

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

2 June 2000

(extract from Book 9)

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

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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Friday, 2 June 2000

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

**ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Native flora and fauna

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) presented report, together with minutes of evidence and research investigation reports.

Laid on table.

Ordered that report be printed.

Hon. B. C. BOARDMAN (Chelsea) (*By leave*) — The majority of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee report is the result of the work of the previous committee, of which the Honourable Barry Bishop, the former member for Dousta Galla Province Tayfun Eren and I were members. The wide-ranging inquiry was conducted over more than two years.

It is appropriate to say a few words about the report. It is pleasing that the current Minister for Environment and Conservation has referred the inquiry to the newly constituted committee. The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act sets the foundations and the benchmarks to deal with wildlife management in the future. The committee travelled extensively not only in Victoria but also nationally and internationally to investigate wildlife management requirements and came to the conclusion that unless wildlife is managed appropriately in the future through the establishment of responsible government policy and the use of sanctions it will become an even more complex issue.

I thank the minister for returning the terms of reference to the committee. I understand most of our recommendations have been taken up.

I also thank the staff of the committee, particularly Brad Miles and Andrea Lindsay, for their work. The committee appreciates their help. I suggest all honourable members take note of the report's serious and relevant recommendations.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

Electoral Commissioner — Report on the Administration of the 1999 Victorian State election, 18 September 1999.

West Wimmera Health Service — Report, 1998–99 (two papers).

Ordered that report of Electoral Commissioner tabled by Clerk be considered next day on motion of **Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika)**.

NATIONAL PARKS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 1 June; motion of **Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources)**.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — It is my pleasure to speak on the National Parks (Amendment) Bill. I am absolutely confident that all members of this place and all political parties represented here believe in and are committed to appropriate, sustainable and proper management of our natural resource base, including allocating resources to the protection and conservation of our natural environment.

There will always be some debate, however, about the detail of how all that might be achieved. Indeed, the party recognised as having over time the strongest credentials in environmental management is the Liberal Party.

In a letter dated 18 May the president of the Victorian National Parks Association, James Ensor, says:

The VNPA recognises that the Liberal Party has been responsible for the implementation of a very significant number of our national parks and nature conservation reserves. Indeed, it was the Bolte Liberal government that formed the Land Conservation Council, which led to Parliament increasing our park estate from 3 per cent to 12.9 per cent.

It behoves all honourable members to remember in any debate on the protection of high-value conservation assets that there needs to be a proper balance. We must ensure that while we are protecting the values we cite to be important for future generations and the enjoyment of the present generation we do not subvert the community's opportunity to use natural resources.

The debate is timely not only because the bill is before the house, but because the government and Parliament are moving to establish reserves and parks.

Industries in rural communities that are dependent on access to Crown land for their resources are beginning to express a great deal of concern about their ability to sustain their businesses and continue employing people who sometimes have little option about their employment opportunities. Many people in rural areas have no option but to seek employment in natural

resource industries that are based on Crown land with access to minerals and forests or have bush grazing licences. Concerns are being expressed about changes to the management of forests because access by public land users — and there are many of them — is causing erosion that is seen as a risk to rural communities.

Although the opposition generally supports most elements of the bill some specific concerns will be dealt with in detail later in the debate. However, I place on the record that before Parliament proceeds to consider reserves beyond those contained in this legislation, it should be considering what impact additional reserves that may be declared in the future — unknown and undefined reserves that Parliament will be requested to consider on the recommendation of the government — will have on Victoria not just in terms of ensuring the proper and comprehensive protection of the environment but on the state as a whole.

The best way to outline the purpose of the bill is to refer to clause 1, which states:

The purposes of this Act are —

- (a) to amend the National Parks Act 1975 —
 - (i) to provide for land to be included in the Alpine National Park; and
 - (ii) to make further provision for parks in that Act; and
- (b) to make other miscellaneous amendments to the National Parks Act 1975; and
- (c) to amend the Alpine Resorts Act 1983 and the Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997.

I will now go through the issues contained in the bill and briefly mention the opposition's particular concerns. Firstly, I refer to the addition of 285 hectares to the Alpine National Park. It is known as the Mount McKay–Rocky Valley addition and extends from the west of Mount McKay to the northern shore of the Rocky Valley storage, including some undeveloped slopes of Mount McKay. It is probably useful to note at this stage that there has been a deal of debate and representation in support of the addition by those who are keen to have it proceed.

I have a letter dated 23 May signed by David Scott AO, a former chairman of the Land Conservation Council, on his own behalf and on behalf of a number of others, whom I will now name: Dr Mick Lumb, a former director of the Land Conservation Council; John Landy, a former member of the Land Conservation Council; and Don Saunders, a former Director of National Parks, former chairman of the Land Conservation Council and

former chairman of the Environment Conservation Council.

The letter states, in part:

It is our view, and we believe the view of conservationists and all who use and value Victoria's national parks, that the entire 285 hectares of the Alpine National Park excised from the park in 1997 should be restored to the Alpine National Park ...

Although I understand that others in the debate will make specific points about that addition, I point out that there are concerns about its the future economic impact because it may reduce opportunities to develop the alpine resort to which the area of land is presently proximate.

The Rocky Valley storage area does not in itself have a high conservation value, and because of the impact of the management of the physical assets of the alpine resort and the dam resource on it the land in question might otherwise not be regarded as fit to be part of an alpine park. Importantly, if the addition goes ahead proposals to extend the ski field and the ski lifts may be precluded as a consequence of limited access to additional land for those extensions. Of more relevance, however, is the fact that the government's recommendation to accept the addition to the national park will curtail future ski field development that could benefit the community. The government has made no provision for a possible alternative of including a more modest portion of land in the alpine park.

The Wongungarra addition comprises an area of some 12 850 hectares, which is recognised as part of the reserve system in the north-east Gippsland regional forest agreements. Given that extensive regional forest agreements (RFAs) have been executed the government should provide the appropriate reserve structure to ensure the proper protection of that area. Those RFAs were signed off by agreement with the previous coalition government, and the present government is implementing a proper and reasonable appropriation of what was otherwise forest land into the alpine park. Although that needs to be recognised it has implications that should be noted. For example, the interests of graziers who have licences to run cattle under forest licence conditions in that area must be protected. The minister alluded to that in the second-reading speech, and I put the government on notice that in the committee stage the opposition will seek further clarification of that matter.

The bill provides for the continuation of deerstalking, which has been a long-recognised activity in the area contiguous with the park. Therefore, deer hunters will

continue to have access to the area. Sometimes people underestimate the interest in deer hunting. One of the more active groups using the highlands includes the people who regularly, through some of the most bitter weather that can be endured, pursue the quarry they prize so readily. The hunters benefit enormously through being able to access public land.

Further park additions include 13 hectares of land along Jackson Creek to the Organ Pipes National Park; I understand that has been generously donated by the City of Brimbank. Additionally, some small areas will be added to the Yarra Ranges National Park. Those areas, which were purchased previously, are included as part of the Upper Yarra water catchment, and their inclusion is important in affording protection to our water supply catchment areas.

An area of 94 hectares is to be added to the Kamarooka State Park, which was purchased with the assistance of the City of Greater Bendigo; I understand it contributed about \$10 000 towards that end. My only comment on that provision is that as the house is this week considering that inclusion in the state park, coincidentally the draft report of the Environment Conservation Council (ECC) on the box ironbark review has been released. It may have been appropriate to consider this inclusion in the Kamarooka State Park when the ECC box ironbark report provisions were being implemented, but I guess that is a matter of timing.

A further addition to parks is the 16 hectares on the Boole Poole Peninsula which will be added to the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park. That land was previously purchased as an addition to the park.

The bill also provides for excisions from national parks. The minister has said that it is appropriate from time to time to excise small areas from parks. She cites previous excisions which have included small modified sites containing government-owned houses on park boundaries, areas in connection with the realignment of major roads through part of a park, and the correction of small errors on park plans.

The bill assists the implementation of those commitments by providing that the National Parks Advisory Council will advise on any proposed excision referred to it by the minister, and the NPAC's advice will be tabled in Parliament.

The government has determined this will be an either/or option — it is not a mandated reference; it is an option that the minister may choose to take up.

I should like an explanation from the minister about the proposal to put in place a formulated consultation process that will stand some test of time. It would have been preferable for the government to make this a condition rather than an option at the discretion of the minister.

Because there will be extensive debate on the bill and a committee stage, I reserve further remarks until then. The opposition is pleased to support the bill but has specific concerns about the proposals that affect the alpine resort at Mount McKay. I am concerned about ensuring that property rights and grazing licences that are affected by the bill on the transference of land in the Wongungarra area to the Alpine National Park are protected. The committee stage would be an opportune time for the minister to deal with that aspect.

Hon. E. C. CARBINES (Geelong) — Victoria's national parks are considered the lungs of the state. I am pleased to speak on the National Parks (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to add a significant amount of land to the national parks system.

The Bracks government is committed to protecting and enhancing Victoria's national parks, and the bill delivers on several key promises made before the election last year. National parks are of extreme importance to the state environmentally and as a site of recreation because of their ability to attract thousands of domestic and international tourists each year. They employ many people and therefore are a significant contributor to Victoria's economy.

A brochure entitled 'Victoria's national parks' prepared by Parks Victoria states that Victoria's national parks are:

One of Victoria's greatest natural assets is its world-class system of 35 national parks, protecting our most spectacular and unspoiled landscapes.

These two and a half million precious hectares have been growing since the declaration of the first national parks at Mount Buffalo and Wilsons Promontory a century ago.

Now managed by Parks Victoria and preserved for posterity, the parks range over an incredible diversity of landscapes and ecosystems; from rugged coastlines, through vast semi-deserts, to rainforests and snow-dusted mountains.

Protecting precious habitats for varied and fascinating native wildlife, they also offer a refreshing natural retreat for the people of Victoria, and for the ever-increasing number of international and interstate visitors who have helped make the parks one of the most popular of all our tourist destinations.

As a member for Geelong Province I know the importance of the Otways National Park to the people who reside in my province. It is extremely precious.

Geelong people spend much time holidaying in, visiting and enjoying the Otways National Park, a major attraction on the Great Ocean Road. We must ensure it is always looked after. The Otway National Park also supplies Geelong's water supply and therefore is precious to Geelong as well.

Just a few weeks ago my family and I visited the Port Campbell National Park. We spent a weekend travelling around Port Campbell, moving on to Warrnambool. I took the children to see the amazing sights in the Port Campbell National Park — Loch Ard Gorge, the Twelve Apostles and London Bridge. We spent a couple of hours exploring caves and thoroughly enjoyed our time there. I was staggered at the number of tourists arriving at Port Campbell National Park. Even though it was an extremely cold, wet, windy day, busloads of international tourists were arriving to avail themselves of one of Victoria's great natural assets.

I compliment Parks Victoria on the way it is looking after the Port Campbell National Park. My family was impressed by the signage and tracks and the sensitive way in which visitors are guided through what is an unstable landscape. I was more than a little disgusted with those international tourists who took the opportunity to carve their names in the coastline with bits of shell and rock, and I was absolutely flabbergasted to see one of them carve 'Elaine 2000'. My husband said, 'Who is ever going to believe you did not do that!'. For the sake of future generations I hope international visitors can be discouraged from carving their names and inscriptions into the coastline. That certainly detracts from the national park.

Of major significance in the bill is the addition of more than 13 000 hectares to Victoria's largest national park, the Alpine National Park. That addition comprises 12 850 hectares in the Wongungarra area and 285 hectares in the Mount McKay and Rocky Valley area. The latter area was excised in 1997 by the Kennett government without warning or consultation. When in opposition the parliamentary Labor Party was a strong and vocal critic of the act. The passage of the bill will see that the land is returned to national park status. I congratulate the Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister Garbutt, on her prompt, speedy delivery of that election promise. Both areas outlined contain land of significant biodiversity, which is of enormous environmental worth to the state.

The National Parks (Amendment) Bill also importantly adds former freehold land to four existing national parks. Some 13 hectares will be added to the Organ Pipes National Park, 3 hectares to the Yarra Ranges National Park, 97 hectares to the Kamarooka State

Park, and 16 hectares to the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park, all of which will now be under the protection of Parks Victoria and the national parks system. That has to be a reason to celebrate the passage of the bill.

Prior to the state election the Labor Party made a commitment to the Victorian people that in government it would take the necessary legislative steps to prevent unnecessary and unjustified excisions from national parks. The Bracks government is committed to dealing with any proposed park excision in an open and thorough manner.

Clause 5 of the bill outlines the process whereby the minister must lay any proposed excision for consideration before both houses of Parliament within 10 sitting days of advice having been received from the National Parks Advisory Council. That sets up an open, clear and transparent process and will enable any excision to be carefully considered by Parliament's elected representatives of the Victorian people.

The bill is all about protecting and enhancing Victoria's national parks system. The parks are for the benefit of all Victorians and must be kept in perpetuity for future generations. I commend the bill to the house.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — I shall take the opportunity to comment on the National Parks (Amendment) Bill. As has been said, the bill adds significantly to the size of the Alpine National Park, already Victoria's largest national park, by the addition of 285 hectares on the slopes of Mount McKay and almost 13 000 hectares in the upper Wongungarra area. It also makes additions to the Organ Pipes and the Yarra Ranges national parks and the Kamarooka State Park and the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park.

I am not opposed to national parks. They play an important role and are a large component of Victoria's overall conservation strategy. However, I am concerned about the tendency to continue to add to the national park system without serious and proper consideration.

Most additions to national parks evolve from a formal process of evaluation, often by the former Land Conservation Council, now called the Environment Conservation Council; sometimes by considerations and investigations, as with the regional forest agreements. Often the general public does not read and understand the reports, believing the addition to a national park is positive without understanding the implications.

For those reasons it is important during the debate to explore and put on record some of the implications. The national park system provides a means of nominating

certain areas worthy of protection for conservation purposes, but the reclassifying of areas does not guarantee that protection, nor does it recognise the restriction on public land use that reclassification brings with it.

The bill provides for the reclassification in some cases of freehold land and forest reserves as national park. I say again that it is important to recognise that the reclassification puts restrictions on the use of that public land: commercial activities like timber production and mining will now be excluded by the reclassification. Other commercial activities such as grazing are restricted by reclassification of public land to national park status, although in the bill there are some interesting clauses that suggest the provisions will be less restricting in this instance. Generally, if land is reclassified from public land into a national park system that brings a restriction on an operation like grazing. Other commercial activities such as beekeeping and some recreational activities like hunting and four-wheel driving are restricted by reclassifying land as national park.

I mention those points because it is important to recognise that the reclassification of public land to national park brings about changes to the way the land can be used. The reclassification does not protect the environmental or biodiversity values of the land. The only way of protecting the land is to have appropriate management regimes in place. Criticism has been made of the management practices employed in looking after the national park system.

There are significant weed problems. I was interested in the report tabled in Parliament earlier today that looks at some of those matters. In my electorate where there are a number of national parks it has often been said that the amount of funding governments dedicate towards the proper management of national parks is insufficient and that environmental problems are the result of the lack of funding.

Management practices could be enhanced in several areas through considering the use of national parks — use in itself can be an appropriate management tool. In many respects grazing has proven to be an effective management tool in some of our national parks. Fire is also an appropriate management tool. Before white settlement in Australia fire was used by Aboriginal communities as a management tool to regenerate vegetation and bring native animals back to regions. Today the Department of Natural Resources and Environment is using controlled fire burns less as a management tool. In recent years the build-up of material on forest floors has had some disastrous

results. When natural fire strikes in that situation its impact is far greater than if fire had been used regularly in preceding years as a management tool. The critical factor relating to environmental values and biodiversity is not the classification of an area of land as a national park but the management practices applied to that area.

I reiterate that I am not opposed to national parks. However, a balance must be struck between areas of public land that are available for commercial and recreational use and areas that are locked away for predominantly conservation purposes. I stand to be corrected, but I believe about 13 per cent of Victoria's total land mass is now classified as national park. That is a significant amount of the state's total land mass, and that already significant area should not simply be added to without serious consideration of the impact.

The proposed addition of land to the Alpine National Park will have an impact on cattle grazing. As my colleague Mr Philip Davis said, this is one of the issues the opposition wishes to explore during the committee stage. I give notice of the issues on which I will seek clarification and answers from the minister.

Firstly, I understand that at least two cattle grazing licences apply to the Mount McKay area and that at least one applies to the upper Wongungarra area. I will seek clarification during the committee stage of exactly how many grazing licences applicable to the areas will be affected and who the licence-holders are.

Yesterday the government moved an amendment to the bill in the other place. I have not had a chance to be briefed on the impact of that amendment. However, prior to the amendment being introduced there was some discussion about the ability of bush grazing licence-holders in the area to convert those licences to alpine grazing licences. A cursory look at the record of yesterday's proceedings in the other place suggests that although the licences will now apply to areas that are part of a national park, they will be treated as if they were a continuation of bush grazing licences. I will seek clarification of that during the committee stage. If that is the case, I will ask questions about whether there will be any changes to the entry and exit times to align with other alpine grazing licences and to licence fees. The issues may have been addressed by the amendment to the bill introduced yesterday, but I have not had time to be briefed on their impact.

Importantly, I want to gain some clarification of the government's policy on alpine grazing. I want to know once and for all whether the government has any intention to phase out alpine grazing. If alpine grazing is to be phased out, not only the people who hold

grazing licences for the areas being added to the Alpine National Park but everybody else who holds alpine grazing licences will be the losers. That will have a significant economic impact on parts of Gippsland as well as the north-east region. The opposition would like a clear statement from the government on the alpine grazing issue.

I have grave fears that the government intends to phase out alpine grazing, and although it has been said that it could only be done by legislation which would require further debate in this chamber, it could also be done by stealth — that is, by not renewing grazing licences when they come up for renewal. The opposition invites the Minister for Environment and Conservation to comment on that.

Next month an application for the transfer of a grazing licence will be considered by the minister, and that will be one of the real tests of government policy. One of my constituents, Mr Andrew Kee, has formed a group called the Friends of Wongungarra Trust. It is seeking to transfer a grazing licence from Mr G. Spaul to the trust. The application will go before the Alpine Advisory Committee and Parks Victoria who will make a recommendation to the minister. She will make her judgment based on the reports of those two organisations.

There is no reason why the transfer of the grazing licence should not proceed. The area has been grazed for more than 100 years and includes some extensive river flats. It will be a test of the government's commitment to alpine grazing. If a decision has already been made, I would welcome a comment by the Minister for Energy and Resources during the third-reading or committee stage.

The opposition considers cattle grazing to be an important issue. It has a strong commitment to supporting the current system of alpine grazing and would like to know where the government stands on the matter.

There are other implications to the reclassification of state forest to national park including an impact on some of the recreational activities, one of which is deer hunting. Clause 7 provides for an extension of the area where deer hunting by stalking is allowed. I presume that once the land becomes a national park deer hunting by hounds will not be allowed. However, deer hunting by stalking in national parks is restricted. It is not a year-round operation as in state forests — in summer months no deer hunting by stalking is allowed in national parks. During the committee stage, I will seek clarification of the exact impact of the reclassification

of the land on deer hunting — that is, whether it will exclude deer hunting by hounds and whether it will limit the times during the year when deer hunting by stalking can take place.

I will also seek clarification about how the reclassification to national park will impact on four-wheel driving and prospecting in those areas. I assume that four-wheel driving will be curtailed and prospecting will no longer be allowed.

The reclassification will also impact on timber production, which is not allowed in national parks. The bill adds to the Alpine National Park the Upper Wongungarra area, which is part of the reserve system identified in both the north-east and the Gippsland regional forest agreement. The outcome of the Gippsland RFA was that there would be 'no job loss outcome'. I doubt that that can be delivered because although an adjustment package is given to try to offset the loss of that timber resource, in the long run you cannot buy jobs.

The regional forest agreements resulted in reductions in resources, and in the long run there will be job losses. That has been evidenced over some years in East Gippsland in particular, where in the past 15 years the timber industry has experienced a 50-per-cent reduction in the available timber resource and significant job losses. The reclassification of land to national park should not be allowed to pass without comment on that result.

The impact of the proposed changes on commercial development has already been canvassed by my colleague Mr Philip Davis and will no doubt be elaborated on by others, the Honourables Graeme Stoney, Jeanette Powell and Bill Baxter in particular, because of their potential impact in the Mount McKay area. I will not go into detail about that but I point out that it will be another impact of the reclassification of the subject land into national park.

Some important matters need to be explored during the committee stage. Although I support the bill, I am not altogether comfortable about doing so without first having some of the issues I have raised addressed and without bringing to the attention of the general public that every addition to a national park brings with it an impact on both commercial and recreational use. Victorians need to have regard to all those matters.

I look forward to the committee debate during which I hope the house can explore some of the issues I have raised this morning.

Hon. D. G. HADDEN (Ballarat) — I support the National Parks (Amendment) Bill, which is an important piece of legislation. Its purpose is primarily to add 13 135 hectares to the Alpine National Park in two main areas — the Mount McKay–Rocky Valley area and the Wongungarra area, which in the Aboriginal language would be pronounced ‘Wungarra’.

Some 285 hectares of the Mount McKay–Rocky Valley area, which was excised under the Alpine Resorts Management Act of 1997 and included in the Falls Creek Alpine Resort in 1997, will be returned to the Alpine National Park.

Some 12 850 hectares of land in the Wongungarra area will be added to the Alpine National Park. Wongungarra is south of the Great Dividing Range and south-west of Mount Hotham, and contains the important and endangered spotted tree frog.

The Alpine National Park has been described by a Parks Victoria ranger, Mr Lachie Jackson, in a pamphlet entitled ‘Alpine National Park’ as follows:

Victoria’s Alpine National Park protects an important part of our natural and cultural heritage, and offers an amazing range of outdoor activities in both summer and winter. But please remember we need your help to look after it for the future.

His warning is about the help he needs from all of us. The pamphlet explains that the park:

... came into being in 1989 when the Alpine National Park, which stretches all the way from central Gippsland to the New South Wales border, was created from several existing parks.

It is a magnificent area covering 646 000 hectares, including most of Victoria’s highest mountains, as well as:

... diverse and stunningly beautiful alpine topography with ranges, wild rivers, impressive escarpments, forests and open grasslands known as high plains.

Human occupation of the alps is long and varied. Countless generations of Aboriginal people summered in the high country, holding tribal ceremonies and feasting on protein-rich bogong moths

With European settlement came the goldminers, the timber getters, the dam builders and the graziers who ran their stock on the summer pastures. Today the park is renowned for its natural beauty and is used for bushwalking, camping and ski touring in the mountain landscapes.

The bill also adds former freehold land to four parks: the Organ Pipes National Park, the Yarra Ranges National Park, the Kamarooka State Park, and the

Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park. I shall summarise briefly: 13 hectares along Jackson Creek has been donated by the City of Brimbank to the Organ Pipes National Park; 3 hectares in four adjoining allotments in the Armstrong Creek and Upper Yarra catchments will be added to the Yarra Ranges National Park; 94 hectares have been purchased with the assistance of the City of Greater Bendigo for the Kamarooka State Park; and 16 hectares on the Boole Poole Peninsula will be added to the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park.

In relation to park excisions, clause 5(1) contains the functions of the National Parks Advisory Council. It provides that the council is:

to advise the Minister on any proposed excision from a park referred to it by the Minister ...

Clause 5(2) inserts proposed section 11(3), which states:

The Minister must cause a copy of any advice received under sub-section (1)(aa) to be laid before both Houses of Parliament within 10 sitting days after it is received ...

That addition to the principal act certainly promotes greater transparency.

