somers Yacht Club would today not exist. But today it is a thriving club and part of the very strong Western Port sailing community. The name Marie Tehan is well known and respected.

Her interest in the Mornington Peninsula and elsewhere is well known in the national parks area. Marie Tehan was generous with her time and generous with her consideration of the substantial number of issues facing the establishment and management of Crown lands such as access and facilities for Point Nepean National Park. That is a testament to her strength, leadership and ability to understand what was truly needed for the community in this and many other electorates.

One of the things that moved me to rise today was to record an important contribution that Marie Tehan made to the health and welfare of Victorians. What is not generally known is that it was Marie Tehan as Minister for Health who accepted the need to look at and was willing to fully explore the registration and recognition of traditional Chinese medicine in the state. I know that is a fact, because she agreed to move forward and explore that as minister after a conversation with me. She did not think long, and in a matter of a minute or two she said, 'You're right', and she went ahead and initiated those discussions. It took some time, but it was Marie Tehan who did that. It will be her lasting legacy that tens of thousands of Victorians now and in the future will have the benefit of the complementary aspect that traditional Chinese medicine brings to our medical services.

That was among the many other good things Marie Tehan achieved during her service to the people of Victoria. That move to initiate a recognition of traditional Chinese medicine is one of the stars in the

many star items that lady achieved. As time goes by the health services in the Frankston area, the national parks program, the Mornington Peninsula national parks, the sailing fraternity I have mentioned, and the users of traditional Chinese medicine all have good cause to remember with gratitude the service Marie Tehan gave to Victoria.

I record my condolences to Jim, the children and the grandchildren. It was a privilege to have served in this Parliament with Marie Tehan.

**The PRESIDENT** — I too wish to associate myself with the condolence motion to acknowledge the service of the Honourable Marie Tehan, former MLC for Central Highlands, former MLA for Seymour and former Minister for Health and Minister for Conservation and Land Management.

It was with sadness that I learnt last week of the sudden death of Marie, whose life was cut short due to illness. Marie had only just started her new life of retirement following her esteemed political career. Marie was elected to this house in a by-election in 1987 following the retirement of one of my predecessors. Five years later she changed houses and was sworn in as the member for Seymour and subsequently as a minister in the newly formed Kennett government.

Marie served as Minister for Health in a challenging portfolio. In reading the many obituaries about Marie, one gets the sense that she was a fighter who liked nothing more than an uphill challenge. I guess Marie would have acquired that from her health portfolio responsibilities. One of Marie's major reforms in the health area was to introduce changes to the way public hospitals were funded in the form of casemix funding. As honourable members from both sides have indicated, that system is now still used and accepted across Australia.

Last evening when I was speaking with the Lieutenant Governor, Lady Southey related a conversation she had with Marie Tehan. As honourable members would know, Lady Southey often drives polio patients. She referred to a time when Marie was having difficulty in the health portfolio dealing with the then Fairfield infectious diseases hospital. Marie visited a number of the patients and spoke with Lady Southey to see if they could make some long-term arrangement for the future of Fairfield. That was not to be, but resources were put in place. Lady Southey acknowledged Marie's commitment to the health portfolio and to everybody who had access to our health system.

As everyone knows, Marie was appointed as Minister for Conservation and Land Management in the second term of the Kennett government. She was instrumental in the establishment of Parks Victoria. Given Marie's love of the country and her dedication to the Central Highlands area over many years I imagine that portfolio would have been close to her heart, and that was clearly indicated by the Honourable Graeme Stoney's contribution.

After Marie's time at Parliament she returned to issues she was passionate about, especially assisting the plight of refugees. As the Leader of the Government indicated, the Bracks government had also recently appointed Marie as a board member of Goulburn-Murray Water.

Marie will forever be remembered for helping others and the community as a whole. Marie is survived by her husband, Jim, six children and eight grandchildren. I wish to pass on my deepest condolences to her family, colleagues and friends who I know will sorely miss her.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Mr LENDERS** (Minister for Finance) — I move:

That, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honourable Marie Therese Tehan, the house adjourn until tomorrow at 9.30 a.m.

**Motion agreed to.**

**House adjourned 3.24 p.m.**