The bill also saves two southern hydro leases and two existing grazing leases in relation to the Mount McKay–Rocky Valley area, as described in clause 8. It provides for the continuation of alpine and bush grazing leases and two existing grazing leases. The lease entitled ‘Tunnel under Falls Creek Alpine Resort’ will continue in force as if it were a lease granted under the act; that lease commenced in December 1997. Clause 8 also provides that the existing lease entitled ‘Northern Foreshore of Part Rocky Valley Reservoir’ will continue in force as if it were a lease granted under the act.

The bill provides for deer hunting by stalking in the Wongungarra area, which, as the Honourable Philip Davis mentioned, has been long recognised by many people as an important recreational activity.

Importantly, clause 6 states that the bill is not intended to affect native title rights and interests. On 18 May I was present at the Australian Law Reform Commission conference in Sydney and attended a lecture on native title. I would like to read a short section from a booklet prepared by the National Native Title Tribunal entitled ‘Short guide to native title’. On page 1 it states:

What is native title?

‘Native title’ describes the rights and interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in land and waters, according to their traditional laws and customs.

Unlike freehold titles or leases, native title is not granted by governments. Native title may exist in places where indigenous people continue to follow their traditional laws and customs and have maintained a link with their country.

....

Native title rights may include the possession, use and occupation of traditional country. In some areas, native title may be a right of access to the area. It can also be the right for native title holders to participate in decisions about how others use their traditional land and waters.

Native title may also vary depending on the rights of other people in the same area. For example, where people have leases, licences or a right of public access, native title may exist alongside these other rights. This is often called 'coexistence'.

The bill implements several key election policy commitments of the Bracks government on national parks: it reincorporates the Mount McKay area into the Alpine National Park; it adds the Wongungarra wilderness to the Alpine National Park; and makes a commitment to prevent excisions from parks.

On the issue of consultation about the bill, external consultation included the Victorian National Parks Association, Falls Creek Ski Lifts and the Falls Creek Alpine Resort Management Board. Consultation on the excisions clauses took place with the Victorian National Parks Association.

The bill shows the government's commitment to preserving and maintaining important alpine national parks and its commitment to the commonwealth Native Title Act. I commend the bill to the house.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — In contributing to the debate on the National Parks (Amendment) Bill I will confine my remarks to the provisions dealing with alpine areas. Some of us in the chamber have a very strong interest in those areas, as do the honourable members for Benambra and Murray Valley in the other place.

It is an important bill, but perhaps the word 'important' can cut both ways. The bill provides for the return of 285 hectares of land to the Alpine National Park. The provisions dealing with different areas need to be addressed as separate issues, and the first issue is the 40 hectares that runs between the man-made Rocky Valley Dam and the Falls Creek Alpine Resort. For many years that strip of land has been used for management purposes. It was used to construct the Rocky Valley Dam. It is presently used to manage the Falls Creek resort. It has borrow pits on it and gravel roads, underground pipes service the area, and buildings have been constructed. The land is important for the management of the Falls Creek Alpine Resort.

I do not understand why this land is being put back into the park. Critics have said the Land Conservation Council recommended that the land be part of the Alpine National Park. Yes, it did — but that was 20 years ago! We have come a long way in 20 years. Needs change; public requirements change. As has been said in the chamber today by Mr Hall and others, the Alpine National Park is a wonderful park — and it is very, very large. Why is it necessary to return land that is essential for managing the resort and lake and also assists with the management of adjoining alpine parks? Why do we have to mindlessly put that land back into the park?

I have great personal difficulty with the issue for several reasons. The quality of the Alpine National Park will be downgraded and opportunities for Falls Creek will be reduced because of the government's philosophy of no development in national parks. That philosophy will make it extremely difficult for anything practical to be done with the management of the land.

I think the government has capitulated to the philosophy and abandoned commonsense. It has done the wrong thing by skiers and has certainly done no favours for conservation groups, who I believe also bear some responsibility. It was an ideal chance for them to gain enormous credibility by saying, 'We know that land can be more useful as management land. We are getting an enormous area of land, including the rest of the 285 hectares, plus Wongungarra'. There are other proposals as well.

The conservation movement could have gained enormous credibility by demonstrating an understanding of the real world. Unfortunately, it has dropped the ball and its credibility has been exposed.

The Falls Creek skiing company needed land to build probably Australia's best ski run. When the company's management heard that the government was bringing the land back into the park it said if the company could be given some small sections of land the project could continue. The company then compromised by saying it could build it inside the old boundary, and was rewarded by having an environment effects statement slapped on the project, which has made the job unbelievably difficult. I am sure Mr Baxter will enlarge on that issue. The ultimate effect is that the government's requirement has done enormous damage to the confidence of both the region and the ski industry. I would not be surprised if the project did not proceed.

The government has hidden behind conservation to achieve another agenda. The former Labor government

did the same in the 1980s with the tour operators, the cattlemen and other users of public land. The actions of the former Labor government were the genesis behind what is now the Public Land Council, an important group of people who have an interest in Victorian public land. I make the point that it is all happening again.

To drive my point home I refer to a letter of 26 May that I received from the Shire of Alpine. It states, in part:

... This amendment will effectively landlock the Falls Creek resort and frustrate the future development of infrastructure required for the resort to remain competitive.

Further down it states:

... disabling the development at Mount McKay of the most advanced skiing runs in Australia and the opportunity of increasing the ski area of the resort by 140 per cent.

This investment was projected to provide 1000 additional jobs in the development stage and 150 permanent positions when operational.

The letter is signed by Charlie Duncan, the very concerned and civic-minded mayor of the Shire of Alpine

A further issue I wish to raise concerns the Wongungarra area which is south of the divide. Wongungarra is a wild and beautiful place and is a good choice to be in the Alpine National Park system. I know it well: I have ridden its mountains and fished its rivers. It is a wonderful place to go for a holiday.

My Central Highlands Province colleague Geoff Craig and I went fishing through the Wongungarra to the Humphray River a couple of years ago. We were driving up the Buckland Valley and on the side of the road was an old friend of mine, a very respected mountain cattleman, Mr John Hall, accompanied by his wife Nan. We stopped and chatted, I introduced Mr Craig to Mr Hall and his wife, and Mr Hall told us he was looking for a few strays. I did not realise then that today I would be standing in this place and relating a story about Mr Hall and the Wongungarra licences.

The Hall family holds two licences near the Wongungarra and some summer and winter bush licences further down the Buckland. On the north side of the divide they hold an alpine seven-year grazing licence stretching to the alpine walking track. They run some 30 head of cattle on the north run.

On the south side of the Great Divide they hold the Wongungarra bush licence, which is a one-year licence. The division of two leases was originally the top of the

divide, which became the alpine walking track. A few years ago something funny happened. Some honourable members will recall that when the Alpine National Park was created, seven-year licences were granted. Bush licences were also granted for seven years. The licences and maps took a while to come through. When they did come through, some years after the licences were granted, there were some funny lines on the maps and some funny requirements on numbers, which I understand are still being sorted out because the alpine park cuts through many grazing licences. Without consultation, the department told the licence-holders they could run a number of cattle in the alpine section of the run and a certain number in the bush section. The map contains lines which some cattlemen are still trying to sort out. That happened many years ago.

A line appeared on Mr Hall's licence map. It was not the sensitive top of the Great Divide. One edge of it was, but the line went down into the south side of the divide for no apparent reason. After speaking to Mr Hall, I believe it was an historic line on a map, perhaps it was a forestry lease or a gradient or altitude line. It made no sense for the lease to be cut off like that. In the original stages it was an administrative change. It took in Mount Murray, which Mr Hall says is slightly sensitive and should not have a lot of cattle run on the land. He can also keep the cattle off Mount Murray if he has to.

The net effect of this narrow corridor makes it almost impossible to manage those two adjacent blocks of land. I have the map here and I will try to describe it, because it is important when one considers the promise of the minister that licensees will not be affected. On the north side of the Great Divide 30 head of cattle can be run on a seven-year licence; on the south side there is a bush run at the moment that can run 150 head of cattle. The two areas are separated by a narrow corridor, which makes it impossible to manage the leases. I know the area; I have been there. I cannot imagine why this land has been excluded for grazing. It is not sensitive land, except for Mount Murray, and it has one boundary on the alpine walking track, which is about 1 metre wide and which means Mr Hall's cattle can come up to the track. However, if they have to go over the track they are in an area that has not got a licence on it, although it is exactly the same country. It does not make sense. It is to do with historic lines on maps. Herein lies a problem we will explore further in committee.

The Halls run 180 head of cattle. They are honest mountain cattlemen. They always pay for their full quota, irrespective of whether the full quota goes up.

They never do the wrong thing by their landlord, the state government. However, in the past 12 months their landlord has been turning up about once a week and saying, 'We think we saw a cow on this narrow corridor; we want you to go up and have a look'. They go up — no cow. Next week the ranger comes back and says, 'We think we saw some cow tracks on this narrow strip; we want you to go up'. The Halls go up, find one cow and take the cow away. It does not make any practical sense. It has been suggested by the department that it might be better if they abandoned their runs because they are having trouble managing their cows.

Mr and Mrs Hall and the family have done the right thing by their landlord. What has been the result? The landlord did not tell them the land status was changing. The landlord did not consult. It did not ask the Halls if they had any problems. It was not interested. I understand that they would have been told some time.

I refer to a briefing note. I assume the note is from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment to the Minister for Environment and Conservation in another place and I am happy to table it. The paper outlines various scenarios for the minister. I was intrigued to hear Mrs Hadden say that the Victorian National Parks Authority, the Falls Creek Alpine Resort Management Committee and Falls Creek Ski Lift had been consulted but nobody else — she did not mention anyone else. The briefing note states:

8. Have the licensees been consulted?

Response

9. There is no impact on the licensee's grazing interests. The licensees are being informed that the bill is being amended to provide that their pre-existing grazing interests are not affected by the inclusion of the Wongungarra area in the national park.

Big Brother thought he knew what was best for the Hall family. I heard that the Minister for Environment and Conservation had given those assurances earlier as this week. However, I remember that in 1989, when the National Parks (Alpine National Park) Bill was debated, we battled the bureaucracy to get some concessions for the mountain cattlemen and the tourist operators. I remember how the Liberal and National parties fought tooth and nail for those concessions. I remember haunting Parliament House and sitting in the back of the public gallery for a month. I knew all the attendants by name and they knew me. They used to hide me in cupboards when other people came around. They were very good — none of them are here now, of course.

It was a cat-and-mouse game for three weeks. The then Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands kept changing its position and when the bill was introduced the department kept changing it. The Honourables David Evans and Rosemary Varty, who were then members of this place, would hand the bill to me. I would read it not knowing what it meant but other people were there to help us. We would say that the bill was not right and send it back and the department would send it back to us again. But for the actions of the National Party and the Liberal Party at that time there would not be a cow in the mountains today.

On Wednesday night I rang John Hall to find out how he feels about the proposed legislation. I asked him if he had any problems and his response was that he has enormous problems and that he has been fighting the Department of Natural Resources and Environment for years about his corridor. I inquired as to whether he had heard from the department lately and his reply was that he had not heard a word and he asked me what was going on. I told him that I thought there was a national parks bill being introduced which included his lease. John said he knew nothing about that and that the department had not offered him any explanation or assistance. Nobody had officially told him that the status of his land was to be changed.

I got a bit stirred up and rattled a few doors on Wednesday night. The mountain cattlemen have some very good friends in this place and I know who they are. Those people, who come from all sides of politics, admire and respect the mountain cattlemen. I went to those friends and we rattled a few cages. Guess what happened? Minister Garbutt rang Mr Hall, as did the manager at Traralgon. The government introduced some amendments to sections 57 and 58 of the principal act. It must have been coincidence, but to my knowledge before that the bill had not mentioned the Wongungarra grazing licences at all.

The apologies rained thick and fast. The government was in danger of having its bill lie over and of losing face because it had not consulted — which makes a mockery of its charter with the Independents. I understand commitments have been made in the other place but the practical fact remains that the Halls have an alpine licence on one side of the Divide and a bush licence on the other. Some of their land will be in the alpine park and they will have an impossible corridor in the middle. This would have been an ideal time for the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, the Halls and perhaps the local members of Parliament to sit around the table and talk. If the department had trouble facilitating such a meeting I or Mr Baxter could have done so. We could have worked out how Mr Hall

can keep his cattle off the sensitive bits and still operate his enterprise.

It could have been fixed but that was not done. The government did not want to do anything and it has created a dog's dinner. I have no doubt the technique will be used again during the term of the government. Wongungarra is a long way from Spring Street but the cattlemen know where Spring Street is. They found it once before and they will find again. I am having difficulty supporting the bill, not because I am against national parks — they are a wonderful asset for the community — but because of the less than transparent process and the dogma that has influenced that process, which is an indictment of the government.

Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern) — I share the Honourable Graeme Stoney's concern and disappointment about the National Parks (Amendment) Bill. As he said, some provisions in the bill are a victory of dogma over commonsense. That is regrettable and unfortunate. It clearly flies in the face of the government's professed commitment to rural and regional Victoria which it trumpeted prior to September last year and about which it constantly reminds the community.

This is the third occasion this week that I have been forced to say in debates in this house that the government's performance does not match its rhetoric. I dealt with the issue that I was particularly concerned with by way of a motion I moved two or three weeks ago regarding the development at Mount McKay, so I do not intend to recap much of the material I put before the house on that occasion. However, I will briefly canvas some of those aspects.

I regret that the Minister for Environment and Conservation and the government refused to countenance any negotiation or consultation that might have led to an arrangement for the development of the land at Mount McKay adjacent to the Falls Creek ski resort while accommodating the hopes, needs and aspirations of both sides of the debate. A boundary could have been constructed that would have enabled the Falls Creek development to proceed adjacent to the Rocky Valley Dam and to enable the huge investment contemplated by Falls Creek Ski Lifts Pty Ltd to proceed on Mount McKay without detriment to anyone. Unfortunately the minister has refused to contemplate such a course and I think she will live to regret it.

I am also concerned about the misinformation the minister and Labor have been party to regarding the 285 hectares of land that was excised in 1997. On reading the exhortations by the minister in the

second-reading speech one could have been led to believe, as was Ms Carbines, that the 1997 actions were somehow a surreptitious manoeuvre by the then minister in the dead of night without anyone knowing about it. People who believe that are admitting they do not examine legislation very well. The excision was in the legislation for everyone to see and would have been seen by anyone with an eye for detail. Mrs Powell reminded me this morning that the bill was introduced in an autumn sessional period and lay over until the following spring so people could look at it.

Hon. E. J. Powell — For further consultation.

Hon. W. R. BAXTER — Yes. How can it be alleged that this was an attempt to slide the provision through Parliament without anyone knowing about it when the facts suggest otherwise? The minister suggested it was some sort of action taken by the former minister at the behest of the BCR Asset Management.

I refer the house to an executive summary prepared by the Falls Creek Board of Management, which gives a history of the events. It states inter alia:

In 1997, following representations by the previous Alpine Resorts Commission the Falls Creek Alpine Resort was increased by the addition of 285 hectares of land associated with the Rocky Valley foreshore, Rocky Knobs area and south-west face of Mount McKay. At the same time 23 hectares of land along the Rocky Valley Creek was excised from the resort to be included in the Alpine National Park.

Of the 285 hectares added to the resort some 95 hectares is land that was previously part of the Alpine National Park.

It is a misstatement of fact to allege that 285 hectares were excised; in fact, only 95 hectares were excised. The other land added to Falls Creek Alpine Resort at that time had not come from the national park. The letter shows it did not happen at the behest of a developer; it was at the behest of the former Alpine Resorts Commission, the predecessor of the current board, and it was not an action that was taken in haste. Clearly, the issue was looked at closely and an exchange was made. Some 23 hectares of land that was previously part of the ski resort area was put back into the park, because the board and other people believed it would be more appropriate to include it in the park.

I wish to put aside any notion that it was a cooked-up deal. It was done after a great deal of consideration. We should remember the importance of Falls Creek ski resort to the economy of Victoria, especially to north-eastern Victoria. The executive summary states:

Falls Creek Alpine Resort contributes an estimated \$50 million per annum to the Victorian economy and provides up to 2000 jobs. This benefit is provided in an economic climate of independence free of government funding assistance.

That is worth noting — there is no government assistance. Falls Creek ski resort generates its own finances and contributes an extraordinary amount to the economy. Furthermore, it creates many jobs, especially jobs for young people. That should be borne in mind.

I also wish to put on the record the great deal of concern felt by everyone in the area that the proposed development they were all looking forward to and believed would underpin the economy is now at a great deal of risk because of the minister's refusal to even contemplate some sort of compromise arrangements. I will quote from a letter I received from the president of the Shire of Alpine only early this week:

The ski resorts of Hotham and Falls Creek play an important role in the economy of north-east Victoria. Alpine shire in particular has a vested interest in the potential of Falls Creek and Hotham resorts being realised to increase Victoria's market share in the skiing industry. At present we are developing a tourism strategy consistent with the Victorian state government's objectives to target the loss of hard and soft adventure tourist days to overseas destinations. Having vibrant and world-class ski resorts is an essential part of the required infrastructure to target this market.

This amendment will effectively land lock the Falls Creek resort and frustrate the future development of infrastructure required for the resort to remain competitive.

...

This investment was projected to provide 1000 additional jobs in the development stage and 150 permanent positions when operational. That employment multiplier and flow-on economic benefit potential makes this development the largest and most significant tourism-based development in rural Victoria.

Very important words. It shows the intransigence, dogma and ideological blinkers of the minister, who is prepared to put at risk a significant development for both north-eastern Victoria and Victoria as a whole.

I reiterate a point I made in a motion two or three weeks ago. The Falls Creek ski resort is one of Victoria's premier resorts, but it has to some extent lagged behind in recent years and is now behind Mount Buller and Mount Hotham. The other two have had huge investments and have become more attractive, particularly to advanced skiers. The proposal would have enabled Falls Creek to catch up and to offer the most challenging ski run in the nation. It now looks as if that opportunity will be denied.

Retention of the land around Rocky Valley Dam would also have assisted materially in the development of

Falls Creek as a summer resort. There is tremendous potential in our ski fields, especially Falls Creek, for development as year-round tourist venues. Falls Creek has a family atmosphere and is attractive to families during the summer period. That feature of the resort will now be undermined by the loss of the land on the Rocky Valley Dam foreshore.

I refer honourable members to a submission made by the board of management to the government. The board makes it clear that it favours the development, despite allegations made in certain places that the board was a bit soft on the proposal. A document supplied to me by the board states:

The board is expected to work in a business-like manner with the widest discretion and freedom consistent with the legislation and accepted standards of corporate prudence. The board operates in a competitive environment consistent with competition policies and the general philosophy of the Victorian government. Sustainable financial viability, service delivery and growth underpin long-term success.

The board believes that the development of the Mount McKay area is an essential element to the long-term future of the resort which in turn provides a regional and statewide benefit.

Those are significant words. The board has been put in office to run a business-like operation at Falls Creek while keeping in mind government objectives — to be financially self-sustaining, to generate jobs and to create tourist opportunities and the like. Now the board is clearly saying to the government, 'We are being sabotaged by the bill'. It appears the government has ignored the views of one of its own boards.

I can understand the government's desire to return some of the land. I acknowledge that the Labor Party opposed the 1997 act. Nevertheless, it would have been possible to construct a set of boundaries that satisfied the Labor Party's election commitment in spirit while at the same time not thwarting worthwhile development.

I have before me a map that shows how the boundaries could have been constructed. I understand it has already been incorporated in *Hansard* in another place so I will not ask for it to be incorporated again. I commend that map to all honourable members because it shows that the boundaries could have been so constructed that three small areas — one of 7 hectares, one of 1 hectare and one of 13 hectares — could have been included within the Falls Creek resort, and that arrangement would have facilitated the most effective construction of the proposed Mount McKay development.

Without those three parcels of land there will either be no development — because the developer might walk away, and I suspect he may — or a chairlift running up

a drainage line, which is scarcely environmentally appropriate, instead of three chairlifts. That arrangement will deny skiers the challenging run that would have been provided for them in the original proposal.

Had the Minister for Energy and Resources sat around the table with the local members, the board of management, the developer, the Victorian National Parks Association for that matter, or whoever else had an interest in it, an agreement could have been reached. The minister was not even prepared to try.

I have said previously that the 40 hectares that fronts the Rocky Valley Dam is essential to the resort's future prosperity. More importantly, as Mr Stoney pointed out it has been worked over and raked over so often that it simply does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the national park. I hope during the committee stage the minister will inform me as to how that piece of land falls within the objectives and definitions in the National Parks Act for land that ought to be so reserved.

All honourable members have had the usual suspects writing to them saying how dreadful it was that the relevant 285 hectares of land was excised in 1997 and wanting it all back. I agree with Mr Stoney that the conservation movement could have done a lot for its credibility if it had been prepared to at least acknowledge that the Rocky Valley land was inappropriate to go into the national park in respect of both its condition and its location. But that was not the case and the demand was that the lot go into the park.

Mr Stoney quoted a letter from David Scott, a former chairman of the Land Conservation Council. Mr Scott also wrote to me; I think he wrote to all honourable members on this side of the house. I find it amazing that people want to lobby members of Parliament but cannot even get around to signing letters personally. That always indicates to me that the person who wrote it did not really have his or her heart in it. This is such a letter.

Mr Scott and I have been in conflict on these issues in the past. In 1991 he said that some of my notions were absurd. When I challenged him on that he denied ever having said so. In a letter to him of 19 August 1992 I was able to demonstrate exactly where he had said that. He was forced to write to me and admit, 'Yes, you are correct'. In his letter of 8 September 1992 he said, 'I did use the word "absurd" in my letter to you of 31 July 1991'. I have a very good filing system. I also have a very long memory. David Scott has no credibility whatever so far as I am concerned.

It is still not too late for the government to acknowledge that its action in proposing to return the whole of the 285 hectares to the national park is putting a very desirable development at grave risk. It is not too late to acknowledge that. It is not too late to say, 'Let's have another look at it'. That the bill itself provides a mechanism for excisions to be made from national parks is an admission by the government and by the minister that national park boundaries cannot be set in stone forever and that there has to be a mechanism to look at small areas that might be properly taken out to allow for highly desirable projects to proceed, or for some other reason. A mechanism is being included in the act and I call on the Minister for Energy and Resources to use the mechanism she is including in this bill to enable the three small areas to which I have referred to be looked at to see whether they can be excised to allow the project to proceed for the benefit of the people of north-eastern Victoria. I call on the minister to do that.

The final matter to which I will allude is that during the debate we have heard a lot from Mrs Carbines, Ms Hadden and others about the benefit of national parks to all Victorians and how there is a need to preserve those areas for future generations. I am happy to concur with that view, but I am exceedingly depressed by the lack of capacity of this government, and indeed the former government, to maintain national parks in an appropriate condition. I particularly refer to the spread of noxious weeds — especially blackberries. The Alpine National Park is becoming a haven for blackberries, which are running rampant. They also harbour all sorts of feral animals, such as foxes, rabbits and the like.

To my alarm blackberries are also established in the Barmah State Park and the department has taken no action. I have lived all my life adjacent to the state park and have spent considerable time there. I cannot recall seeing blackberries in the forest 20 years ago but when I last visited the area I was alarmed to see infestations of them. The country is not natural blackberry country. It has a relatively low rainfall and one would not expect to see blackberries there. I would have thought they would be much easier to control there than in the Alpine National Park bearing in mind that the country is flat, easily accessible, and so on. However, Parks Victoria seems incapable of arresting the spread of blackberries, even on that sort of land.

I therefore call on the government to match its rhetoric with budgetary allocations to make sure that the spread of noxious weeds in Victoria's national parks is controlled.

I conclude by saying that I am exceedingly disappointed that the bill is putting at risk one of the best developments in the high country of northern Victoria. It is being put at risk by the intransigence of the minister, who is allowing dogma to overrule commonsense. I call on her to reconsider the matter.

Hon. ANDREA COOTE (Monash) — I have much pleasure in speaking on the National Parks (Amendment) Bill. The bill has several elements. The first is the addition of 285 hectares at Mount McKay and the northern slopes of the Rocky Valley Dam to the Alpine National Park, about which I will speak later. The second is the addition of the Wongungarra area to the Alpine National Park, which I do not oppose. However, I note the grave concerns raised by several of my colleagues in this house and in the other place, especially the honourable member for Benambra, for the protection of continuous cattle licences.

The third element is the proposal to add former freehold land to the Organ Pipes National Park, to Kamarook State Park and to the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park. I commend and welcome those important additions. In Victoria parks are for all people, and people want and expect different sorts of experiences when they visit them. The Organ Pipes National Park and the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park offer very different experiences. On the one hand the compact Organ Pipes park, which is located at the end of the busy Tullamarine Freeway, has extraordinary geological outcrops of rock that resemble large organ pipes and is popular with families from the metropolitan area. On the other hand the Gippsland Lakes coastal Park is wild and remote. People visit for several days to have a wilderness experience in a remote, rugged place.

I place on the record my credentials for speaking on the bill, and particularly for discussing the Mount McKay area. I am a former member of the Parks Victoria board and I commend that excellent organisation for the work it does. I commend former Minister Tehan for having the courage to amalgamate both the former National Parks Service with Melbourne Parks and Waterways. I am pleased the current minister has kept that framework.

I also own an apartment at Falls Creek; my family and I enjoy the time we spend there enormously. I have done a lot of skiing at Falls Creek — although I fear the double black diamond run will be a little beyond me! I have also done some significant bushwalking through the Bogong High Plains around Mount McKay, to what is known as the Ruined Castle and down through the Mount McKay pipeline. I know the area well.

Two major issues exist in regard to Mount McKay: conservation and development. On the conservation side, I quote from a letter dated 18 May that I received from James Ensor of the Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA) in which he outlines clearly the Liberal Party's credentials for conservation. The letter states:

The VNPA recognises that the Liberal Party has been responsible for the implementation of a very significant number of our national parks and nature conservation reserves. Indeed, it was the Bolte Liberal government that formed the Land Conservation Council, which led to Parliament increasing our park estate from 3 per cent to 12.9 per cent.

Today national parks comprise 16 per cent of Victoria, and that is highly commendable. It is certainly world best practice, and something of which we can be very proud. The VNPA went on to talk about the flora and fauna in the Alpine National Park at Mount McKay, and I quote from the association's briefing papers on the bill:

The following species use the excised area as their habitat:

- the mountain pygmy possum (of national significance)
- the broad-toothed rat, mountain galaxias, alpine water skink and alpine bog skink (of state significance)
- the alpine bog communities and the silky daisy.

I recommend all honourable members see the silky daisy in flower across the Bogong High Plains; it is a beautiful sight, and this year the flowering was excellent.

A number of people have a conservation approach to the area, and many hike through the high plains and use the cattlemen's huts such as Langfords Hut, Ropers Hut and others as part of significant walking exercises along the alpine walking track in summer.

On the other side of the debate is development. My colleague Mr Baxter put it succinctly when he said development is a major concern for northern Victoria. The huge regional infrastructure development at Mount McKay has to be viewed carefully, looking at the work it provides and the opportunities for investment within that part of Victoria.

I refer to a letter from the mayor of the Alpine shire, Charlie Duncan, in which he refers to the importance of investment to the region. The letter states, in part:

This investment was projected to provide 1000 additional jobs in the development stage and 150 permanent positions when operational. The employment multiplier and flow-on economic benefit potential makes this development the

largest and most significant tourism-based development in rural Victoria.

That amount of investment in the area is not insignificant and needs to be considered carefully. Victoria needs tourism dollars and it is important to consider investments in additional skiing facilities to help provide the dollars. New Zealanders are promoting skiing in their country by offering good skiing packages to Queenstown, for example, so Victoria must encourage people to stay in Australia and ski within the Victorian Alps. The development of the double black diamond run will do that.

I shall quote from an article in a special lift-out in a May edition of the *Age* entitled *Ski May 2000*, which states:

Some of the mountain's southern slopes —

referring to Mount McKay —

pitch at a mind-boggling 50 degrees. Slopes of that order are usually reserved for extremists in Alaska and heli-skiers in the Canadian Rockies.

Kat skiing gets its name from the caterpillar tracks that are used on oversnow vehicles such as the Kassbohrers that will be used to take skiers to Mount McKay.

Those vehicles will be able to transport 10 people at a time.

It is a 50-degree slope that is important when one thinks of Australia skiing opportunities. We must not lose sight of that.

In a development sense it is important to see Falls Creek as part of an overall picture. For example, the Hoppit cross-country skiing competition held in Falls Creek is recognised throughout the world, and brings in a large number of interstate and international visitors to ski on the excellent groomed slopes.

It is pleasing that Falls Creek is being used increasingly during summer. Steve Moneghetti takes a large contingent of alpine runners to train on the slopes because apparently the decreased levels of oxygen enhance speed. At any given time over the Christmas period significant numbers of runners use the high plains. The Rocky Valley Dam is the highest dam in Australia, and the New South Wales Institute of Sport sends a rowing crew to train on that wonderful lake. Several Victorian private schools, including the Methodist Ladies College, which takes a large group for about two weeks, use the lake. Those activities bring a significant number of tourism dollars into the region in a season that would normally be a downtime.

The area should be used as a year-round resort, and the inclusion in the Alpine National Park of 40 hectares by the Rocky Valley Dam site and around the creek is short sighted. It is a difficult area; it does not add much significance to the park but would enhance the area for summer development. Matters of conservation and development are important in our national parks. The vision for Parks Victoria in its 1998–99 annual report is for:

an outstanding park and waterway system, protected and enhanced for people, forever.

It is important to keep the balance. We could have pristine parks that are never used and kept in their pristine condition throughout the generations, but such parks should be used for today as well. The balance is important not only for the people who want to see, for example, the Organ Pipes National Park or Croajingolong National Park, a wilderness area in Gippsland, but for people who want to use the parks for recreation and are not involved with walking, hiking, conservation or ecotourism. It is important to reach a balance. The second-reading speech states:

The government is therefore committed to:

limiting excisions to those that can be clearly justified as minor and as having minimal impact on the park.

This is a lost opportunity because 280 hectares is an enormous amount to be taken out of a national park. Having examined the developers' plans for the land to be used for ski tows, which amounts to 21 hectares, and a further 40 hectares along the Rocky Valley Dam, I believe the government has lost an opportunity. Taking the total 285 hectares in a block to honour an election promise shows that it is not prepared to compromise. The additional 61 hectares being taken out of the park is a lost opportunity for development.

I do not disagree with the fact that the majority of the land should be put back into the park, in fact, I welcome it. I refer to what Minister Garbutt said about excisions in the second-reading speech. It states:

The government is therefore committed to:

...

limiting excisions to those that can be clearly justified as minor and as having minimal impact on the park.

The 61 hectares we are speaking of would have a minimal impact on the park. It would remain pristine, which is to be encouraged. I am sad to see a great opportunity lost.

The last part of the bill deals with the National Parks Advisory Council. It gives the council additional

powers to advise the minister on proposed excisions. The council's annual report for 1998–99 states:

The National Parks Advisory Council is responsible for advising the Minister for Conservation and Land Management generally in relation to the administration of the National Parks Act 1975 and on particular matters on which the minister seeks its advice.

I remind the house that the membership of the council represents a broad spectrum of park users. It includes two rural community representatives, two metropolitan community representatives, and representatives of the Victorian National Parks Association, Environment Victoria and the Municipal Association of Victoria. Honourable members must be mindful that Victoria's parks comprise not only national parks but also a significant number of metropolitan parks. A university professor and the Director of National Parks are also members of the council. It is important for that group to have additional powers, and I welcome that aspect of the bill.

For the record, the National Parks Advisory Council has said it is maintaining a watchful brief on the proposed Mount McKay developments with a view to ensuring the impact on the park is minimised. The technical advisory group (TAG) has produced a large report, which I believe has been completed. The minister is now calling for an environment effects statement yet the TAG report pre-empts much of what might be covered in an EES. A great deal of money will be wasted if an EES is conducted on top of the work already done by the TAG. It is important for the minister, the Victorian National Parks Association and the developers to attempt to reach a compromise.

I do not oppose the bill but certain aspects need more balance. I am a user of Falls Creek and Mount McKay as a skier, and I am a great lover of Parks Victoria and the Victorian national parks scheme, and I would like to see the 61 hectares I have referred to excluded from the 285 hectares. I hope the minister can find a balance between national parks and conservation issues and the development issues. That would be a win-win situation. I suggest the minister closely examine that.

Hon. E. J. POWELL (North Eastern) — I am pleased to be speaking on the National Parks (Amendment) Bill. However, as I am the last speaker there is not a lot left for me to say that has not already been said. I will reiterate some of the comments of former speakers.

Many honourable members either know intimately the areas with which the bill deals or have a passion for national parks and hence an interest in the impact the

bill will have on those parks. I will speak mainly on the provisions that relate to Mount McKay because that area falls within the wonderful province the Honourable Bill Baxter and I represent.

The alpine region is beautiful and is an attraction to tourists. In the second-reading speech Minister Garbutt stated that in 1997 the former government introduced without prior public consultation or proper explanation a bill to excise 285 hectares of land from the park and include it in the Falls Creek Alpine Resort. I put it on record that that is absolutely not right.

As the Honourable Bill Baxter said earlier, when the former Minister for Conservation and Land Management, Mrs Tehan, introduced the bill into Parliament in 1997 she asked that it lay over until the following sessional period. She put it on hold for three months to allow further information to be sought — that is, to allow for wide consultation. The Honourable Bill Baxter and I used the time available to visit Falls Creek with members of the Falls Creek management board and others interested in the area, such as representatives of the Falls Creek chamber of commerce. Following an inspection of the resort we came away with a true reflection of what was needed for the resort and the exciting programs planned for the oncoming years.

The second-reading speech claims the previous government had not consulted. That certainly is not true. Many of us who were here at the time had an extensive consultation period and spoke to many people about the impact of the bill on the alpine area.

As the Honourable Andrea Coote, the Honourable Bill Baxter and many other members have said in their presentations, the government has not consulted. In 1997 when the honourable member for Bundoora in the other place, Ms Garbutt, now the Minister for Environment and Conservation, was speaking on the bill she said that if the Labor government got back into power it would put the land back into parks. There has been no consultation, no going back to the community; just plain, 'We made the decision and now we are back in government we are putting it back in'.

The government is missing an opportunity to allow the bill to lie over, as proposed in the reasoned amendment in the other house asking that the bill not be read a second time until a copy of the report of the technical advisory group is provided to members. It was meant to have given time for people to hold the types of discussions being talked about here this morning and to let us look at the best interests involved: whether the 285 hectares has to go back into the alpine park or

whether, through consultation, we can find some reasonable amount of land for that purpose — whether it be 60 hectares or 40 hectares — but let us look at it with the developers and the management board and consider the best interests of the environment and the protected species but also the interests of the Falls Creek resort. It is an opportunity lost, but perhaps in the committee stage there can be discussions about how we can best fix that situation and maybe the opportunity will not indeed have been lost.

While opposition members speaking on the bill do not oppose it, we want to ensure the development on Mount McKay is not jeopardised, adversely affecting employment in the local area and tourist development for the benefit of the whole of Victoria.

I would like to talk a bit about the Falls Creek Alpine Resort. It is a top-class tourist destination and skiers come there not just from across Australia but from across the world. The management committee is an excellent one and has had strong input in developing the resort into a world-class facility and looking at other initiatives to increase employment, making the development something we can all be proud of.

The fact that the resort is in country Victoria should not deter us from saying it will be an icon for tourism. People in country Victoria see icons being built in Melbourne and it would be great to see an icon being built in country Victoria.

As has also been said by other speakers, the management committee is looking at making it an all-year resort, and that will be very important because if a resort is used only in winter, employment levels in the area will not keep the young people active and enable them to stay there and continue their employment. The fact that Falls Creek is likely to become an all-year resort — there have been many initiatives to make sure that occurs — will improve employment prospects in the area.

It is important for young people to get jobs in the skiing and hospitality industries and perhaps move on from there to work in other parts of the world because they have the skills and experience required. The Falls Creek resort has been developed as a conference venue, and the National Party had a very good conference there. The venue can be used all year.

As has been said by other speakers, the venue is also particularly good in spring and autumn; it is not just a winter resort. When I visited the area I found that both rowing and cycling are popular. Cycling is particularly good for both the heart rate and the muscles. Because of

its steep hills and inclines cyclists have found the resort to be a wonderful training venue. Therefore, it must be ensured that the development is not jeopardised.

The former government gave the resort much-needed support in 1997, when it provided for the transfer of 285 hectares of land to the Falls Creek Alpine Resort and for the extension of lifts to provide access to the skiing areas of Mount McKay and the area around the Rocky Valley Dam. The inclusion of those areas of land in the development would make it a world-class facility.

I had intended to read the letter Cr Charlie Duncan, the mayor of the Alpine Shire Council — a respected mayor and person who is passionate about the alpine area — wrote to many honourable members, but the Honourables Bill Baxter, Graeme Stoney and Andrea Coote have already read excerpts from it. Nevertheless, I will refer to two important paragraphs of the letter which state:

This amendment will effectively landlock the Falls Creek resort and frustrate the future development of infrastructure required for the resort to remain competitive.

The amendment as proposed will overturn a commitment given by the previous government, disabling the development at Mount McKay of the most advanced skiing runs in Australia and the opportunity of increasing the ski area of the resort by 140 per cent.

That shows the extent to which the area can develop.

The government's decision to overturn a planning decision by the former government for ski-lift developer, BCR Asset Management, could jeopardise the project and put at risk a great tourist attraction. During construction the ski-lift development would create 1000 jobs and upon completion it would provide the opportunity for 150 permanent jobs for the alpine region. The ski-lift company plans to spend \$50 million in the area on new ski lifts and a further \$50 million on further associated development. It must be understood that it is a major private investment in the alpine area.

It is also important to understand that if the ski run is developed it would probably be the only major development in country Victoria. It would be a special development, even unique. Currently there is no other proposal for a major development that would create jobs and private investment of that kind in country Victoria. The government cannot turn a blind eye to that. It would be a great icon for country Victoria.

There has been some discussion about an environment effects statement and the reason for its being held up. I refer the house to a letter from the former Minister for

Planning and Local Government, Rob Maclellan, to Dr Ron Bassett, executive chairman of MHSC Pty Ltd, a ski-lift company. The letter states:

I refer to your proposal for the development of lift-based skiing at Mount McKay within the Falls Creek Alpine Resort.

I have decided that the proposed development does not require the preparation of an environment effects statement (EES).

I am satisfied that following the outcome of the initial consultation process led by my department, the statutory planning framework will ensure that the environmental assessment of the proposal will be robust, transparent and provide for adequate consultation.

To advance your proposal for a ski field you will need to submit to my department for a combined amendment and permit process under section 96A of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. I recommend that upon submission of this documentation, you request that the permits and amendments be considered together. The proposal would be placed on public exhibition for a period of two months.

The consultation process has been successful in defining the range of issues that need to be addressed by your company in the development of your detailed submission for permit.

The then minister's letter concludes:

It is essential the development of the final documentation occurs through detailed and direct consultation with the consultative group already formed. I intend that this group be supplemented by other interest groups not represented in the initial process. I also require this consultative group to have an independent chair. Further information on the stage 2 consultation process will be provided shortly by my department.

The environmental and other issues were taken on board. I hope what is agreed on in the committee stage will go some way to ensuring that other alternatives are considered so that the development can go ahead without detriment to the national park.

I touch briefly on alpine grazing licences and the mountain cattlemen. Over the years I have received many letters in which people expressed the hope that as a rural member of Parliament I would understand the importance of cattlemen being able to graze their cattle in the national parks. The cattlemen have asked me to seek the government's assistance to lift the suspension of grazing rights in the Alpine National Park, which is a right of access they have had for more than 100 years.

The Honourables Graeme Stoney and Peter Hall, together with the Honourable Bill Baxter, have worked tirelessly over many years with the mountain cattlemen and have raised the issues in Parliament many times. They have pointed out how important it is, particularly during hard times, for the cattlemen to be confident that

their leases will be extended. They also need the security of knowing where they can graze their cattle.

Mr Stoney referred to the Honourable David Evans, a former National Party member and the Honourable Rosemary Varty, a former Liberal Party member, both of whom sat in this house. Over many weeks, they too discussed the importance of the grazing rights and licences to cattlemen.

In conclusion I am sure a balance can be found between protecting the environment and the endangered species and plants and protecting people's livelihoods.

The ACTING PRESIDENT

(Hon. G. B. Ashman) — Order! There is a lot of conversation between the speaker and Hansard which is making it difficult for Hansard to hear.

Hon. E. J. POWELL — Along with other members who have spoken today, I am disappointed that the bill was not held over to allow for further consultation on and consideration of what is in the interests of the development, the environment and everybody else concerned.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Committed.

Committee

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — In addressing clause 2, I deal firstly with a number of matters referred to in the second-reading debate. No doubt some other matters will be raised when the committee deals with specific clauses.

The excisions dealt with in clause 5 were referred to by Mr Philip Davis. I understand that the advice from parliamentary counsel to the government is that the reason for proposed subsection (aa) of section 11(1) empowering the National Parks Advisory Council as it does, rather than mandating the minister to seek the National Park Advisory Council's advice, is to avoid a potentially difficult legal situation arising if, for some reason, the NPAC's advice were not sought, which could raise doubts about the validity of excisions. The bill provides that the NPAC will advise the minister on excisions.

Proposed subsection (3) of section 11 as inserted by clause 5 also requires the minister to cause a copy of the advice to be laid before both Houses of Parliament. However, that does not mandate the minister to seek the advice, although it is clear from the second-reading speech and the minister's statements about the bill that it is clearly her intention to do so.

The government's policy on grazing licences in general was referred to by a number of speakers. The government currently has no proposals before it to change current practices or licences that are in place. On the general matter of cattle grazing licences, the government's intention is that if it receives any such proposals it will deal with them by an open and transparent process of negotiation.

I refer to the specific licences that were raised during the second-reading debate, and in particular to Mr Stoney's remarks. While I agree with Mr Stoney that the mountain cattlemen have significant influence in all sorts of places, I would not want to elevate the mythology about them to any greater heights. He will therefore be disappointed to learn that the minister sought and was given approval on Monday to amend certain aspects of the bill dealing with the licences referred to by Mr Stoney, which was well in advance of the representations on Wednesday to which Mr Stoney referred.

I will refer to specific matters relating to grazing licences when the committee deals with the relevant clause.

The matter of deer hunting by stalking has been raised. The bill provides for deer hunting by stalking to be permitted in the area added to the alpine park. I am advised that that will be permitted from December through to February in accordance with what is permitted in the remainder of the park. I am advised that in line with the remainder of the national park and national parks elsewhere, deer hunting with hounds will not be permitted in the additional area.

Four-wheel driving was also referred to during the second-reading debate. I am informed that there are very few four-wheel drive tracks in the area referred to. It is the government's intention that existing access will continue, subject to appropriate road closures and other environmental protection measures that from time to time might be necessary as a result of seasonal factors.

I am informed that in line with policies generally prospecting and fossicking are not permitted in national parks. Those activities are permitted only in circumstances where it is specifically provided for in

the enabling legislation; it is not provided for in this bill.

In relation to the ski field development issues, in general terms the government has indicated it is not opposed to appropriate sustainable development in alpine resorts subject to proper environmental considerations.

The return of 285 hectares to the national park in the Mount McKay area does not preclude ski field development in the resort area, subject to proper environmental considerations. I understand that most of the Mount McKay area, including the summit area and most of the skiable slopes, has never been in the national park and details of proposals for alternative ski fields that are contained entirely within the former resort boundaries have been published previously.

Dr Bassett's specific proposals have been referred to by a number of speakers. The minister has indicated that the government is not opposed to appropriate development in resorts. I draw the attention of the house to environmental assessment processes and the decision by the Minister for Planning to proceed with an environment effects statement.

In addition to the correspondence referred to in the second-reading debate, correspondence has been received from Senator Robert Hill to the former Minister for Conservation and Land Management, the Honourable Marie Tehan, in which he expressed his concerns about the potential for the proposed ski development at Mount McKay to significantly impact on the nationally endangered mountain pygmy possum, or *Burramys parvus*. He sought advice from the then Victorian government — although that occurred during the caretaker period last year when it was unclear who would form government — about how it intended to deal with the proposal.

The commonwealth legislation — that is, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act — will come into effect on 16 July. It will enable the federal government to examine proposals that could threaten endangered species. In light of the federal legislation the Victorian Minister for Planning in the other place intends to implement an environment effects statement process.

The final matter relates to timber production. I refer to the north-east regional forest agreement (RFA), which maintains current levels of sawlog supply and provides long-term certainty of access to timber resources without requiring access to the Wongungarra area. However, in relation to the specific case of Mount

Beauty Timbers and its claim that it is adversely affected by the addition of the area to the Alpine National Park, I am informed that the minister has written to Mount Beauty Timbers confirming the Victorian government's support through funding to restructure its sawmill operation. The company has agreed with the government's proposal and, subject to federal government agreement, the future of that regionally important enterprise will be secured.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! As Mr Davis would be aware, the minister can take the opportunity when clause 2 is being debated to respond to the second-reading debate, whereas he may speak only on the commencement.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — Thank you. The minister made some comments about the excisions that require further embellishment.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Does that issue relate to clause 5?

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS — Yes.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! We will deal with that clause shortly.

Clause agreed to; clauses 3 and 4 agreed to.

Clause 5

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — The minister made some comments about excisions in which the key words were 'litigation' and 'circumstances'. I am trying to work out what specific circumstances would mean it is not possible to mandate the reference to the advisory committee on an ongoing basis. The advice the minister has been given indicates that there are particular litigious circumstances in which it would not be appropriate for the minister to seek that advice. I find that a little perplexing.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — By way of further clarification, as I understand the advice from parliamentary counsel — and I freely indicate that I am not a lawyer — it is not that there would be a problem with the minister seeking that advice; rather, if for some reason in the future this or any other minister under this or some future government omitted to seek that advice, that would raise some doubt about the validity of the legislation that contained an excision.

To avoid such a situation arising in the future, the provisions empower the council to provide the advice

and require the minister to table such advice, but they do not mandate the minister to seek the advice.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — Can the minister confirm that this relates to a failure of administrative process? If the minister and her advisers fail to seek the formal advice simply by an act of omission, that is what the clause is designed to deal with?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — Yes, that is my advice. It is clearly the government's intention to seek the advice, but this clause deals with an omission that could occur for some unforeseen reason.

Clause agreed to; clause 6 agreed to.

Clause 7

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — Clause 7 deals with deer hunting. I want to clarify its status because a change is taking place in land-use status allowing access for deer hunters. Can I confirm that, notwithstanding clause 2, the minister indicated that deerstalking would be permitted between December and February when in fact she meant it would be permitted other than between December and February?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I confirm that Mr Davis's interpretation is correct. Deerstalking is permitted other than between December and February. I misread my notes.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I seek a clear understanding of the government's intention. As the Wongungarra area is currently controlled as part of a state forest, hound hunting and deerstalking are permitted all year round. With the change of status the land will become part of the Alpine National Park and, unlike deerstalking which will be permitted from February to December, hound hunting will no longer be permitted. The effective change is the complete deletion of hound hunting and the restriction of deerstalking to a limited period each year.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — That is correct.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — While clause 7 relates to deer hunting in the Alpine National Park, it is appropriate at this time to refer to deer hunting in one of the other coastal park areas. At the moment hog deer hunting by method of ballot may be conducted on the Boole Poole Peninsula in the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park and I wonder whether the addition to that park will mean an increased area for hog deer hunting.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am informed that that will not result in an addition to the areas for hog and deer hunting.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 8

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — During the second-reading debate the opposition clearly expressed its concern about the impact on grazing licences affected by this clause. It appears that a circumstance will arise where licensees who have previously operated under forest licence arrangements will now be granted licences different from licence-holders otherwise licensed in the Alpine National Park. In other words, the bill facilitates an arrangement whereby licensees will be treated distinctly. Under the alpine parks arrangement there are alpine grazing licences and separately there will be ongoing licences that preserve the pre-existing arrangements.

It seems peculiar that, firstly, the licensees are not assured that their licences will be as valuable as those of any other licensees who hold an alpine park licence. Secondly, I would be interested to know whether the intention is to provide those people who hold continuing former bush grazing licences the opportunity to convert them from one-year to seven-year licences as has been done by many bush grazing licence-holders, notwithstanding that the licences will then be alpine licences rather than bush grazing licences.

Alpine licences have been issued for seven years. Notwithstanding that the current licensees, as I understand it, hold licences for only one year, they, along with other licensees, have been given the opportunity to convert or upgrade their licences. I am interested to know the attitude of the government on that.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — The government's position is to ensure that the current grazing interests of licensees in the Wongungarra area are continued and that the licences will continue to be able to be renewed. I understand the minister has written to the licensees giving them that assurance. I understand the effect of the saving clauses is to protect the status quo, which means that there will be no change to the area of the licences, the number of cattle permitted under the licences, the cost of the licences, or the renewal method of the licences. All those aspects will remain as they are. The minister has given those assurances.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — Following that important question from Mr Davis, it might be helpful to assess what happened in 1989, when most alpine graziers were faced with exactly the position the graziers are faced with now. It was handled by the insertion of a provision in the 1989 act. Section 32AD of the National Parks Act puts the matter into context. It states:

- (1) The Minister may grant licences in respect of the alpine and bush grazing licence areas in accordance with the agreement on provisions for alpine and bush grazing licences endorsed by the Minister on 25 May 1989.
- (2) A person who —
 - (a) immediately before the commencement of section 7 of the National Parks (Alpine National Park) Act 1989, was the holder of a cattle grazing licence in respect of any part of the alpine and bush grazing licence areas —

I believe this is a critical part —

- (b) applies in writing to the Secretary within 60 days after that commencement —

is entitled to be granted a licence under sub-section (1).

Will this apply to the licence-holders in the Wongungarra?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am advised that if such an application were to be made under the section to which the honourable member has referred, the minister would consider it. However, it would involve the existing licences being split into two parts in that some of the existing licences are in the park and some are outside. There would need to be an application made to the minister to consider such an approach.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — Thank you, Minister. There are many cases in the alpine park where the national park line goes straight through the middle of a grazing licence, where graziers have bush grazing licences and seven-year alpine licences.

Proposed section 55 provides:

... any licence over the hatched land, to which section 64 of the Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997 applied immediately before that commencement, continues in force and may be dealt with as a licence issued under section 32AD(1) of this Act.

Therefore the amendment to the principal act of 1989 makes provision for the Bogong graziers. The government could do the same for Wongungarra by such an insertion, which could read:

... any licence held in Wongungarra immediately before the commencement, continues in force and may be dealt with as a licence issued under section 32AD(1) of this Act.

Did the government consider handling the Wongungarra licences by notating them?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am advised that the approach outlined by Mr Stoney was considered. However, after discussions with the affected licensees the government decided to save the current arrangements which would not otherwise have been provided for. That approach was agreed to by the affected licensees and the Minister for Environment and Conservation in another place.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I do not understand why the Wongungarra graziers are being treated differently from the Bogong graziers when it would seem simpler to have them all under the same regime. It appears that the provision will cause enormous complications for the graziers and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Could the Minister for Energy and Resources provide the reason for the decision to go that way?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I can only reiterate my advice from the Minister for Environment and Conservation: that approach was considered but in discussion with the affected licensees it was agreed to deal with the issue as provided by the bill, including the amendment made in the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I understand that. I referred earlier to a briefing note that may have been sent to the Minister for Environment and Conservation. That briefing note said the decision was made to retain the current grazing interests in Wongungarra. Who made that decision?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — When it was determined that the amendment would be dealt with as it was subsequently, the decision was made by the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I seek clarification regarding the question I asked earlier about the status of licences that I understand are presently one-year licences. Does the bill inhibit the licensees from upgrading their licences to seven-year licences?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I referred to this matter in response to an earlier issue raised by the Honourable Graeme Stoney. There is nothing in the bill that precludes that

happening. It would require a proposal being put to the Minister for Environment and Conservation and the licences being divided. It is an issue for the minister to consider. It is not a matter which is addressed in the bill or which is precluded by the provisions of the bill.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I take it the minister is advising the committee that it is a policy decision for the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — That is correct. I understand it is a decision for the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — How many licences are affected by the change in the Mount McKay and Wongungarra areas, and will the minister supply the names of the licence-holders?

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Has the minister any advice for the committee? Time is moving on.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — Yes. If the information had been requested in advance it could easily have been provided. It is not in the notes that I have before me. In relation to the Wongungarra addition, the licence-holders are Ms Frazier, Mr David Treasure and Mr John Hall. In relation to Mount McKay the licence-holders are Hicks and Madison.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — I asked for that information during the second-reading debate when I forecast that I would seek the names of the licence-holders. Were those five licence-holders consulted on the proposed changes?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am advised that in relation to the Hall, Frazier and Treasure licences, discussions occurred with the licence-holders about the amendment moved in the other place. In relation to the Mount McKay licence-holders, given that the previous arrangements will be restored and that no change will be affected, there is no perceived need to consult with them.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — I refer to a matter I raised in the second-reading debate seeking comment by the minister about whether there were any plans to phase out alpine grazing licences. The minister responded that there was no proposal to exclude grazing from national parks, and if there were such a proposal — to use her words — there would be widespread consultation on the matter. Would that

consultation involve coming back to Parliament and debating the issue?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — Mr Hall is dealing with hypothetical proposals, and I referred to proposals that may affect particular licences. As I have said, it is not the government's intention or general policy to change any proposals dealing with individual licences. If issues arise they will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis in an open and transparent manner and by negotiation with any affected licence-holders. There is no proposal before Parliament or anywhere else to bring about a general change in the government's approach or general policy.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — I thank the minister for that advice. I think I am correct in understanding her answer to mean that if the government ever decided to prohibit grazing in alpine areas, given that various acts of Parliament allow for grazing to take place in those areas, we would have to come back and debate any proposed legislative change. I notice the minister is nodding to show she agrees with that comment.

In the second-reading debate I raised an issue about the transfer of a licence from one holder to another. I said that the application for the transfer of the licence was current and that it involved a transfer from Mr Spauld to Mr Andrew Kee on behalf of the Friends of Wongungarra Trust. That area of land lies just south of the land that is to be added to the Alpine National Park. I ask the minister whether she has had any advice on whether the minister has yet considered that application.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — This matter concerns areas outside the areas covered by the bill, but I am advised that the matter is with the department and has not yet been considered by the minister.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — The licensees of land in the Wongungarra area covered by the bill may want to transfer their licences in the future. What will be the attitude of the department, firstly, to transferring them to another cattleman's family or, secondly, to transferring them to an adjoining farm that does not have a lease, given that in the case of Mr Spauld and Mr Kee we have advice from the Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria that the department will be opposing the matter just raised?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — Those are matters the minister would

have to consider if they were to arise. They are not affected one way or the other by the bill. I am not able to indicate hypothetically how the minister would deal with those situations if they were to arise.

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — I appreciate the minister's answer. However, the decision the department or the minister arrives at on this issue will reflect the government's long-term policy on alpine grazing. That is why the question was asked. I realise it is outside the central purpose of the bill; but the opposition is asking about how government policy will be reflected in this or that future administrative decision such as the transfer of a grazing license.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — On another issue, the minister mentioned the Fraziers and the Halls. The name of their station is Coolungubra, so references to Ms Frazier and Mr Hall and the Hall family are references to that station.

The licence in question on Wongungarra south of the Divide has 150 head of cattle on it and is a bush licence. However, many times the Hall family has received correspondence that starts with the words, 'As yours comes under alpine grazing' and then goes on to give general information.

I would like to put aside for a moment what we are discussing here and ask the minister another question about the licence. At present it is a one-year licence. I ask the minister whether this property with its lease and licence is currently eligible for a seven-year bush licence, because that is pertinent to what we are discussing.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I believe I covered that question earlier when I indicated that a licensee wishing to proceed in that way would need to make an application to the minister and the minister would deal with it at that time.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — Given the spirit of the 1989 alpine park legislation, that is not a satisfactory answer.

On another matter, the maps, as all honourable members know, are very obscure. It is hard to get a map that truly reflects the status of the land. I ask whether the Wongungarra lease held by the Hall family south of the Divide falls entirely within the new portion of the alpine park or whether some of it falls inside and some outside?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am advised that the majority of the licence falls outside the addition to the park.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — The other Wongungarra licence I am interested in is the one the minister referred to as belonging to the Treasure family. Is that licence entirely in the park? Can we have an estimate of how much of it is in the park and how much outside?

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — You asked those questions at the briefing!

Hon. G. B. Ashman — The briefing is not recorded in *Hansard*.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! The committee process is going along quite well without further advice.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am not sure where we are headed here. In relation to that licence, I am advised that most of it is outside the park. If I had to hazard a guess about the relative proportions, perhaps about three-quarters of the lease is outside the proposed addition.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I ask the minister to explain the mechanics of how a grazier will have the numbers allocated to the section outside the park and the section inside the park, and under what criteria.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — My understanding is that those matters will need to be resolved with the licence-holders. That is their understanding, and they will be resolved in discussions with them.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I think I heard you say earlier that there will be two licences on the Wongungarra lease — one for the parks section and one for the outside section. Is that correct, or will there be just one licence?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am advised in relation to both licences that they will continue to be managed as they are now — as contiguous areas. To backtrack for one moment, in relation to the numbers of cattle that attach to each of those licences, they will continue to be managed exactly as they are now — as one contiguous area covering the smaller part of the licences inside the proposed addition to the park and the majority lying outside of it.

Debate interrupted pursuant to sessional orders.

Sitting suspended 1.03 p.m. until 2.06 p.m.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

BLF: assets

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (East Yarra) — I refer the Minister for Industrial Relations to the latest report to Parliament of the State Custodian who controls the assets of the former Builders Labourers Federation (BLF). Is it not a fact that the government has had confidential meetings with the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, the aim of which is to gift the frozen assets of the BLF, worth several million dollars today, to Labor's mates in the CFMEU, thus contravening the High Court and full court decisions on the use of those assets?

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — The answer is no.

Industrial relations: workplace agreements

Hon. G. D. ROMANES (Melbourne) — Is the Minister for Industrial Relations aware of inconsistencies between the federal government's opposition to pattern bargaining by unions and the use of pattern Australian workplace agreements by the former Kennett government? If so, what is her response?

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — Australian workplace agreements are more than unfair, they are surrounded by secrecy. Federal minister Peter Reith recently urged employees to use Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) to undermine both state and federal awards. The Office of the Employment Advocate is also an active partner in cloaking AWAs with secrecy and promotes pattern bargaining with employers by encouraging them to use a template of AWAs.

An Opposition Member — Oh, you call it a template!

Hon. M. M. GOULD — That is what it is. A pattern bargain is a template that is used to minimise conditions. It is interesting to note that Mr Reith has introduced legislation to seek to outlaw pattern bargaining, yet everything he says involves one rule for employers and another for employees.

All honourable members would recall the report of the inquiry into AWAs in the public sector that was commissioned by the Employment Advocate. The report revealed staff dissatisfaction with AWAs and the process surrounding their development. The Kennett government tried to hide the results of that inquiry and

then tried to sanitise it to cover up what was happening with AWAs.

The Bracks Labor government will support a federal Labor government returning to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission the powers that the Howard government removed.

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission needs to be resourced appropriately so that it can be involved in the prevention and resolution of disputes.

Australian workplace agreements (AWAs) were promoted as a great success, whereas in fact they have been a monumental failure. Only about 100 000 AWAs have been entered into, which equates to about 1 per cent of employed Australians; most are in the federal and state public services.

The previous Kennett government ensured — surprise, surprise! — that all 10 000 Victorian AWAs expire on 30 June. That is an example of pattern bargaining; the government has abolished them. Opposition members display their hypocrisy when they say they do not like pattern bargaining — yet they started it with AWAs for their public servants, and they all expire on 30 June!

The government would welcome the return of a federal system that has proper principles of collective bargaining and that looks after the rights of workers who join unions. Workers who choose to have individual contracts will still be able to do so, but in those cases they will be underwritten by common law.

BLF: assets

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (East Yarra) — I again refer the Minister for Industrial Relations to the report from the State Custodian who controls the multimillion dollar assets of the Builders Labourers Federation, and I ask: is it a fact that, despite the decisions of the High Court and the full court, the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union is refusing to transfer more than \$850 000 of the former BLF's cash to the State Custodian? What action will you, as the responsible minister, take to stop the CFMEU's unlawful behaviour?

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — The decision of the High Court is a complex one. The government is seeking legal advice on that matter. Under the previous government, every time a decision was made the matter went on appeal from court to court to court!

As I said, the matter is complex and the government is seeking advice from the Solicitor-General and legal

firms to ensure it makes an appropriate decision in line with the decision of the federal court.

Youth: round table program

Hon. JENNY MIKAKOS (Jika Jika) — Will the Minister for Youth Affairs inform the house what issues the first ministerial youth round table will consider?

Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Youth Affairs) — As I have mentioned in the house on previous occasions, the youth round table is an initiative of the government and will be held on 9 June 2000 — next Friday — at Treasury Place, Melbourne. The round table is the first of several which will be held each year. Two more are scheduled for this year — one in October in Gippsland, and another in metropolitan Melbourne in November.

At least half of the round tables each year will be held in regional towns, and each round table will involve a different range of young people. We anticipate that about 250 young people will have the opportunity to participate in the round table each year.

The inaugural round table will be held on Friday, 9 June, starting at 9.45 a.m. and will be followed by an informal lunch. It will be facilitated by Roger Holdsworth from the Youth Research Centre at the University of Melbourne. The round table will focus on issues relevant to the Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria, but will also allow time for the participants to raise other issues with me. I will participate in the round table that morning.

It will also be attended by Peter Kirby, chairperson of the review panel. Three other members of the review panel will attend, along with staff from the review secretariat and the Office for Youth.

At this stage there are 56 confirmed participants, and a few more are still possible. Participants have been nominated by either schools — state, Catholic and independent schools — regional youth committees or the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues. They are mostly 15 to 19-year-olds from metropolitan and regional areas.

The tone of the round tables, unlike that of this place, will be friendly and informal so that all young people attending will feel comfortable to make their views heard.

Following the round table, a report outlining the views of the participants and the minister's response to the

issues raised will be sent to each of the participants and will also be made available to the general public.

BLF: assets

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (East Yarra) — I refer the Minister for Industrial Relations to her answer to the first question about the BLF State Custodian. Is the minister denying that the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) has approached the Labor government to get the frozen Builders Labourers Federation assets?

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — The answer to the first question, whether I had discussions with the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, is no.

Hon. M. A. Birrell — On a point of order, Mr President, the minister seems not to have heard either the last question or the first one. I asked whether the minister has been approached by the CFMEU to get the frozen BLF assets. The minister has not responded to the question. In relation to the first question, she has not responded to whether the government has been approached about getting the frozen assets of the union. The minister is not addressing the question and wants to keep the issue secret.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The question was specific: whether the government had been approached. The minister may care to address that. I believe she said she had not been approached.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! As I have said before, I cannot force the minister to give an answer. I call the next question.

GST: statutory fees and charges

Hon. R. F. SMITH (Chelsea) — I refer the Minister for Energy and Resources to the unfair deal struck between the previous state government and the Howard government on the goods and services tax and its impact on statutory fees and charges within the minister's portfolio. Will the minister inform the house of its impact?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — The Bracks government does not support the Howard government's goods and services tax. However, we are obliged to implement the GST under the intergovernmental agreement signed by the previous Kennett government with the Howard government.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I ask the opposition to settle down and allow the minister to respond.

Hon. C. C. BROAD — The Bracks government is committed to ensuring that Victorians get the best deal possible, notwithstanding that the previous government entered into an unfair agreement. As the government will become subject to the GST from 1 July, its fees and charges will include a GST unless they have been specifically exempted under a determination by the federal Treasurer in accordance with the goods and services tax legislation.

Despite the implementation of the GST being less than four weeks away, continuing uncertainty exists in ascertaining the scope of those exemptions. Officers of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, in consultation with officers of the Department of Treasury and Finance, have been seeking for more than 12 months to clarify with the commonwealth the GST status of many fees and charges within my portfolio. One determination, which runs to many hundreds of pages, was made in March this year. However, there are still numerous areas of uncertainty.

Fees submitted to the federal Treasurer for exemption more than six months ago are still awaiting a final determination, and as late as last week the commonwealth was proposing to change the basis on which decisions have been made to date on whether royalties on renewable resources will be subject to a GST. That has the potential to create uncertainty for Victoria's abalone fishery, where a charge is levied on the basis of the beach price per unit of abalone taken. It is unacceptable that at this late stage no firm decision has yet been made on the impact on that important resource and export industry.

Another area of uncertainty within my portfolio is the treatment of fees and charges under a number of acts including the Extractive Industries Act and the Mineral Resources Development Act. Honourable members would be aware of the significant mineral deposits Victoria has and their importance for both the Victorian and national economies. At present a final decision is awaited on a number of fees and charges including those for exploration permits, pipeline licences and production.

Without a determination by the federal Treasurer prior to the commencement of the GST, as now would seem to be the case, fees may be subject to GST for some months and subsequently become GST exempt. The uncertainty for business is unacceptable. So is the

administrative burden of notifying affected persons of changes and ensuring that correct fees are levied and refunds are paid. That process will add to costs for business and the Victorian government.

Waverley Park

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — I refer the Minister for Sport and Recreation to the fact that his government has made no viable offers to the Australian Football League on Waverley Park. Does the minister concede that his policy of keeping AFL football at Waverley Park has collapsed and that he has failed as a minister?

Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — It never ceases to amaze me that Liberal and National members can be so vocal about Waverley Park when they had so much time to deal with it when in government. I understand they met with the Australian Football League once, and the meeting lasted 5 minutes. We have met with the AFL on five occasions, with the City of Monash — —

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I ask the house to settle down. This is the third last question. Let us hear the answer.

Hon. J. M. MADDEN — We have met on five occasions with the AFL and on a number of occasions with other relevant stakeholders, and we will continue to fight to maintain Waverley Park, unlike the Liberal and National parties when in government.

Olympic Games: soccer

Hon. D. G. HADDEN (Ballarat) — I refer the Minister for Sport and Recreation to the government's commitment to ensuring Victoria's fair share of the benefits of the Sydney Olympic Games and ask the minister to inform the house as to the finalisation of the Melbourne Olympic soccer draw.

Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — On a number of occasions in the house I have mentioned the Melbourne Olympic soccer — an exciting event for Melbourne and Victoria.

Tomorrow, Melbourne will find out which soccer teams will play at the Olympic Games football tournament at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) in September. Melbourne is in an enviable position heading into the Olympic Games football draw to take place tomorrow in Sydney at 11.00 a.m.

We already know that two of the tournament's biggest drawcards, the Australian men's and the world champion USA women's teams are scheduled to play here in Melbourne. Tomorrow we will learn of the further 11 teams that will play at the MCG. With the quarterfinals and semifinals in Melbourne we might get to see up to 16 different teams competing for Olympic glory over the course of the seven sessions.

Of particular interest is that Australia will be playing on the opening night of the tournament and it will be an exciting gala night with fireworks and all the razzamatazz. By tomorrow we will know which team Australia will be playing. The game will take place two days before the official opening of the Olympic Games in Sydney. Again that reinforces the fact that even during the Sydney Olympics, Victoria is the place to be!

BLF: assets

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (East Yarra) — I direct my question to the Minister for Industrial Relations and refer to the issue of the Builders Labourers Federation assets. I ask the minister to reflect on the accuracy of her previous answers on the matter and to advise the house whether it is true or false that the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union has approached the state government on the issue of the allocation of these assets.

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — You have already asked that question and I stand by the answer I gave you.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Mr President — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! If Mr Theophanous had an objection to the question he should have got on his feet and raised a point of order. You were too slow!

GST: small business

Hon. KAYE DARVENIZA (Melbourne West) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business. Can the minister inform the house what the state government is doing to restore full business confidence which is sliding as a result of the goods and services tax?

Hon. M. R. THOMSON (Minister for Small Business) — The government is well and truly aware from the Yellow Pages *Small Business Index* survey that business confidence is down. Over 50 per cent of small businesses believe they will be adversely affected by the goods and services tax (GST); and two-thirds of small businesses believe that the federal government

has botched the implementation so badly that it has damaged — —

Hon. Bill Forwood interjected.

Hon. M. R. THOMSON — No! Small business is obsessed with the GST and with the burden of trying to implement it without accurate information.

In contrast to the way in which the federal government has failed small business, the state government is intending to undertake a review to ensure the tax cuts introduced on 1 July actually assist businesses, including small businesses, so they benefit from real tax cuts.

The chair of the review was announced and it is Mr John Harvey, senior partner at Pricewaterhousecoopers; Ms Nicole Feely, the chief executive officer of the Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Professor John Freebairn, head of the department of economics at the University of Melbourne; and Ms Kath Townsend, the director of Executive Solutions. The review will go out and about and talk to business people about what they need in tax relief.

It has ensured that small business will be included in those discussions and Ms Kath Townsend will be a member of the panel, representing small businesses. That is in stark contrast to the federal government's lack of consultation, which explains why the goods and services tax is a tax that will not work. The government will ensure that its tax cuts benefit all businesses including small business.

In relation to other matters and the GST — Mr President, the last of the sticky buns without a GST will be in your office for afternoon tea this afternoon.

Honourable members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! If Mr Boardman and Mr Theophanous want to talk to each other, they should go outside.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Answers

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

That so much of the standing orders as require answers on notice to be delivered verbally in the house be suspended for the sitting of the Council this day and that the answers enumerated be incorporated in *Hansard*.

The question numbers are: 432–37, 441–43, 449, 450, 453, 455–57, 459, 460, 462–67, 471–73, 479, 480, 483, 485–87, 489, 490, 492–97, 501–03, 509, 510, 513, 515–17, 519, 520, 522–27, 531–33, 539, 540, 543, 545–47, 549, 550, 552–58, 560 and 562.

I advise that there may be more answers before the end of this day.

Motion agreed to.

NATIONAL PARKS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Committee

Resumed from earlier this day; further discussion of clause 8.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — Before the suspension of the sitting I was seeking the committee's clarification on the rights of licensees of the various grazing licences affected by the clause. The Minister for Energy and Resources confirmed that in future the licensees holding licences over land with what could be described as bush-grazing conditions that will be incorporated into the alpine park grazing licence arrangements will be subject to policy decisions of the minister of the day.

That is of some concern, notwithstanding the comments made by the Honourable Peter Hall, who specifically pursued whether any proposals were on foot to phase out grazing in the park. The Minister for Energy and Resources firmly indicated that there are no such proposals before the government.

I draw the committee's attention to a document headed 'Our natural assets', which is the Australian Labor Party's 1999 election policy document on the environment. The commitment made under the subheading 'Alpine National Park' states:

Labor will improve and extend the Alpine National Park by:

...

enforcing environmental conditions on grazing licences, and examining ways to remove all grazing from the park;

I am particularly disturbed about the security of and confidence in the quality of the licences that are to be vested in a bill that effectively incorporates a property entitlement of graziers to undertake a recognised pursuit in what is not now but will become the Alpine National Park. I am not comforted by the assurances provided so far and I would like the minister to reconcile, if she is able, the Labor Party's stated policy commitment — that is, to examine ways to remove all grazing from the park in the context of the security of

tenure that the licensees affected by the bill will have once the legislation is passed.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I acknowledge the reference by the honourable member to the government's election policies, which stand. I refer him to the statements made earlier during the committee stage that no proposals are before the government.

I refer the honourable member to the minister's undertakings to the licence-holders affected in this instance, which I have gone through specifically, as to how they will be dealt with. The bill, to the extent that it directly addresses those matters, allows for the licences to continue to be renewed. I reiterate the assurances that the minister has given to the licensees about those renewals.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I continue to have some difficulty. Frankly, the minister's response did not satisfy my concern about the matter. It is clear that under the current arrangements the government's policy commitment does not apply to the licensees — that is, their current licences do not impinge upon the alpine park. So, the government's policy commitment should cause no great anxiety because they are operating under bush grazing licence conditions.

With the passage of the bill the area of land which is licensed to the cattle licensees will be part of the park. Notwithstanding the assurance of the minister that there is no present proposal before the government, it is a fact that the government's clear intention is to remove grazing from the alpine park. The minister has advised the committee that in order to proceed we must just accept that a policy commitment has been made, which the minister has reiterated as being the standing policy. How can we reconcile the fact that, according to the minister, graziers have been given reassurances that are completely at odds with Labor's policy position that its ultimate objective is to remove all grazing from the alpine park?

If that is the policy objective — notwithstanding there is no proposal before the government, as we are being advised — I cannot understand how the licensees can have any security when their licences are subject to the government's whim on the alpine park.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I reiterate that the assurances the Minister for Environment and Conservation has given to the licensees have gone into specific detail about the licences and their renewal, that the minister has had discussions with the licence-holders, and that the advice

provided to me is that the licensees have no problems dealing with the licences in the way that I have outlined on behalf of the minister.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — Given that the minister has reinforced the government's policy position and clearly does not resile from the objective of removing all grazing from the alpine park, all I can do at this point is indicate that I hope in further consideration of this clause that the opposition will be provided with some comfort. It would seem to me that there is an impossible conflict between what the government is doing about the assurances it is offering and its incorporating into the park an area of land over which there is an entitlement to graze that will be denied in the future if the government implements its policy.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I take issue with the minister, because I know when the Minister for Environment and Conservation rang one of the leaseholders, Mr Hall, he told the minister that he had had several problems — one being the corridor issue, which I raised in detail during the second-reading debate. I suggest the corridor issue could have been on the table for discussion during that process. Unfortunately, there has been no response from the department. It has been a one-way dialogue. Mr Hall has been trying to get an answer out of the department but there has only been silence.

This morning Mr Hall told me that his position is impossible to manage, that the department is not helpful, that the ranger has suggested he give it away, and that the ranger has been very officious over the summer. Mr Hall asked me why it has got to that point, and I ask the minister the same question. I also ask whether the government is using the issue to pursue Labor Party policy.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — The answer is no. I am advised that now that the minister has been made aware of that particular case, she has undertaken to examine the practical difficulties being experienced by the licence-holder and the specific circumstances, with a view to resolving the problem.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — Do I have your assurance that all efforts will be made by the government to solve the corridor issue to the mutual benefit of both parties?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — Yes, that is so, Mr Chairman.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — On another issue, I refer to the National Parks (Alpine National Park) Act of 1989, which provides in section 32AD(3) that:

The Minister may grant licences in respect of the park described in Part 37 of Schedule Two in accordance with the agreement on provisions for alpine tourism licences endorsed by the Minister on 25 May 1989.

By way of explanation, Mr Chairman, that agreement allowed for three-year licences to be granted to tourism operators. I ask the minister: if tourism operators were to apply for licences to operate in the Wongungarra area of the park, would they be given one-year or three-year licences?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — That is obviously not a matter covered by the bill. However, I am advised that if such an application were received, it would be assessed on its merits, along with any other such application.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — Can I assume, therefore, that if an operator with a good reputation and with good bona fides were to apply, he or she would be given a three-year licence, in line with what occurs in the rest of the alpine park?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — That is a hypothetical example. Without knowing what application might be made for what purpose, and given that the bill does not deal with those matters, I do not wish to start giving hypothetical answers to hypothetical questions.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I make just one further comment to wrap up the topic. It is highly likely that tourism operators will get three-year licences to operate in the proposed Wongungarra area of the national park, which will be in conflict with graziers, who can get only one-year licences. That anomaly again draws attention to the discrimination being applied against graziers.

I refer to the Alpine Advisory Committee, which is provided for in the 1989 act, section 32AE(1) of which provides that:

There shall be a Committee known as the Alpine Advisory Committee.

It goes on to list the good organisations around the state which nominate committee members to the Alpine Advisory Committee.

I ask the minister: will the Alpine Advisory Committee have jurisdiction over grazing licences both within the

Wongungarra area of the park and outside the park, and if so, how can that work?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am advised that the provisions in the bill to preserve these licences mean that the Alpine Advisory Committee does not have a role with regard to these licences.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — It is my understanding that one of the Alpine Advisory Committee's main tasks is to comment on grazing issues in the Alpine National Park, so how can that be the case?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — It is clear that the provisions of the bill preserve these licences. If the honourable member examines the clause we are dealing with he will note there is no provision for that to be altered by the Alpine Advisory Committee.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I am asking for the reason behind this incredible decision.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am not sure what the honourable member is referring to as an incredible decision. I would have thought the honourable member would have welcomed the government's providing for the existing licences under these provisions of the bill.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — The concept behind the Alpine Advisory Committee is to have an independent panel made up of respected bodies and groups and including people appointed by the minister to ensure fairness for groups using the Alpine National Park, including graziers and tourism operators. The fact that the Alpine Advisory Committee is being sidelined and gazumped is of great concern to me.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I note the honourable member's concerns.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I drew the minister's attention to some advice to the Minister for Environment and Conservation, which was 'the decision was made to retain the current grazing interests'. I asked who made that decision. The answer was that the Minister for Environment and Conservation made the decision. As the advice to the Minister for Environment and Conservation was that the decision had been made, how on earth could she have made the decision?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I do not have in front of me the paper to which the honourable member is referring, but I am advised that it was a decision made by the minister.

Hon. E. G. Stoney — I can make the paper available.

The CHAIRMAN — Order! Mr Stoney may hand the paper to the minister if he wishes.

Hon. E. G. Stoney — I am happy to table it.

Hon. C. C. BROAD — And subsequently by the government.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I again make the comment that the advice to the minister was that the decision had been made. Therefore the minister could not have made the decision.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I have one final comment to make on clause 8. In closing the discussion I want to reiterate the opposition's real concern and alarm at the fact that the minister responsible for the Alpine National Park will be the minister who has policy control over the future of grazing licences. Graziers have had confidence in the bush grazing licence arrangements in the past, but after the bill receives royal assent those arrangements will be subject to the policy position articulated in Australian Labor Party policy documents of September 1999, which is to remove all grazing from the park.

Further, it has today been reaffirmed by the Minister for Energy and Resources that that will remain the policy of the government. That being the case it is quite evident that, subject to the discussions that have taken place in this committee stage of the bill and the assurances provided by representatives of the government to the licensees who are directly affected, the reality is that the licences will be at risk if the government implements its policy of removing grazing from the park.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I refer to the minister's comment that the cattlemen had no effect on the introduction of the amendment moved in the other place. The bill passed the lower house about lunchtime on Thursday and the minister said the amendment was around on Monday, which is probably correct. The row blew up on Wednesday night when I telephoned Mr Hall in the Buckland Valley and was told he had had no contact with government officials. I believe the minister said the licensees were contacted and the amendment was discussed. However, that did not happen until Thursday morning.

If the cattlemen had no effect on the process, will the minister advise why the department's Traralgon office and the minister both rang Mr Hall on Thursday morning almost as the bill was being passed in the lower house?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — My comments were intended to be taken in a slightly more light-hearted vein. It is acknowledged that the minister did not discuss the matter with the licence-holders until about the time described by the honourable member. I was referring to the consideration of the amendment by the minister and the government in advance of the discussions occurring with the licence-holders.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — Will the minister agree that Thursday morning, when the bill is before the house, is a bit late to consult with the licensees?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I note the honourable member's comments. It is not a matter for me but for the responsible minister.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 9

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I wish to clarify a couple of matters concerning clause 9. I refer to the response of the minister in her overview of issues that arose from the second-reading debate, particularly to the addition of Mount McKay into the alpine park. Significant concern was expressed during the debate about the long-term viability of the Mount McKay ski field. The matter was extensively flagged in discussion in this chamber and I note in the lower house rather more passionately perhaps than it was canvassed here.

Nevertheless, it is evident that the bill does not seek to address this long-term problem. Certainly clause 9 impacts upon the future development of the Falls Creek ski field. Without going into the detail of the broader issues associated with ski-field developments, I will simply pick up the minister's comment on clause 2 that the amendment will not preclude ski tows being constructed in the national park.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — My understanding is that that is correct; the bill does not preclude that. However, such developments are subject to an environment effects statement process to deal with the environmental impacts which might result from such development.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — If the amendment will not preclude that occurring, is the government implying that, as part of the longer term strategic view of the development of the mountain and ski field, the government would see it as desirable to provide that access to a small part of the park to facilitate the more viable ski-tow arrangements?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I can only reiterate my previous comments, that any development proposals would have to be subject to an environment effects statement process and the government would not want to indicate any view about that in advance of such a process. Again, I observe that in the current development of the resort area there are proposals for future development within the resort area and absolutely nothing in the bill would preclude that.

Hon. E. J. POWELL (North Eastern) — My question is probably on the same issue. I seek the minister's advice as to what will happen if all the 285 hectares of land is returned to the Alpine National Park. Is the government suggesting that it will require only an environment effects statement consultative report and that the ski tow would then be allowed to be built in the Alpine National Park?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I have already advised the chamber that Minister Thwaites has said an environment effects statement is required and to the extent that the proposed developments, as I am informed about them, are contained within the resort area, the bill does not affect the proposed developments, subject to the environmental impact process.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — To clarify that, I presume that it would require a policy decision of the minister, so that it would be subject to two threshold tests: the first is agreement by the minister responsible for the alpine park; and the second is the environment effects statement. Is that right?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am advised that the proposals that have been discussed with the Minister for Environment and Conservation in another place are contained within the former resort area and would not require any approvals from the minister. The approvals would come from the environmental effects statement process.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — Is that notwithstanding those proposals encroaching on land which will now be included in the national park?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — My understanding of the proposals that have been discussed is that they are contained entirely in the former resort area.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I think I am getting an answer to a different question, so perhaps I have not made myself clear. It might be easier to deal with the issue hypothetically. It is not appropriate for me to talk about a possible commercial-in-confidence discussion between the government and a developer so I will put that to one side and deal with the hypothetical.

If a proposal is put before government for the further development of the Falls Creek Alpine Resort and as part of that development and to meet the most desirable development objective the construction of a ski tow impacts on the alpine park because it is proposed to include a large area of former resort land in the park, would the minister responsible for the administration of the park be required to make a policy decision or will that be a matter of process? Would the minister of the day determine whether that ski tow development could proceed even if only a small area of land in the park were affected?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — Mr Davis has indicated that it is a hypothetical situation.

Hon. Philip Davis — I am trying to help the minister.

Hon. C. C. BROAD — If such a hypothetical situation were to arise, I am advised that it would require consideration by the Minister for Environment and Conservation and would possibly also require legislation.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I thank the minister for that response. As I understand it, it is government policy that there will be no commercial development in national parks. If that is a stated policy of the government, it seems clear that there is no prospect whatsoever, notwithstanding the legislative framework, of any such development proposal proceeding. Is that correct?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I have indicated clearly that that is not an issue in the development proposals being considered by the government. I have also indicated that the hypothetical situation proposed by Mr Davis would require consideration by the minister and also possibly require legislation.

Hon. ANDREA COOTE (Monash) — During the second-reading debate I referred to the balance between commercial development and conservation interests, keeping in mind that, as national parks are important, so is development in northern Victoria. The map with the three strips of land the developer proposes using for ski lifts shows a total of 21 hectares, with 13 hectares on one site, 7 hectares on another and 1 hectare on the third. Will the minister explain to the committee why it is that the 21 hectares cannot be taken out of the 285 hectares so that the balance between the developer and conservation interests can be met?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am advised that the government believes a balance has been obtained between the Land Conservation Council recommendation that the area should be contained in the park and the outcome that allows the ski lift development to continue.

Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern) — I refer the committee to clause 9(2), which refers to the Falls Creek ski resort locality. It is widely acknowledged that the parcel of land between the Rocky Valley Dam foreshore and the proposed boundary of the ski resort has been worked over considerably in the construction of the Kiewa hydro-electric scheme. It has sheds on it, a couple of gravel roads, snow grooming equipment on hardstanding mounts and pipes and other infrastructure beneath the surface. In fact, it was freeholded as a Crown grant and purchased for the sum of £25 100 in 1959.

Referring to land that should be included in national parks, the preamble to the National Parks Act states:

... it is in the public interest that certain Crown land characterised by its predominantly unspoilt landscape ...

How does the government reconcile the inclusion of this parcel of land, which clearly does not meet that parameter by any stretch of imagination? Bearing in mind it does not meet that parameter why does the government not leave it attached to the ski resort given its importance for the future development and viability of the Falls Creek ski resort?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I refer the committee to the recommendations of the Land Conservation Council, which the government has accepted, that the area should be added to the park. In relation to the current resort services and utilities, I am informed that it is not intended that they be removed and that activities such as groomed cross-country trials and races will continue to be permitted in the area the honourable member has referred to.

Hon. W. R. BAXTER (North Eastern) — I am not too sure what recommendations the minister is referring to other than the Land Conservation Council recommendations of 1979. That was dealt with appropriately by the Honourable Graeme Stoney in his contribution earlier when he said it should be acknowledged that the world has moved on since then and what might have been appropriate in 1979 — I contest it was appropriate — should not be accepted without question today. Be that as it may, if that is the government's decision it is regrettable, and the government may come to regret it in future years.

It sets a precedent and goes to the issue referred to a moment ago by Mrs Powell about allowing development in the national park. If this land is to be in the national park and it has on it an existing development surely the most desirable Mount McKay extensions and ski lifts that require the three pieces of land mentioned by Ms Coote in her contribution should also be allowed to be constructed within the boundary of the park in line with the precedent that is being set with the return of a relevant parcel of land along the foreshore to the national park.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I wish to clarify what regrettably has become uncertain. In answer to my earlier question about the development of the ski tow I understood the minister to say, and I noted her words, that it would not preclude the development in the national park and the ski tow.

Recently we were given a response that alludes, firstly, to a policy decision made by the minister who is responsible for the park; secondly, an environment effects statement; and thirdly, the notion that further legislation may be required. That reference to further legislation came as something of a surprise, because it is not consistent with the earlier commentary. I would like to have that reference clarified.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I am happy to clarify those matters. My earlier remarks concerning future development referred to the resort area. If that was not clear at the time, I am happy to clarify that now.

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — So, for any future construction of a ski tow that may intrude on a small part of the park it would be necessary to obtain an environment effects statement, ministerial approval and a legislative amendment, because there is no capacity under the legislation to facilitate a proposed development. Is that what the minister is saying?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — My reference to legislation was that whether it required further legislation would depend on the nature of the proposal. In the absence of a specific proposal it is difficult for me to be more specific than that. I reiterate that any proposal for future development on national park land would have to be assessed to determine its appropriateness. That would require consideration by the minister. My reference to the environmental impact processes concerns the proposals the government is now dealing with.

Hon. E. J. POWELL (North Eastern) — I would like to pick up on the point Mr Baxter made earlier about a parcel of land going back into the national park. That parcel of land is certainly not pristine, and will probably be of no benefit to the national park. It has a grooming machine on it, pipes run through it and it is run down. It is not worthy of being included in the national park. I ask the minister for the reason for including it in the national park.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — The information I have been provided with indicates that, notwithstanding the past disturbance to the area that a number of honourable members have referred to, the former Land Conservation Council and later the Parliament determined that the whole of the Rocky Valley storage area and its environs should be included in the Alpine National Park. That is, in order to reflect the importance of the area as part of the Bogong High Plains the LCC treated it as a unit. That was to ensure that development would not encroach around the Rocky Valley storage, thereby protecting it.

Hon. ANDREA COOTE (Monash) — Picking up on a point made by the Honourable Phillip Davis about the environment effects statement process leading to the development of ski tows within the national park, will the technical advisory group report currently being completed be able to hasten that environment effects statement process so that the developer will have some idea of what he can go ahead with?

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — Yes, I am advised that the work of the Mount McKay technical advisory group will feed into the EES process, so that work will not have to be redone.

Clause 9 agreed to; clauses 10 to 13 agreed to.

Reported to house without amendment.

Report adopted.

Third reading

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

That this bill be now read a third time.

I acknowledge the contributions of the various honourable members and thank members of the opposition for their support of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT 2000/2001) BILL

Second reading

Debate resumed from 1 June; motion of

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources).

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — The opposition supports this bill.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

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

That this bill be now read a third time.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Don't forget to thank me for my contribution.

Hon. C. C. BROAD — I am very happy to thank members for their contributions, but I can't remember who they all are!

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

APPROPRIATION (2000/2001) BILL

Second reading

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

That this bill be now read a second time.

The 2000–01 budget is the first budget of the Bracks Labor government.

It was also the first budget speech in any Australian Parliament to be broadcast live on the Internet.

The Bracks government, at the last election, promised to deliver on four key pillars:

- responsible financial management;
- promoting growth across the whole state;
- delivering improved services, and
- restoring democracy.

This budget — the first budget of Bracks Labor government — provides the substance of this commitment.

These four pillars formed the basis of the 115 service delivery initiatives that were promised at the last election, and described in ‘Labor’s financial statement’.

This budget:

- delivers on each and every one of our commitments in education, health and community safety; and
- delivers on Labor’s commitment to the people of regional Victoria.

What’s more, the 2000–01 budget puts the state’s finances before Victorians in an unambiguous and open manner.

For the first time, the budget papers include a scorecard, measuring the government’s promises against what we have delivered.

For the first time, the budget papers set out estimates of revenues forgone through exemptions and concessions included in tax legislation.

And for the first time since the move to accrual accounting, the budget papers detail the cost of each individual output.

Responsible financial management

This budget delivers a financially responsible and socially progressive blueprint for Victoria.

We have fully funded our election commitments at a cost of \$426 million in 2000–01.

After allowing for that, a budget operating surplus of \$592 million is forecast for 2000–01.

And surpluses averaging \$450 million are projected over the remainder of the forward estimates period.

In addition, the government is committed to keeping state liabilities at prudent levels.

For example, this budget reduces net state debt from \$6.2 billion to \$4.7 billion over the forecast period.

Furthermore, this budget is putting \$250 million towards fully funding the Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme.

Growing the whole state

The government is keen to ensure that all Victorians share in the benefits of the state’s economic prosperity.

It is determined to reverse years of neglect to rural and regional Victoria.

Since coming to office, this government has introduced a set of coordinated strategies to enable Victoria to take advantage of opportunities from evolving economic, industrial and technological trends through Linking Victoria, Skilling Victoria and Connecting Victoria.

The Bracks government has a clear plan for growth across Victoria.

This budget includes two major initiatives to facilitate the implementation of this plan.

The first provides for business tax cuts totalling at least \$400 million over the next four years.

The second initiative is the establishment of a new \$1 billion infrastructure reserve, Growing Victoria.

In addition, this government has also introduced specific initiatives such as:

- a \$170 million Regional Infrastructure Development Fund, and
- a \$35 million Living Regions, Living Suburbs Support Fund.

These represent a major boost to the economic and social infrastructure of the state and are long overdue.

Delivering improved services

The 2000–01 budget commences the task of building a more inclusive society. It seeks to deliver improved services to all of Victoria.

After allowing for expenditure responsibilities taken on from the commonwealth as a result of the new tax system, government expenditure in the budget increases by 5.2 per cent.

This increased expenditure is primarily allocated to education, health and community services and police and emergency services — areas that required urgent attention after years of cuts and reductions in service.

Restoring democracy

Mr President, the Bracks government has pledged to return Victoria to open, transparent and accountable government.

The independence of the Auditor-General has been restored and the independence of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Ombudsman is guaranteed.

In addition the Auditor-General has been given new powers to review the budget financial statements.

The government has also introduced new financial responsibility legislation which sets new standards in government accountability and transparency.

These and other initiatives ensure that government in Victoria is now open, transparent and accountable.

Appropriation Bill

The Appropriation (2000/2001) Bill provides authority to enable government departments to meet their agreed service delivery responsibilities in 2000–01.

Schedule 1 of the bill contains estimates for 2000–01 and provides a comparison with the 1999–2000 figures.

In line with recent practice, the estimates included in schedule 1 of the bill are provided on a net appropriation basis.

These estimates do not include certain receipts that are credited to departments pursuant to section 29 of the Financial Management Act 1994.

Conclusion

The government is proud to report that the budget delivers on each and every one of Labor's commitments.

It provides a sound financial platform for the delivery of key services and for raising the living standards of all Victorians.

It achieves this, whilst maintaining a substantial operating surplus.

Mr President, the Bracks government made a commitment to develop an economic framework to grow the whole state and that is what we have done.

I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. D. McL. DAVIS (East Yarra).

Debate adjourned until later this day.

APPROPRIATION (2000/2001) BILL and BUDGET PAPERS, 2000–01

Concurrent debate

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

That this house authorises and requires the Honourable the President to permit the second-reading debate on the Appropriation (2000/2001) Bill to be taken concurrently with further debate on the motion to take note of the budget papers, 2000–01.

Motion agreed to.

Second reading

Debate resumed from earlier this day and 30 May; motion of Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) and Hon. C. C. BROAD's motion:

That the Council take note of the budget papers, 2000–01.

Hon. D. McL. DAVIS (East Yarra) — It is my pleasure to make a contribution to the cognate debate on the 2000–01 budget. I do so having in mind the second-reading speech I have just heard and my detailed examination over a period of the budget papers.

I shall reflect firstly on the current position in the state. The most striking aspect of the budget papers is the admission by the government of a decline in predicted growth. There is no doubt that we have seen an

extraordinary slowing in the growth rate over the past period, ranging from a high point of slightly more than 6 per cent per annum to an expected low point of 3.5 per cent per annum, according to the government's figures. I suspect the rate may slide even further, to less than 3 per cent.

That slowing of growth will have an extraordinary impact on the economy and the community. In the end the growth of the state is what delivers economic dividends and important social dividends to Victorians. The government has talked at length about growing the whole state, but it misses the point that the whole state cannot be grown in any significant way without robust economic growth.

The government concedes in its statements that over the past few years Victoria has, for the first time, been a state with a net inflow of population from other states. That historic turnaround was achieved by the Kennett government and has been inherited by the Bracks government. Unfortunately that trend will not last long under this government because Queensland and the other states are predicted to grow more strongly than Victoria. That will lead to a reversal of the historic inflow of population to Victoria from other states.

The government is inaccurate in its claim that the budget is pro-business. The delay in implementing business tax cuts will seriously hamper economic growth. That goes directly to the bottom line of whether the budget is aimed at growing the whole state. It is not, and it will actually harm business performance in Victoria and in its comparative business environment with other states.

Victoria should never regard itself as isolated. It competes as a community not only with other states but with other regions in the world. The loss of business confidence in Victoria is greater than that in other states and over and above that which one might expect. It is striking and a harbinger of unfortunate tidings.

The government has divided its budget into significant programs, using a form of badging. I will now examine the budget through the prism that the government itself has devised. The three so-called categories are Linking Victoria, Skilling Victoria and Connecting Victoria. I am not opposed to viewing the budget and its aims in that way. I propose to examine two of those categories — that is, Linking Victoria and Connecting Victoria.

The government claims the aim of Linking Victoria is to revitalise the state's roads, rail, and ports. Its aim is to achieve an integrated transport infrastructure. The

Connecting Victoria program claims to be a strategy for growing the state's information and communications technology industry and for sharing the benefits of those technologies across the entire Victorian community.

But I contend the government could have implemented a number of strategies that would have successfully enabled Victoria to compete more effectively. It could have integrated both aims into the national economy and brought various parts of the Victorian economy more closely together. I refer also to the aim of bringing rural and regional Victoria closer to the city and to each other.

Referring to the Linking Victoria strategy, honourable members will remember a debate in this place only a few weeks ago about Essendon Airport. It struck me that the budget shows a complete failure to understand that the transport systems are becoming increasingly interlinked. No government can focus simply on rail, road and ports and exclude aviation.

I focus specifically on aviation. It is true that aviation matters are a federal responsibility in the immediate regulatory sense, but aviation forms an important part of the state and national transport infrastructure. No-one can look at the Linking Victoria strategy without first understanding the importance of the provision of government infrastructure for aviation and air transport. The government has a role to play in facilitating the provision of aviation infrastructure and in ensuring the best connections operate between the different modes of transport.

There is almost no mention of these points anywhere in the budget papers, which I have searched exhaustively. There is discussion of the transit link to Melbourne Airport at page 266 of budget paper no. 2, the importance of which I do not deny. It is a significant piece of infrastructure for the government to examine.

Aviation is a growing and important industry. To give members an understanding of its growth and importance I point out that the domestic airlines monthly activity report for December 1999 gives an idea of the size of the industry for Victoria and for Australia. Available seat capacity increased over a short period to 3.326 billion seat kilometres, a significant fact when one examines it historically. The industry has increased in size about three times over the past 20 years in the number of passenger movements, seat capacity, kilometres and tonnage moved. They are approximate figures, but give the flavour of what has occurred.

At page 327 budget paper no. 3 demonstrates the point, which I have made before, that there is no sense in the removal of an output measure for the transport industry in submissions to airlines and regulatory agencies. I note that the number of submissions to airlines and regulatory agencies for 1998–99 was 13 and the target and expected outcome for 1999–2000 was 4 to 6 submissions. The output measure for 2000–01 has been abolished, so those figures seem to be the only output measure in terms of transport linking aviation that I can ascertain from the budget documents after close examination. That is unfortunate in the light of the loss of Virgin Airlines and the stance the government has chosen to take, which has been well examined in this house, on Essendon Airport. It is a matter the government will have to deal with over a period.

I note the Honourable Gavin Jennings conceded that perhaps there was a blind spot about aviation in the budget during the debate on the Essendon Airport. I reiterate my concern about that blind spot and believe something should be done about it in the near future. There is bipartisan interest in the subject, because we cannot underestimate the importance of linking Victoria and Australia to our region and to the whole country.

Ministers Batchelor and Brumby have been a long time in fulfilling their promises to the Australian Airports Association. I believe they have a meeting next week with that organisation and I hope at that time they will give some explanation why they have not undertaken, as promised in opposition, an inquiry into the operation of the aviation industry. It is true that an inquiry is being undertaken into airports in the Port Phillip region — a study duplicating an earlier study undertaken in the early 1990s — but this is a request for a broader examination. I know a number of people at the Australian Airports Association are concerned to see that broader aviation inquiry go ahead.

The budget papers give credence to their concern that they have been ignored by the now Treasurer and Minister for State and Regional Development and the Minister for Transport. Aviation is not directly a state responsibility but is part of the transport infrastructure of the state and an important part of growing the economy, particularly the regional economy.

The results we would like — that is, the aim of linking Victoria, as expressed in the budget — will not be achieved unless there is some movement on that point. The second-reading speech describes Connecting Victoria as:

... a strategy for growing the state's information and communications technology industry and for sharing the

benefits of these technologies across the entire Victorian community.

On page 101 of budget paper no. 2 the aim of Connecting Victoria is stated as follows:

Its aim is to integrate the information society into the main economic and social agenda of the state. Connecting Victoria also builds on a commitment by the government to initiate programs that are better targeted ...

That section makes no mention of an important topic — broadcasting. Although in the strict sense it is again a federal responsibility, the state government needs to integrate and build its technology in the broadcasting industry. Those who were members of the last Parliament will remember that, together with others in the house, I have had a longstanding interest in the impact of broadcasting on Victoria, in particular government broadcasters.

Hon. S. M. Nguyen — The ABC and SBS.

Hon. D. McL. DAVIS — The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), as Mr Nguyen correctly points out. It is important to examine the size of the budget allocation in that area. I pick up the government's own figures on page 298 of the budget paper no. 3. The information and communications technology (ICT) and multimedia output group has a projected budget for the coming year of \$31 million. If one considers the size of that budget in comparison with the federal effort in communications and broadcasting, one can see the size of the difference.

A recent inquiry into government-funded national broadcasting discovered that the two government-funded broadcasters spent \$811 million, in the case of the ABC, plus over \$100 million, in the case of SBS, across Australia in the last year they were examined. That gives some idea of the scope of the difference and the impact of those large, federal statutory authorities. I will say more about that but I make the point specifically that the budget and the government's own departments and programs need to link closely in a world where communications and broadcasting are converging, Internet broadcasting is building strongly and different methods of transmission are converging significantly.

In that context I comment on the Economic Development Committee *Report into the Effects of Government-funded National Broadcasting on Victoria*, tabled in the Parliament before last year's state election. The Economic Development Committee (EDC), in its previous form as a joint parliamentary

committee, did good work under the chairmanship of the Honourable Chris Strong.

I briefly and gently chastise the government. In the first instance, while referring to ICT in its budget it has yet to table in the Parliament its final response to the EDC report — it has tabled only an interim response. I would be interested to know what the government intends to do about constructively harnessing both the cultural and economic resources of those large federal broadcasters for the benefit of Victorians.

I refer to the themes of that inquiry, in particular the resource distribution of the ABC. I note that at page ix of the report of the Economic Development Committee the staff profile as at 21 June 1998 shows that 53 per cent of ABC staff were based in New South Wales, only 16 per cent in Victoria and smaller percentages in other states.

I note that most of the report was bipartisan. There were two minority reports, one of which recommended that SBS be moved largely or entirely to Victoria. There was also a minority Labor Party report. However, the bulk of the report was bipartisan and picked up important economic and cultural themes for Victoria.

The report drew on the impact on a variety of areas. I note the recent government announcement of an inquiry to be headed by Sigrid Thornton to look at television and film production in Victoria. I welcome the drift of the approach and the examination of the industry's importance for Victoria, but I hope the inquiry moves quickly because there is a continuing shift of resources.

I am particularly interested in the economic impact because hundreds of jobs are at stake. On the basis of figures calculated by and included in the submission I made last year to the EDC inquiry, the ABC might be spending, on a pro rata share of its resources to gross national product, around \$100 million less than it would otherwise be spending if this were allocated according to population or share of GNP. That is a significant measure of economic activity compared to the \$30 million spent by the government in its own budget on information and related technologies for assisting those industries.

The ABC and other such organisations have an important role in assisting business. The house is aware of my views on the need for greater business programming on both radio and television. There is also a significant role for extending the reach of SBS into country Victoria.

I am interested in the current direction of the ABC. It is important that as state politicians we keep a weather

eye to the interests of the community, because currently significant developments are occurring. The new managing director, Mr Jonathon Shier, appears to have the interests of the organisation at heart. He has a long history in broadcasting, in Scottish Television, Thames Television and in Europe, and a strong knowledge of digital television and digitisation of broadcasting. He is well placed to assist the ABC make that transition. I welcome his appointment.

I was pleased to see that the *Australian* in an editorial on 27 May made the point that Mr Shier intends to be his own man. The evidence he gave to a Senate committee recently would lead one to believe he will be his own man; he will stick up for the values of the organisation and will focus strongly on his role of improving the reach and distribution of the broadcasting of Australian cultural and economic life.

It is interesting to re-examine the report of the Economic Development Committee in the light of management changes occurring at the ABC at the moment. I watch those changes quite closely because there is great potential for Victorian broadcasting and culture to suffer significantly. One of the sufferers in the management changes has been Mr Andy Lloyd-James. The phrase used by the Economic Development Committee was that much of the evidence he gave was 'at odds with other evidence' he had given. In other words, the committee was accusing him of giving different evidence on different occasions. In the evidence I saw him give I found him to be somebody who did not impress me with the frankness and fullness of his explanations, and his lack of focus on the community benefits seemed to me unfortunate.

In that context not many Victorians would be sorry to see Mr Lloyd-James move to other activities. The management changes currently occurring at the ABC need to be watched carefully. I am reliably informed by sources at the ABC that now no live television entertainment is produced in Victoria, which highlights the cultural and economic impact of the changes.

A similar situation applies at SBS. Recently I have had representations from staff, members of unions and a number of industrial officers at SBS about the changes there. Honourable members should understand the importance of those organisations. According to its budget, this year the federal government is spending \$30 billion on information and communications technologies, and SBS has a budget of significantly more than \$100 million. While not expecting exactly a pro rata share, Victorians would expect a fair and reasonable share of SBS's funding to be spent in Victoria to reflect the Victorian community. It is

impossible for broadcasters and other communications organisations to reflect the full Australian community unless an opportunity exists for those voices to be heard and currently that is not possible.

I am informed that in preparation for its move to Federation Square SBS is beginning to make some significant changes — the government and the opposition would be wise to keep a weather eye on those changes. Since 1996 SBS television news and current affairs has lost the following positions in Melbourne: a current affairs journalist, a local news journalist, a production position, a publicity position and a unit manager. In addition, a chief of staff was made redundant and replaced by a person in a different position. Melbourne TV news now features three nominal news journalist positions and one sports journalist position. That does not adequately reflect Melbourne's cultural and economic significance — particularly its strong representation of multicultural communities — compared with the rest of Australia.

I have concerns also about SBS radio. From information recently provided to me, it has been failing to fill language program vacancies as they occur and vacancies in five head-of-group positions have existed in Melbourne for more than 12 months. SBS has no Melbourne positions with national responsibility or focus — decision making is not adequately reflected from Victoria. All those positions are located in Sydney although that has not always been the case.

If Victorians want to see the right sort of outcomes for our community, we need to ensure that resource, position movement, decision making and cultural reflection does not become Sydney-centric, which is what appears to be happening in both the ABS and SBS. I urge the government and the opposition to consider the implications for Victoria and its economy in a bipartisan manner.

I turn to the health allocation and specifically to issues affecting the East Yarra Province, which was covered by the Inner and Eastern Health Care Network. The Minister for Health in the other house announced changes to the health care networks, but there is also a need for concern and caution about the process leading to the reorganisation of the networks.

The word I hear from many of the hospitals in my electorate and more widely — hospitals with which I have had connections over many years — is that the level of confusion and uncertainty about the process is increasing. The government could cause tremendous damage to health care in Victoria if its reorganisation of health care networks is not handled sensitively and

carefully. What I am hearing does not fill me with much comfort.

The government must take into account the impact the health budget has on people's lives. It must get right the proportion of the public health budget in the overall health budget; no-one should underestimate the importance of the public health budget. I refer to the public health budget as a proportion of the overall budget and draw attention to the table on page 61 of budget paper no. 3. As I have mentioned on many occasions, public health is the area of a budget that is most likely to return significant dividends to the community, yet it is often the least obvious in its return of economic and social results when one considers the money that is spent in that sector.

The overall budget, without the public health component, shows an increase in funding of about 8.6 per cent, but the budget funding for public health services has been increased by only about 6 per cent. That reflects a lack of focus. The Honourable Rob Knowles, the previous health minister, maintained a strong focus on areas such as mental health and particularly public health; he was generous in his emphasis on that area. Victoria's public health programs and units are among the best in the world. The Minister for Health has not put the necessary focus on public health; I encourage him to change that focus.

I am pleased to have been able to contribute to the debate and to have sounded a number of warnings about the government's lack of focus on certain important industries and what I see as a likely and significant slowdown in economic growth. There are other reasons to be concerned about that slowdown in economic growth. Victoria's increasing industrial unrest is of concern. The unrest is not, as the Minister for Industrial Relations may like to believe, federally driven; it is being driven in significant part by the lack of leadership from the Victorian government.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS (Melbourne) — I am delighted to join the debate on the budget for 2000-01. Today's sitting of the Council is the final day of the second sessional period of the 54th Parliament of Victoria — and what a session it has been!

I reiterate what the Premier said in the second-reading speech: that in this session the Bracks government had lived up to what it said in the election campaign, that it would only promise what it could deliver, and that in this budget it has delivered what it promised.

That is the hallmark of the budget being considered by the house today. It is consistent with the approach the

government has brought to government administration and parliamentary reform with a whole suite of new program initiatives included in the 62 bills it has introduced this sessional period.

Hon. Bill Forwood — How many have section 85s in them? Let Hansard note the laughter!

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — I am proud to be part of a government which has introduced in the budget initiatives that deliver on 114 of the 115 commitments that were listed in Labor's financial statement and, through the legislation to which I have referred, important reforms on behalf of the people of Victoria. During my contribution I will show the interconnectedness between the structure of the budget, the initiatives that are contained in it, and the vital pieces of legislative reform the Bracks Labor government has introduced in only its second sessional period since being elected to office.

As the Premier and then Treasurer mentioned in his second-reading speech, for the first time the budget papers include a scorecard by which to measure the government's promises against what has been delivered. They are outlined in budget paper no. 2, page 159, chapter 8 headed 'Election commitments — implementation report card'. Listed there are the items that have been introduced by the government and funded within the budget.

I ask honourable members and any Victorian who wishes to keep a track of the government's undertakings to remain vigilant and ensure that Labor satisfies the promises it made to Victorians prior to the election. Those undertakings are clearly outlined in the budget papers and the government intends to continue to report on such matters in a transparent fashion.

For the first time the budget papers, as listed in appendix F of budget paper no. 2, contain the costs of tax concessions and exemptions and revenue forgone by initiatives introduced by the government. That is to demonstrate at one level the government's undertaking in terms of social justice outcomes and appropriate levels of equity and access of Victorian citizens to services but also the costs forgone to budget revenues.

In budget paper no. 3 the government has provided for the first time since the move to accrual accounting practices in Victoria details of the cost of each individual program output. From reading the contributions of opposition members to debates in this place on the budget and other matters, one would believe the government has not given a detailed

description of outputs and financial contributions it has made to ensure the outputs are reached.

Budget paper no. 3 is a weighty volume; it comprises 487 pages, largely made up of tables which are prescriptive by department and by program and describe the specific financial allocation derived for each of the programs to achieve the outputs as described in the budget papers. It is a transparent and detailed budget paper. Budget paper no. 3 is the volume to which I would refer Victorian citizens who want a clear understanding of the connection between the financial contribution of government and achieving specific program outputs.

The budget papers identify the full financial exposure of the commitments that Labor took to the last election as being \$426 million in this financial year. Notwithstanding that significant contribution to ensure that it delivers on its promises, the government has produced a budget with an operating surplus of \$592 million in this financial year.

On the budget's forecast projections for the outgoing financial years it is anticipated that on average the government will deliver a \$450-million operating surplus for each of the next three years. Those projections give the Bracks government substantial headroom in achieving its commitment to the people of Victoria that it would have an operating surplus of at least \$100 million each year.

The financial and economic forecasts that predicate the budget are modest and reasonable, and are considered by financial analysts to be in no way adventurous. However, at the same time they allow for a healthy operating surplus for each of the next three financial years.

In the next financial year the economy is forecast to grow by 3.5 per cent, and in the subsequent two years by 3.25 per cent. As I have already said during the course of debate on the budget papers, those modest estimates of economic growth come well within the ballpark of prevailing views. They are modest compared with the federal budget forecast, yet they are indicative of the government's confidence that, notwithstanding any fluctuation in the international financial marketplace, the Victorian economy will remain strong and be able to not only resist any downward pressure on economic growth but also maintain growth at a sustainable level of 3.25 per cent over the forecast period. On that basis the government estimates that unemployment in Victoria will continue to fall and has set a target of 5.75 per cent unemployment by June 2004.

As a member of the Victorian government I am very proud to say that during the next three years the government anticipates it will be able to maintain a healthy operating surplus. Sustainable economic growth in Victoria will lead to a reduction in unemployment rates, which is obviously a key goal of all state governments and something that the budget sets out to achieve. The government can be very proud if its forecasts are achieved.

The budget also anticipates that over the next three years the net financial liabilities of the budget sector will fall from 10.9 per cent of gross state product as at June of 1999 to 7.7 per cent by June 2004.

The government has demonstrated its continuing commitment to putting the state's finances on a viable footing well into the future by allocating \$250 million this financial year to pay off ongoing superannuation scheme liabilities and bringing forward by 15 years the paying out of the Emergency Services Superannuation Scheme.

The framework of the budget is designed to reduce state government net debt from its current level of \$6.2 billion to \$4.7 billion by the end of the forecast period. The budget will ensure that Victoria maintains a strong financial position and engenders a pro-business, pro-economic growth and pro-infrastructure and skill-based development structure that includes a taxation system that is fair, equitable and competitive with other states so that the Victorian economy continues to be a strong component of the Australian economy.

Programs outlined in the budget demonstrate the government's commitment to infrastructure development, to improving transport links through the Linking Victoria program, to improving the skill base of the Victorian work force and to providing adequate training and job opportunities into the future through the Skilling Victoria program. Emphasis is placed on the high technology information industry to ensure that Victorians have access to information technology services through the Connecting Victoria strategy.

In addition to those three programs, the government has used the surplus to create a Growing Victoria trust. The trust will provide \$1 billion worth of infrastructure spending over the next three years, which will constitute a 20 per cent increase in Victorian public sector investment over the estimates in the budget the Bracks government inherited.

Some \$190 million has already been allocated from the trust for school modernisation and rail projects. Key

infrastructure initiatives in the budget will underpin Victorian transport and communication links. Some \$240 million has been allocated for accident black spots, half of which will be spent in regional Victoria. Some \$70 million has been allocated for extending suburban train and tramlines, and for the introduction of flyer trains to Dandenong, Ringwood and Frankston. Some \$90 million has been allocated for regional and metropolitan arterial roads and stage 1 of the Dingley bypass.

As honourable members know the government has an integrated transport planning perspective that focuses on key road infrastructure and on providing public transport initiatives for Victorian citizens, whether they live in regional Victoria or on the fringe of the Melbourne metropolitan area. Those clear commitments have been funded in the budget before the house.

The budget deals with big picture issues and has delivered in every electorate in Victoria. The Premier and then Treasurer foreshadowed a series of major reviews to ensure ongoing viability in Victorian industries, a strategic audit of Victorian industry and a new manufacturing industry consultative council to advise on strategic directions for this sector. At the Growing Victoria Together summit the Premier also foreshadowed the creation of a new Victorian economic and social advisory council to advise on the economic and social development of the state.

The government has put in place the mechanism to bring together business, government and workers to create an ongoing safe and secure environment for investment and job growth. The budget delivers on the micro level by providing critical funding to ensure specific stimulus to training opportunities and access for citizens to explore the potential of emerging technologies.

Three examples of projects in the electorate of Melbourne Province are included in the budget: a multimedia centre at the Victoria University of Technology, a cyber centre at the William Angliss Institute of TAFE and a fashion industry centre to be established at the Brunswick campus of the RMIT University to provide support for the fashion industry. The constituents of Melbourne Province will be pleased that key opportunities for training and development in high-tech industries and other industries of the future such as the service sector are available in their immediate geographic area. That will certainly provide them with further job opportunities.

I turn now to access across the state emphasised in the Connecting Victoria strategy. Some \$9 million has been allocated for public Internet access with a focus on regional areas and those communities without convenient Internet access. Some \$3.5 million has been allocated for the expansion of the community-based Skillsnet program targeted at technologically disadvantaged Victorians and the establishment of an electronic export assistance centre to help Victorian businesses in trade readiness, promotion and finance. Initiatives such as those bring Victorians together and provide as far as possible equal access and opportunity for the citizens of Victoria wherever they may live.

As part of the government's legislative reform program several economic reform measures have been introduced in the 54th Parliament. Some that have passed through this place over the past couple of weeks include the reform of the electricity industry by providing ongoing guarantees for price regulation and control. Community service standards have been set for the consumers of electricity. Parliament has passed the Electronic Transactions (Victoria) Bill which underpins the growth in e-commerce and the security of information systems and data protection mechanisms required for this important industry.

As part of the national tax regime that is often referred to in debate in this house the government has introduced several pieces of legislation to ensure an appropriate regime applies to both the federal and state jurisdictions to guarantee there is no mismatch in the application of tax law. A positive piece of legislation that comes with those reforms was the First Home Owner Grant Bill that passed this house earlier in the session.

The Bracks government has been prepared to reform the administrative practices of government. Reforms of the education system have taken place through the Education Acts (Amendment) Bill, the Health Services (Governance) Bill and the Local Government (Governance) Bill.

Those three pieces of legislation have reformed the way in which the delivery of critical services in education, health and local government is to be restructured and reorganised and will guarantee Victorians greater levels of access to those services.

A number of key initiatives in the budget demonstrate the government's commitment to education and training, which is a vital sector of government activity. Those initiatives restate public commitment to education and training, something that has been on the decline during the past seven years. The budget

includes: \$165 million over four years to employ 350 additional teachers in primary schools as part of the government's goal to reduce class sizes for prep and grade 2; \$121 million to modernise school and TAFE facilities; \$65 million over four years to expand the pathways open to young people in the post-compulsory years of education; \$72 million over four years to assist private and public employers to train a further 16 000 new apprentices and trainees; and \$43 million over four years to employ student welfare coordinators in every secondary college. Clearly, that has been a major emphasis and priority of the first Bracks Labor budget and the government has delivered what it promised to the people of Victoria at the last election.

Similarly, in health the government has a \$160 million public hospital strategy that includes the opening of 360 additional beds to ensure the pressure on waiting lists is not acute during the critical winter period. The government has provided funding for an extra 70 000 outpatient and other services across the hospital system. It has ensured it has strategies in place to retain nurses in the sector and to improve cleaning and infection control, which has been of critical importance to Victorians as the standards have clearly slackened over time. A major challenge of my ministerial colleague John Thwaites, the Minister for Health, has been to ensure that infection control mechanisms in public hospitals are adequate to protect all Victorians.

I am pleased to announce that in terms of what affects the people of my electorate of Melbourne Province, \$37 million has been allocated to the Royal Women's Hospital and there has been a significant reinvestment in the Preston hospital which impacts on my electorate. Funding of \$45 million will be provided for the new hospital-to-home program and new community health measures, which dovetails on the back of \$39 million for better services for older Victorians, including home and community care, rehabilitation and geriatric assessment beds.

An additional \$75 million has been committed to prevent illicit drug use. In the next session of Parliament we will consider an important initiative introduced by the government in this session, a bill that will lay over for the winter period — that is, the establishment of supervised injecting facilities.

Hon. Bill Forwood — They are not safe any more, are they? They are supervised.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — They are supervised. I am pleased to acknowledge the interjection by Mr Forwood. When Parliament resumes after winter,

this is an issue that all honourable members will want to discuss.

Hon. Bill Forwood — You might be leader then and you will be in charge of the bill in committee.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — The government's proposal on this important initiative will enable the Parliament to play a critical role in ensuring that as many community safeguards and mechanisms are in place — —

Hon. Bill Forwood — Can I get heroin there?

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — We are not in committee yet, Mr Forwood. There will be adequate opportunity.

The government looks forward to the opportunity to debate the legislation in this place when we return for the spring session and to establishing supervised injecting facilities with the support of the Parliament and the people of Victoria.

I went down the burrow of supervised injecting facilities because it is one part of a \$75-million multi-dimensional strategy at the heart of the public health strategy of the budget. The nature of what the government is trying to do is to establish an integrated and compassionate drug reform and public health system. Particular attention is paid to that issue but it is just one measure in a series of interrelated programs introduced by the government. Those are significant issues in my electorate as the cities of Yarra and Melbourne are contemplating the introduction of supervised injecting facilities.

Another issue of critical importance in my electorate is the rate of homelessness, to which my colleague the Honourable Glenys Romanes referred. She emphasised the importance of maintaining public housing stock in our electorate and across Victoria. We are very proud to be part of a government that has allocated funding to provide 800 additional public houses. That will lead to 1800 extra jobs and make a vital contribution to the construction industry and economic development. More importantly, it will take some pressure off a very strained public housing environment and relieve some of the pressures faced by low-income earners when trying to find adequate accommodation.

The budget contains a suite of measures designed to ensure we build safer communities in Victoria. An extra \$64 million has been allocated to put an additional 800 police officers on the streets to provide a secure and stable environment for all Victorians. The

government has allocated an extra \$37 million to provide new and improve existing police stations and facilities. The redevelopment in Preston is important to the people of my electorate.

At the same time the government is enhancing the safety and accessibility of public transport by providing for the employment of an extra 100 railway staff and 100 tram conductors across the network.

In its first term the government has introduced significant programs and legislation to enhance public safety. This week the Control of Weapons (Amendment) Bill was passed by this house and bill providing for supervised injecting facilities has been introduced into the Parliament. We have also seen road safety reforms.

They come on the heels of important legislation that restored fundamental human rights to the citizens of Victoria. The Workcover bill reinstated the common-law rights of seriously injured workers. The dust diseases legislation gave the families of people who have died from dust-related illnesses the right to claim some degree of restitution for the pain and suffering of their loved ones. Equal opportunity legislation saw breastfeeding added to the categories of protection under the Equal Opportunity Act. We have seen reforms of the gambling regulatory regime.

Important reforms have been made to the tobacco industry generally and to tobacco use in particular. Parliament has restricted the availability of tobacco to young people and has passed legislation to protect the rights of Victorian citizens to dine and to attend at entertainment and recreation venues without being subjected to second-hand smoke. That legislation has introduced a regime designed to improve the long-term public health of each and every Victorian citizen.

The legislation on victims of crime introduces a form of restitution and compensation for Victorian citizens who have been subjected to criminal activity and injury. The government has also introduced witness protection legislation. On top of its achievements outlined in the budget the government has introduced 62 bills in the second sessional period of its time in office.

Finally I refer to the important role the Auditor-General has played in signing off on the parameters of the budget. The government introduced the Financial Management (Financial Responsibility) Bill, which for the first time identified an opportunity for the Auditor-General to sign off on the financial forecasts and operating parameters that underpin the budget as part of the regime in place to ensure that the people of

Victoria have some degree of confidence in the government's forecasts. Anyone who understands the nature of economic forecasting will know that initiative provides about the greatest degree of confidence one can have in understanding the structure that underpins the budget.

Hon. Bill Forwood — You told me you were a sociologist.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — I can clearly recall that during the debate on the audit bill the house was reminded that I was a social worker by training. However, Mr Forwood did not identify that I had some numerical qualification or a degree of training that assists me in adding up. It has been extremely useful to me.

Hon. Bill Forwood — I hope you are able to subtract as well.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — Win or lose, I am good at counting numbers.

Hon. Bill Forwood — I hope it does you well over the weekend.

Hon. G. W. JENNINGS — I am clear on the outcomes at the weekend. In conclusion, I am proud to be part of a Bracks Labor government that is introducing important reforms through the budgets and legislative program it will put before the 54th Parliament.

As the Premier said, the government has delivered on what it promised the people of Victoria. The budget papers are structured in a way that enables the people of Victoria to clearly and consistently measure whether the government delivers on the undertakings it has earnestly put before the people of Victoria. I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering on its budget promises and I am prepared to be accountable for what is in the budget papers. I commend the bill to the house.

Hon. E. J. POWELL (North Eastern) — I say at the outset that this is the first time since being in opposition that I have spoken in the debate on the budget, so my contribution will be different from the last four contributions I have made to budget debates. Many members of this house who have been in opposition before will know how I feel at the moment.

The Honourable Gavin Jennings talked about the detail of the budget. I agree with him that there is a lot of detail but most of the information provided in the budget papers is generic rather than specific. I found it

quite difficult to locate the allocations of funding I normally brag about in my speeches at budget time. Not enough detail is provided in the budget papers about local allocations. That is unfortunate, because if a lot of money is going to country Victoria there is no detailed reference to it the budget papers. For example, the budget papers refer to \$60 million being provided for rural health, but do not state where the funding is going. Will it go to regional Victoria or metropolitan Melbourne? Will it go to one side of Victoria or the other? It is difficult to know. The coalition government provided details of funding in the budget papers, and I suggest it would be more helpful if the present government were to do the same.

Premier Steve Bracks recently announced the new slogan for car numberplates, and I thank the government for the great compliment it paid to the former government. The coalition government's slogan was 'Victoria: on the move'. The slogan announced by the Premier is 'Victoria: the place to be'. The opposition believes Victoria is the place to be, but the state did not become that way overnight; the coalition government made it happen over the past seven years. I sincerely thank the government for the great compliment it has paid the former government by introducing that numberplate slogan. It shows that the Labor Party recognises the great work the former government did throughout Victoria.

Labor inherited the state in a viable and strong financial position — a \$1.3 billion surplus. It also inherited a situation in which more people were moving to Victoria than were leaving. Statistics show that had not happened since 1971, which shows the level of confidence in Victoria during the term of the coalition government.

Under the former government Victoria's economy was growing faster than any other state. Business investment has doubled since 1992. That statistic also shows the level of confidence in Victoria. Employment was at record levels. The rate of inflation was at its lowest since 1962, and the AAA rating was restored. That all came about as a result of the work of the former government over the past seven years.

In the Treasurer's speech reported in budget paper no. 1 under the heading 'Growing the whole state' he said that the budget was a pro-business budget. I have to query that, and businesses have also questioned what benefit they will get. There are no payroll tax cuts. The former coalition government cut payroll tax from 7 per cent to 5.75 per cent over three years. No other state has given three consecutive payroll cuts to the business community.

The budget provides for no business tax cuts either. It says that business tax cuts will occur only if Victoria continues to achieve strong economic growth. That means there can be no wage rises. If business tax cuts are to occur next year there can be no wage rises for teachers, the police or our nurses during the next 12 months. There are no new major projects in the building industry. That means there will be no economic growth. In fact, building activity is declining. There is nothing for business in this year's budget.

In the scenario I just depicted there may be no business tax cuts for at least the next year or even two years depending on whether there is economic growth. So the government is putting a proviso on business tax cuts.

Local members used to have a good rapport with Business Victoria. The members of Parliament who represent north-east Victoria used to meet with Business Victoria once a month in the major centres in north-east Victoria. The Honourable Bill Baxter and I used to meet with Business Victoria at Wodonga, Wangaratta and Shepparton where we used to be able to discuss issues of importance. Service clubs used to ask us about funding issues or how to obtain funding for certain projects and we were able to advise them how to present their applications. When the government came to office at first the opposition was not concerned that it changed the name of Business Victoria and made it merely part of the Department of State and Regional Development. However, when invitations were sent out for our regular monthly meetings that were booked six months beforehand, strangely we received phone calls from the people at what was formerly called Business Victoria to say that all the meetings had been cancelled.

I believe that is because all the local members are National or Liberal party members; there are no Labor Party members in North Eastern Province. That amounts to saying, 'You are elected by your community but you cannot talk with the department to find out how you can help your constituents'. That is disappointing because it was beneficial to the service clubs, local councils and businesses. They had sufficient rapport with the department to find out what the status of the project was, and local members were able to alleviate some concerns and advise community groups how, for example, they could access the Community Support Fund. It is sad that that has been stopped. The government has obviously decided not to allow opposition members to gain any benefit for their constituents.

The former coalition government also worked hard to attract development to country Victoria. Listening to some of the project announcements made by the

Minister for State and Regional Development, Mr John Brumby, you could be forgiven for thinking they all happened the minute he went into that portfolio. Many of those projects were, however, initiated by the former government and funding was committed and announced before the present government came into office.

Examples include the Heinz factory at Echuca, a \$10 million project that has generated 80 jobs and is a wonderful project. The new minister went there and announced that funding, but he gave no recognition to the part played by the former government. Ozfresh at Cobram is another example, and the minister was there as well. Ozfresh attracted \$9 million in funding and generated 194 jobs. The project was an initiative of the former government, and it benefited from the efforts of local members, businesses themselves and local government. That joint approach ensured that funding and jobs were captured in that area.

The Vitasoy development in Wodonga cost \$25 million and generated 38 jobs — another plus for country Victoria. I note the Honourable Mark Birrell, the former industry minister, has entered the chamber. I thank him for his support of business in regional Victoria and for getting those big factories out into the country.

There is also some redevelopment of regional art galleries. The Minister for Education, the Honourable Mary Delahunty, was in my electorate recently announcing funding, but I have been trying to find out the status of that funding from the Department of Premier and Cabinet for the past six months. One project is the \$7 million redevelopment of the art gallery and civic centre in Shepparton, \$3 million of which was to come from the state government — and the former government had committed those funds — \$1 million from the commonwealth government and \$3 million from the City of Greater Shepparton. It is a wonderful project for the people of Shepparton.

We were not able to find out from the department whether the \$3 million of state funding was still committed, and that held up proceedings for quite a while. The grant has now been announced, though, and the minister has said that the \$3 million announced by the former government is now announced!

Refurbishment of the performing arts centre at Echuca, including a new cinema, has attracted a grant of \$1.1 million. The centre will get a new, four-screen cinema complex and a 450-seat performing arts centre. Funding is from the state, the Shire of Campaspe and private enterprise and totals \$3.4 million. The former

government committed itself to that project — which the minister has just announced again. That's great! We almost lost that project because the developer needed to make a decision about whether he was going to build there or move on to somewhere else. The work has started now, however, and I hope the project will be finished by Christmas.

A number of police station projects for my electorate that are spelt out in the budget were initiated by the former government. One is the wonderful new police complex in Shepparton, which will cost \$6.2 million. The Minister for Police and Emergency Services was there recently announcing that funding. I would like to place on the record the importance of the prior work towards that end by the former police minister, the Honourable Bill McGrath. He came to Shepparton, saw the old police station and realised instantly what a bad and dilapidated state it was in. It was former Minister McGrath who gave us that wonderful new, state-of-the-art police station. Katamatite also has a new police station. I commend those two projects, both started by the former government.

The budget provides \$60 million for rural health. I commend the government for that. Rural health is vitally important. Shepparton has a commonwealth-funded rural health centre. The Honourable Theo Theophanous was in Shepparton not so long ago and is quite well aware of the centre. I hope some state government funds can be found for the centre.

Honourable members hear talk about how it is not possible to attract doctors or other health practitioners to country Victoria. This wonderful project will require all medical students to do a portion of their training in the country. It is hoped some of those students who visit country Victoria for the first time will recognise what medical services are needed and will perhaps spend some time during their careers as medical practitioners working in the country. It is hoped that will be a way of attracting doctors and other health professionals to work in country Victoria.

An important part of being a member of Parliament is membership of parliamentary committees. I am on two all-party committees and five policy committees. Committees are important because their considerations of proposed legislation provide members with an in-depth understanding about what is proposed before it is translated into a bill and introduced in the house. Members can have an impact on how legislation will affect the community and the areas they represent.

I am the convenor of the opposition partnership's tertiary education and training policy committee. I was disappointed that when the committee asked for briefings from the department it was told that only convenors of committees and shadow ministers could be briefed. In addition, minister's advisers were also at the briefing table and seemed to write down everything that was said. It is disappointing that the government is not more open and accountable, and perhaps more trusting of government departments. It should allow departmental representatives to talk to the opposition without someone writing down everything that is said, which makes opposition members feel they have to be very careful about what they ask. It is important for the opposition to have open access to departments.

The budget allocated additional funds for technical and further education (TAFE) amounting to \$28 million. That wonderful achievement was to ensure high quality training services were provided in the state. In its last budget the former government provided funding to quite a number of TAFE institutes in North Eastern Province, and I will put them on the record because some have been announced only recently: Echuca was allocated \$3.3 million, Wodonga got \$1.1 million, and Goulburn-Ovens got \$3.5 million. Goulburn-Ovens has a wonderful new food technology centre — it is almost a virtual campus with links to the Shepparton, Seymour, Benalla and Wangaratta campuses. The Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment in another place, the Honourable Lynne Kosky, opened the project recently. She put on the record the work done by the local members. I thank her for that recognition.

The Honourable Gavin Jennings talked about public housing in his contribution and how important it is to people in Victoria. During the budget the government said it would provide funds to upgrade and redevelop existing housing stock. That is an important part of the budget. I have been trying to gain funds for a public housing estate in Shepparton that has had problems in the recent past — the Parkside Housing Estate. The minister has not yet got back to me on whether funds are available but I believe she is being briefed by the department this week. I hope the outcome will be positive and funds will be allocated for the estate.

The estate's problems include safety problems. A stigma attaches to it because the police attend it six times more than any other place in Shepparton. Although there is a long waiting list for public housing in the area people will not go into this estate for the reasons I have mentioned. The former Minister for Housing, the Honourable Ann Henderson, visited Shepparton to look at the estate because of the

problems. Vacant houses are being vandalised, and they are vacant because people do not want to go into a large housing estate with a bad reputation.

The former minister proposed an advisory committee to consider improvements to the estate and in May 1999 I was asked to chair it. However, when the election was called everything was put on hold. The new Minister for Housing, the Honourable Bronwyn Pike, asked me to continue as chair of the committee and asked that the committee make its recommendations. The committee completed its work and sent its report to the minister in February. I have still not received a response or any advice on whether the estate will receive funding. The budget does not contain any provision for the Parkside estate. Funding is important because the local community has high expectations that the estate will be made safer and more attractive for prospective tenants. I come from a public housing background so when I talk about the stigma attached to such housing I refer only to a certain element and not to public housing tenants in general. That element makes things bad for the rest who are in general decent tenants and proud of their homes.

I have spoken a number of times about Seniors Card concessions. The Honourable Gavin Jennings spoke about Labor's commitment to public transport in regional Victoria. Public transport is about not only physical structures but about the people who use it, and our seniors comprise one group who have been left out of the equation. On 15 November 1999 I wrote to the Minister for Transport seeking permission for a deputation of seniors to put their concerns to him and request a seven-day concession on travel similar to concessions available to travellers in Melbourne and in New South Wales and Queensland.

On 28 February I received a response. The Minister for Transport stated the issue was the responsibility of the Minister for Aged Care and advised that the letter would be referred to the Honourable Bronwyn Pike. On 20 March I received a letter from the Minister for State Concessions, the Honourable Christine Campbell! The letter stated that she is now the minister responsible for the area and will be dealing with it. I point out that this saga has been going on for eight months and I have still not received a response. The independent retiree constituents who raised it with me are angry. They want to put forward their concerns to a minister. They are asking that they be given the same rights as are accorded to seniors in Melbourne and to rural seniors in New South Wales and Queensland.

In her last letter to me, the Honourable Christine Campbell stated:

The government has given the commitment to examine the feasibility of extending the Seniors Card discount to Monday and Friday. The Department of Human Services have sought and are awaiting advice from the Department of Infrastructure, Public Transport on the feasibility and cost of introducing travel on V/Line services for Seniors Card holders on Monday and Friday.

I received that letter on 23 March. It is now June and I have still not had a response about whether she will accept the requested deputation or whether she will respond on how much that travel will cost.

Ms Darveniza told us earlier about what the Bracks government is doing for women. She spoke about attending the Victorian women's summit in Ballarat, which women attended in large numbers to tell the government about issues of concern to them in regional and rural Victoria. I put on the record that the former government published brochures entitled 'Women on the move', which are accessible to everybody. They are in two volumes and deal with economic security, leadership and decision making, safety, health and wellbeing, all of which were issues brought forward by women for the government to deal with. The former government dealt with them. It looked at what it was doing at the time and outlined what it would do. I commend those brochures to the government. I encourage government members who want to know what country Victorian women want to read those brochures.

I was one of a seven-member committee, chaired by the honourable member for Frankston, established to examine those issues. It held about 35 forums across Victoria, after which 5000 copies of a draft report were distributed for public comment. The report highlighted the four key priority areas for women: safety, health and wellbeing, economic security, and leadership.

A number of other initiatives were developed by the former government, including the Growing the Farm Business seminars, when seven women made presentations to other women at about 20 small country towns: a bank manager spoke about business plans; an Austrade commissioner spoke about exports; a lady from the then Department of Natural Resources and Environment spoke about farm planning; an aquaculture officer spoke about diversification of farm dams; an officer from Workcover spoke about farm safety — an issue that is important at the moment, with the Workcover debate; a Farmsmart facilitator spoke about succession planning; and I talked about leadership.

Those examples illustrate that the former government has been talking, consulting and listening to women in

rural Victoria for at least the four years I was a member of that government.

In addition the former government initiated the annual rural women's leadership bursaries, where 20 women a year each received a grant of \$2000. They could take courses to develop their skills and give them new experiences. A women's register was started so that boards and committees — not just in country Victoria but in Melbourne also — could access the names of women who would like to be on those boards and committees. That is an example of how country people become involved in decision-making areas. They need to be a part of boards where businesses, Landcare groups and so on, are operating. Their voices are needed.

A number of leadership programs such as the rural youth leadership program and the school-based leadership programs have been developed for the young people. I urge the government to continue those initiatives because it is important that the work already done is not wasted. The former government consulted widely, and I urge the government to examine carefully the results of that consultation with a view to incorporating them in its policy.

I was pleased that the budget contained \$22 million for statewide tourism initiatives, but there was no detail about what will happen specifically in North Eastern Province or how much country Victoria will receive.

I commend the former government for its tourism promotion which used a jigsaw puzzle with the slogan 'Victoria — You'll love every piece of it'. That promotion was important for country Victoria because it allowed grants to flow to country regions, to enable them to print brochures and so on. The brochures highlighted the tourist attractions on offer in country Victoria. I hope the government will continue with a similar campaign to ensure that every effort is made to include country Victoria in its tourism initiatives.

I congratulate the Honourable John Brumby in the other place on his promotion to Treasurer, but add that I am disappointed he is still the Minister for State and Regional Development. Although the Bracks government came in with a strong country focus, the state and regional development portfolio has been downgraded because the Treasurer's first portfolio is his most important. The new Treasurer will have little time for his state and regional development portfolio.

It seems strange that after the Benalla by-election the portfolio was diminished to a minor one, and it is disappointing for country Victoria when the Bracks

government got into government by saying it would focus a large amount of its effort on country Victoria. Country Victorians believed that and voted accordingly, but with Minister Brumby now the Treasurer, he will not have much time for regional development.

I am also disappointed in the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund. The allocation of \$107 million to that fund over three years, which may sound wonderful, is not enough.

Already \$100 million has been spent. There is nothing allocated for it in the budget this year. The budget provides for \$50 million next year, \$50 million the year after and \$70 million the year after that. Country Victoria is not only Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong: there are many other country area that members represent.

I began my contribution by talking about the slogan on Victorian car numberplates. I hope after its first term the Bracks government becomes financially responsible and the numberplates do not have to be changed again because they would have to reflect Victoria's position as 'the place that used to be'.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — It is with pride that I speak on the budget because it is the first budget of a Labor government following the successful campaign by the Labor Party which resulted in its achieving government and in the rejection of the policies and practices of the Kennett government.

The budget's slogan encapsulates what it is about because it is a budget that is financially responsible and socially progressive. It is built on the four pillars on which the government was elected which captured the imagination of Victorians. The first pillar is:

responsible financial management, including maintaining a substantial budget surplus.

The budget delivers on that substantial surplus with a forecast budget operating surplus of \$592 million for 2001 and with a projected surplus averaging more than \$450 million in future years.

It has also received a tick from financial markets. Victoria continues to attract a AAA credit rating from Standard and Poor's that was put in place on 20 December 1999 and from Moody's Investors Service on 8 February 2000.

The second pillar is:

promoting growth across all of Victoria.

That means the whole of Victoria. Programs that have been put in place include Linking Victoria, which will create an integrated transport infrastructure program that will assist in revitalising the state's roads, rail and port facilities; Skilling Victoria, which recognises the importance of education and training; and Connecting Victoria, a strategy for developing the state's information technology and communications.

The fourth pillar of the budget is:

restoring democracy through open and accountable government.

It is important to note the achievements that have taken place since the election of the Bracks Labor government. Budget reforms include the restoration of the independence of the Auditor-General and the guarantee of the independence and powers of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Ombudsman. Local councils will now operate with much greater autonomy and as democratic institutions. An important reform for me is the return of common-law rights for seriously injured workers. The restoration of democracy is very much part of the budget.

Finally, the budget delivers improved services, particularly in education, health and community safety. I refer particularly to some of the government's educational initiatives. The government is increasingly recognised by the community as leading the way in developing educational solutions to rectify the social and economic problems of the state. As Parliamentary Secretary for Education, Employment and Training I increasingly see a sense of excitement in educational institutions and among parents and others. Effective educational solutions are being brought to bear that link educational outcomes with the requirements of industry and business. That is one important solution the Bracks government is utilising in combating some of the problems experienced in our community.

The budget contains funding for a range of education and training initiatives. Some \$165 million is allocated over four years to reducing average prep-to-year-2 class sizes to 21 students; \$22 million is allocated to supporting students with disabilities and impairments; \$12 million is allocated to employing student welfare coordinators in each secondary college; \$3 million is allocated to assisting in the research and development of the middle years of education; and \$65 million is allocated to expanding pathways in post-compulsory education. Expanding access to our education system and creating a future for all youth are important initiatives.

Some \$121 million is allocated to modernising schools and TAFE facilities around the state, of which \$110 million will be through the Growing Victoria infrastructure reserve. The Bracks government has set aside \$1 billion for that initiative. That will allow for the development of Victoria's transport infrastructure — for instance, its roads and rail infrastructure.

In addition, that allocation will allow for the development of Victoria's educational infrastructure. The development of such infrastructure projects will have the effect of stimulating growth and, I hope, creating a better society.

If there is any one item of expenditure I am critical of in the budget it is that the government may be required to part with \$100 000 as a result of the previous government entering into a contract with Dr Malcolm Kennedy to write a book about the Kennett years. The contract was entered into secretly without reference to the public service — an arrangement at ministerial office level involving ministers of the previous Kennett government. A book was to be written involving a report on the Kennett years. The contract was for \$100 000 to be paid to Dr Malcolm Kennedy. Beyond that, it has come to light, the contract contains a clause that if the book is not published, the public purse is responsible for another \$20 000. Nothing more clearly shows the arrogance and vanity of the Kennett government than that project — and the unpublished manuscript.

Some members of the Liberal Party still living in the past, who see Jeff Kennett in idealistic terms as a sort of god they should continue to worship, are trying to raise funds but have been unable to come up with the necessary \$100 000 to save the people of Victoria from having to pay out of consolidated revenue the full amount of money, let alone the additional \$20 000.

The manuscript provides an insight into the thinking of the Kennett government. I have a report by Penguin Books Australia of an analysis of the manuscript called *The Kennett Ascendancy: a History of the First Kennett Government, 1992–96*. The report is indicative of how objective the proposed publication is. I quote:

There is a lack of objectivity throughout. Despite being a historian, Kennedy puts in his personal opinions as if they were fact. Some of these have been mentioned in the media, but they do stand out in a quite extraordinary way. For instance, Kennett is described following his victory speech at the 1992 election as:

'humble, generous and self-effacing in victory but subtly strong and resolute in projecting the ability and

determination to carry through his program of economic, social and political reform’.

That is in the introduction on page 13. The report continues:

This is not given any source, so must be assumed to be Kennedy’s opinion of Kennett: he thus pin his colours to the mast very early. But there’s more!

And on it goes:

In four of the chapters dealing with specific policy there is a ‘profile’ of the politician in charge — Stockdale, Hayward, Tehan and Wade. These read like advertising puffs: adulatory beyond belief. They must surely have been written by PR people.

Under the title, ‘If it were published in book form, who would buy it and why?’, that objective assessment by Penguin of the manuscript states:

From a commercial point of view, if Kennett had won the last election a publisher could have taken on the book, producing it as a handsome hardback edition, for a Liberal government would undoubtedly have underwritten the print run by taking several thousand copies and giving them away to all visitors — dignitaries and non-entities alike — as a puff for the government.

The Penguin analysis concludes:

Some people might buy it now because of the recent publicity but I cannot believe that there are sufficient Victorian readers still faithful to the Kennett ideal who would buy it out of interest and thus make publication a commercial proposition. It would not sell outside Victoria at all. It would be discredited as serious history — it sweeps anything remotely critical under the carpet, ignoring it — so cannot be recommended for publication on that score.

A small number of political scientists and historians would buy it, mainly as an example of how not to write a political history, but their numbers would not be large enough to make a print run viable.

I am appalled that Victorians will probably face a bill for \$100 000 for such nonsense.

Turning to some extracts from the manuscript, it begins with a number of quotations about leadership and quotes a number of sources. A quote from *Hercules Furens* by Seneca the Younger is:

The foremost art of kings is the power to endure hatred.

Another quote on Kennett’s leadership is:

Premier Kennett was an outstanding leader. Full of ideas and energy he drove his ministers but also inspired them to achieve all their policy objectives.

Had I been a minister in that government I would have been embarrassed that someone purporting to be an

historian would write such nonsense about a Liberal government.

The manuscript goes on:

Kennett had made himself available to the people of urban and rural Victoria to an extent never provided by any other Premier.

What is the basis of that claim? People of rural Victoria did not think that Kennett made himself available to them — that is why they voted against him at the last election. That an historian would make such a claim is just beyond belief.

Another comment about former Premier Kennett and the media states:

A primary objective was the use of mechanisms which forced the media to behave within their own professional rules, and where this was not the case information would be restricted or denied ...

Information was restricted and denied in many cases because in the view of the previous Premier, the press had acted outside its professional rules. In truth, information was restricted and denied because people who criticised him were told that if the criticisms continued, they would no longer have access to ministers and the government.

Another quote states:

The ‘Kennett factor’, a creation of the media, was used to promote a negative image of Premier Kennett and satisfy prejudices.

What a load of nonsense! When the press was reporting the Kennett factor its aim was not to promote a negative image of Jeff Kennett and satisfy prejudices. On what basis would anybody, a historian in particular, reach that kind of conclusion?

What about this gem:

The Kennett government never attempted to silence or control the media, rather it demanded professional standards ...

What an outrageous thing to say in a so-called historical document! No-one would believe that statement.

Any minister in the Kennett government with an ounce of decency who has read the manuscript would have said, ‘Hang on a minute, maybe there’s a need for some level of historical objectivity in writing a manuscript of this sort’.

I read what the manuscript has to say about Don Hayward, the former education minister:

Don Hayward is tall and heavily built with a ready smile and a high level of social charm. Confident and self-assured, he has an obvious liking for people and company As is the case with most tall and strong men he walks with an unassuming stride which presents no apparent force or assertiveness.

What a load of rubbish to be included as a critical historical account of what may or may not have occurred under the Kennett government! I remind the house that the author has produced a manuscript which is meant to represent in an objective and unbiased way what the previous Kennett government did. The manuscript further says this about Don Hayward:

His high-domed head suggests intelligence and this is reinforced by his acute listening skills and his ability to dissect an argument with speed and precision.

I would like to know the biological argument — because I have not heard one — that suggests a high-domed head means one is intelligent. If that were the case I am surprised that the manuscript did not include a comment suggesting that on that criterion the Honourable Mark Birrell should be able to claim a level of intelligence, but I'm not sure about the Honourable David White! Many people in the community have high-domed heads, but I have not seen any scientific evidence to suggest a high-domed head equals intelligence. The manuscript is supposed to be an historical objective document about the Kennett years. It would be a joke if it were not so bizarre!

I read what the author says about other ministers:

My interviews became enjoyable and informative discussions in which I began to learn that idealism remains the basis of good politics and good government.

He gives his 'sincere thanks' to:

The Hon. Mark Birrell . . . Alan Brown . . . Gude . . . Hallam . . . Hayward . . . Knowles . . . Maclellan . . . Ian Smith . . . Tehan . . . Wade —

all of whom were contributors. I do not know why he left out Mr Craig, who was a government member in the 1992–96 period, but I am sure he should have been included!

It is an amazing document. It astounds me that it was produced not only by the former Premier, Jeff Kennett, but also with the assistance, input and support of all the previous ministers in the Kennett government. It is one of the most disgraceful episodes I have seen come out of the Kennett period and is indicative of what the former government was on about — it was run by one man with a huge ego who was prepared to impose his will on everyone and anyone — and the state suffered as a result.

Hon. K. M. Smith — On a point of order, Mr Deputy President, I know that the budget debate is reasonably wide ranging, but Mr Theophanous has been talking on this particular issue now for more than 15 minutes. It is not a budget issue. Mr Deputy President, could you draw him back to the budget debate before the house.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — On the point of order, Mr Deputy President, it clearly is a budget issue; it entails an expenditure by the government out of the budget of \$100 000 under the contract. Furthermore, under the contract if the manuscript is not published it will entail a further expenditure from the budget of \$20 000. So it is a budget issue; there is no question about that. As to the question of its importance, although the amount is small in the context of the overall budget, it is symbolic of a range of things that happened under the previous government. I am simply contrasting the administration of the previous government and this government.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT — Order! On the point of order, as is usual in this place, the budget debates have been wide ranging. I note that the honourable member has spent substantial time on this part of the subject. His opportunity to address the house may be directed to some other areas of the budget, and I urge him to continue along those lines.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS — I had intended to conclude by noting that I have received an email on the topic from a company which has suggested publishing and making the manuscript available online, thus saving the taxpayer \$20 000. The email states that the company has purchased an Internet domain called corruption.com.au, in which it intends to make Kennedy's book available. That would be an appropriate place for Kennedy's book to finish up. The sooner an opposition member condemns the appalling piece of work and all that went with it, the sooner the opposition may gain some credibility in this state.

I conclude my remarks by referring to Aboriginals and the government's commitment to the reconciliation process. I feel strongly about the reconciliation process and the need to recognise our Aboriginal communities. I commend the government for the initiatives it has taken in the area with both the recent agreement and budget allocations to assist Aboriginals.

Having said that, I also put on the record my concern about and objection to a letter I received from the Returned and Services League in which its state president, Bruce Ruxton, expresses his views about Aborigines. He says:

Two-thirds of Victoria is under claim, and most Victorians would not see an Aboriginal from one year to another.

That kind of attitude has led to the desperation of our indigenous population. I put on the record my view that that is exactly the sort of attitude in our society that needs to be changed.

I commend the government for an exciting budget which is, in the words of the budget itself, financially responsible and socially progressive.

Hon. R. H. BOWDEN (South Eastern) — I shall present my thoughts on the budget. I consider budgets — whether they be corporate or government — to be an opportunity to plan for the future and to meet the aspirations of the corporation or the people affected by them — in this case, the citizens of the state for whom honourable members have legislative responsibility.

Having considered the budget at length, I find it to be an opportunity lost. I do not see in it any vision of great excitement. At best it can be described as a maintenance budget, which is disappointing at such an early stage in the government's term of office. It is conceded by the government that it achieved its place on the Treasury benches unexpectedly last September. However, it has had the opportunity to generate an exciting, far-reaching and visionary budget. The government inherited a sound financial base and the state was positioned to move forward with a high level of confidence. I have considerable corporate experience, and I do not see in the budget any great vision or expression of excitement or confidence.

Members of the respective provinces represent the hopes and aspirations of many people. In my case in the South Eastern Province, as at the poll taken in September last year, I have responsibility for 147 000 voters and I take that responsibility very seriously.

One of the initiatives highlighted in the budget is the \$170 million Regional Infrastructure Development Fund. I am most disappointed that the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council cannot participate in that fund. The southern part of the Mornington Peninsula, which is an important part of the province I represent, is geographically further from Melbourne than Geelong. I have made representations to the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, urging it to reconsider its non-membership of the group of regional councils covered by that fund, and will continue to do so.

In this speech, which I will circulate among the members of the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, I

put them on notice that I expect them to take a responsible view towards participating in the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund and to seriously re-examine their performance to date in failing to have done so, given the shire's geographic location.

In my early teens I went with great excitement and enthusiasm to the Royal Sydney Show. I had saved all my money over a considerable time to buy some show bags. When I got to the show I put my hard-earned money on the counter and bought two wonderful, glossy, well-produced show bags. When I opened them, thinking they would be full of lollies and chocolates, I found a bag full of licorice. I was very disappointed. For me, and I suspect for other honourable members who like me hate licorice, the budget is like those glossy show bags — glossy on the outside with not much inside!

The budget lacks vision. It is, as I said, a maintenance budget. Where are the new key projects? Victorians are seeing major infrastructure programs in this state running down. Where are the major programs to drive the sophisticated infrastructure industries of the state? To my knowledge, there are none.

I refer the house to pages 10 and 11 of the budget document *2000–01 Victorian Budget Overview* headed 'Budget highlights — for all Victorians'. I am disappointed that for South Eastern Province the budget has few highlights of any consequence. I am delighted that Gippsland has received funding for wonderful improvements, such as the replacement of the police station at Moe and the South Gippsland Secondary College redevelopment, which I totally support. However, the seat of Gippsland West has no real achievements in the budget.

In the seats of Cranbourne, Mornington and Dromana, and the Melbourne portion of the budget highlights, I note there are no major budget highlights for my constituents. I am, therefore, not satisfied with this budget. It does not deliver meaningful funding for roads that are important for the tens of thousands of my constituents because of the inadequate public transport system in my electorate. The improvements forecast — as welcome as they will be to many Victorians — are not of major benefit to my constituency. I am not satisfied with the tourism funding and I am appalled at what I have read about the Seal Rocks Sea Life Centre. I would like to see a successful conclusion to that problem at the earliest opportunity. I am concerned about the seals and about protecting Phillip Island's reputation as a major tourist destination.

I turn to tourism in general. I would like to see targeted funding for tourism, and I would be pleased to meet with officers from the Department of State and Regional Development or the minister at any time to give my views either publicly or privately.

The South Eastern Province has seen the introduction of dairy deregulation, which I will not dwell on. I am concerned, as I said in my contribution to the debate earlier this week on the Dairy Bill, about the benefits of deregulation flowing through to dairy farmers.

Crayfishing is a major activity from an economic and employment point of view in South Eastern Province. I optimistically look forward to a satisfactory resolution to ongoing negotiations between the crayfishermen and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment about secure, long-term viable access to the raw product. That is important both economically and socially for the cohesion and wellbeing of many families in South Eastern Province, particularly in Gippsland West.

In recent weeks difficulties have arisen about the funding for the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix. Some 10 years ago the grand prix was a controversial issue. Victoria lost the event because of many factors. The relevant issue today is assurance and support funding by the state government. Although a considerable amount of money is involved, I suggest to the government that the tourism value and financial contribution of those who flock to Phillip Island for the grand prix bring economic benefit to the whole state, but particularly to Melbourne and Phillip Island. I hope the appropriate budget allocation to the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix continues.

The operators of the Phillip Island circuit are excellent professionals. The worldwide motorcycle racing community regards the Phillip Island track as first class. It would be a shame if Victoria were set back not only economically but also with its hard-won reputation because of difficulties over negotiations about an extremely small amount of money compared with the state's overall budget.

I encourage the government to provide sufficient funding to surf lifesaving clubs. In the South Eastern Province there are several clubs, including the Mornington Peninsula with its wonderful beaches and access to both surf and bay, Westernport, Phillip Island and the coastal strip near Wonthaggi. I urge the government to provide sufficient funds to encourage and support the activities of surf lifesaving clubs.

Many retired people live in the South Eastern Province, particularly in Rosebud and Rye but throughout the entire area. The Dental Update document from ADA Victoria shows that on a per capita basis Victoria would need to budget a figure rising to around \$80 million within three years to stay in step with New South Wales in providing public dentistry capabilities. I am concerned that older persons, retired persons and those with limited incomes who need urgent dental work have the opportunity for better and more enhanced access. I encourage the government to examine that issue.

The Mornington Peninsula Freeway has been neglected in the road funding statements of the Bracks government. Although nothing has been provided in the current budget I suggest the constituents of my province will be taking a dim view in the future if no funding is forecast in subsequent years. The population is rising; and it is of a commuting style with a heavy dependence on motor transport. It is vital that the Mornington Peninsula Freeway system be upgraded.

I look upon the budget as that disappointing show bag I recall from my younger years: it is glossy on the outside, it looks interesting, but when I open it there is not much inside to satisfy my expectations.

Hon. S. M. NGUYEN (Melbourne West) — I am pleased to take part in the debate on the Appropriation (2000/2001) Bill. The Bracks government has delivered on its election promises because it believes the community is the responsibility of government.

I am delighted that the Labor Party has formed government and delivered to the people of Victoria a financially responsible budget. The Bracks Labor Party campaigned on four key issues: responsible financial management; the promotion of access across the state, including metropolitan and rural and regional areas; delivering improved services; and the restoration of democracy.

I turn to responsible financial management. The government has ensured that the budget is in surplus. Funds have not been spent just to please the community but to ensure there is a surplus for everyone. The budget is a pro-business budget providing tax cuts for business people.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Phoney.

Hon. S. M. NGUYEN — Some \$400 million —

Hon. Bill Forwood — No, not \$400 million.

Hon. S. M. NGUYEN — From 2000–01 business tax will be cut by \$200 million before July 2003.

Much will be gained by the Victorian community, especially the business community. The government wants to promote business, to help business grow in Victoria, and to attract business from other states and overseas. The government wants to help the whole of Victoria, not only to encourage business in metropolitan and city areas, but also to encourage jobs growth in country Victoria.

I refer the house to *2000–01 Victorian Budget Overview*. At page 10, under the heading ‘Budget highlights — for all Victorians’, service delivery initiatives are listed for all areas of Victoria. In the Loddon–Mallee area the fast rail link between Bendigo and Melbourne is mentioned as one of the great contributions to encourage country Victorians to travel by rail. The list includes hospital redevelopment and the duplication of the Calder Highway between Bendigo and Melbourne. That is one example of the Bracks government providing services to rural areas.

In the Central Highlands–Wimmera area the replacement police station at Bacchus Marsh is listed as is the fast rail link between Ballarat and Melbourne. The list also includes the development of Horsham College, the redevelopment works at Horsham–Sunraysia research institutes, and the redevelopment of the acute health facilities at Ballarat Base Hospital, which is important for country Victoria.

The list goes on. Budget highlights listed under Gippsland include the restoration of environmental flows to the Snowy River and the contribution to the fast rail link between Traralgon and Melbourne, which is part of the Bracks government’s rail link policy. The replacement of the police station at Moe is important as are the new library and classrooms at Traralgon Primary School.

I refer to the Goulburn–Ovens–Murray area for which the budget lists upgrades to primary schools and secondary schools, a replacement police station at Seymour, and road upgrade and accident black spot treatment at Benalla. The Bracks government has promised to look after the whole of Victoria, particularly as rural areas have been neglected for many years.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Have you ever been there?

Hon. S. M. NGUYEN — Yes, I have been to many country areas in Victoria. The budget refers to Skilling Victoria and will provide extra funding at the TAFE level to improve the skills of young people.

The government has delivered an extra \$127 million to the TAFE sector, including \$38.5 million to be spent in the first year on increasing the number of TAFE places for people who want to be able to get jobs. The government is committed to the whole of Victoria. It does not want to leave people behind because they have difficulties or are disadvantaged in looking for work by a lack of skills or opportunities. The government wants to take them with it — as it did in the country.

In my area, Footscray City High School received \$1.12 million for a technology upgrade and \$836 000 of that will be spent in the next year. The Victoria University of Technology will receive \$1.4 million over two years for the Beanland Building — and that is good news. The Dinjerra Primary School will receive \$250 000 over two years to upgrade its library.

In education, the government has allocated \$105 million for capital works in the year 2000–01, including \$24.5 million to build extra classrooms and reduce class sizes. More than \$80 million has been allocated to provide better school buildings. That includes \$16.8 million for 10 new schools. The budget allocates \$22 million in 2000–01 to help students with disabilities and impairments. The Labor government is committed to the education and the post-compulsory education and training sectors. That is its commitment to Victorian schools.

Several schools in my electorate of Melbourne West have received generous funding in the budget. Boardwalk Primary School is a new school which will receive \$1.6 million in the coming year and \$1.9 million in 2001–02. The Altona Meadows Primary School will receive \$89 000 in the coming financial year and \$1.2 million in 2001–02. The Manorvale Primary School will receive more than \$1 million altogether. That reflects the level of commitment of the Labor government to improving education opportunities in Victoria. There is more but I will not go through all the details.

The new jobs plan will create 32 000 much-needed new job opportunities. The government will spend \$60 million for its community infrastructure jobs program. It will allow 7800 people the opportunity of working on infrastructure programs in areas of high unemployment. The positions will combine real jobs and training.

The budget allocates \$72.2 million for private and public sector apprenticeships and traineeships. It will allow the government in partnership with the private sector to provide almost 6000 apprenticeships and traineeships. That is good news for young people who

want to get into the job market after completing their studies. Long-term unemployed adults will benefit through the government's allocation of \$7.5 million for employment incentives. A further \$12.5 million is allocated for long-term unemployed young people. That funding will assist up to 10 000 long-term unemployed young people. The youth employment line is allocated \$6 million. The direct telephone service will provide young job seekers with advice on employment and training opportunities. No matter where a person lives, he or she will be able to pick up the telephone and get information on jobs.

In her contribution Mrs Powell referred to public housing. Like her I lived in public housing accommodation. After I first arrived in Australia 20 years ago I lived in public housing for a number of years so I understand how important it is to help people who need somewhere to live. The budget will provide further funding for public housing. A few months ago I visited the Braybrook area with the Minister for Housing to examine public housing opportunities. The budget allocates \$165 million for the purchase or construction of more than 1300 public and community housing units. Approximately \$98 million is being allocated to buy land and more than 1000 public rental properties, which will bring the total number of properties to 65 570 by June 2001. Approximately \$20 million is being allocated to buy or build 110 long-term community-managed housing properties to help young couples who need somewhere to live. A further \$15 million is being allocated to expand the crisis and transitional housing program

A further \$162 million has been allocated for improvements to public housing stock, including: \$31 million to upgrade high-rise estates; \$12 million for fire safety work; \$87 million to upgrade family and older persons units; \$20 million for minor capital items; and \$12 million to upgrade community-managed housing. A further \$21 million has been allocated for redevelopment in inner urban and major regional centres as part of the longer term strategy of improving older estates.

I turn to discuss the proposed supervised injecting facilities. I am sure all honourable members are well aware that the Minister for Health delivered his second-reading speech on the bill yesterday. The government will spend \$75 million on the program in an effort to save people, usually young people, who would otherwise die from drug overdoses. The government will consult with the community, especially with local councils. It will talk to the mayors and the councillors to ensure that the centres are set up with the support of local communities. Not only that,

the government wants to provide a system that will keep young people out of the criminal justice system and help them to get out of that way of life. The government wants to provide better programs for all that process and keep kids off the street. It will provide assistance to get them back into their communities so that they can take charge of their lives with the help of the community and their families.

The government will spend additional funds to improve what are known as the 'from school to the streets' programs to make sure all the young people who are in crisis can get support and will be able to help themselves in the future. Drugs are one of the gravest problems our communities have faced in the past few years. We have talked a lot about fixing the problem and turning the tide, but we have not talked about providing the support that prevents the problem from occurring. Young people need an opportunity to help themselves. With the help of local communities the government will be able to provide help to deal with the terrible problem of drugs.

I will conclude my remarks. I know that all honourable members would like the opportunity to contribute to this debate and I am aware of the time constraints. I take this opportunity to wish everybody well during the recess, and I look forward to seeing you in the next sessional period. I commend the bill to the house.

Motion agreed to.

Read second time.

Third reading

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

That this bill be now read a third time.

I thank all honourable members who contributed to the debate.

Motion agreed to.

Read third time.

Remaining stages

Passed remaining stages.

BUDGET PAPERS, 2000-01

The PRESIDENT — Order! The question is:

That the Council take note of the budget papers, 2000-01.

Motion agreed to.

COMMONWEALTH TREATY DOCUMENTS

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations),
by leave, presented the following treaty documents:

- (a) bilateral agreements tabled in the commonwealth Parliament on 7 March 2000, together with national interest analyses, dealing with:
- trade and economic cooperation, between Australia and the Slovak Republic
 - social security, between Australia and Denmark
 - technology for the separation of isotopes of uranium by laser excitation, between Australia and the United States of America
 - child and spousal maintenance, between Australia and New Zealand
- (b) bilateral agreement tabled in the commonwealth Parliament on 7 March 2000, together with national interest analysis and regulation impact statement, dealing with:
- avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and protocol, between Australia and Romania
- (c) multilateral agreements tabled in the commonwealth Parliament on 7 March 2000, together with national interest analyses, dealing with:
- safety of United Nations and associated personnel
 - simplification and harmonisation of customs procedures
 - recognition and enforcement of decisions relating to maintenance obligations
 - discrimination against women
- (d) bilateral agreement tabled in the commonwealth Parliament on 4 April 2000, together with national interest analysis, dealing with:
- social security, between Australia and Italy

Laid on table.

PAPERS

Laid on table by Clerk:

- Mt Hotham Alpine Resort Management Board — Report, 1 November 1998 to 31 October 1999.
- Planning and Environment Act 1987 — Notices of Approval of the following amendments to planning schemes:
 - Ballarat Planning Scheme — Amendment C23.

Brimbank Planning Scheme — Amendments C15 and C17.

Campaspe Planning Scheme — Amendments C7 and C11.

Dandenong — Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme — Amendment C6.

Indigo Planning Scheme — Amendment C3.

Strathbogie Planning Scheme — Amendment C1.

Laid on table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Hon. R. H. BOWDEN (South Eastern) — I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Hon. M. M. Gould — Leave is granted.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Leave is granted.

Hon. R. H. BOWDEN — On Wednesday, 10 May, I was the subject of a series of comments in the Legislative Assembly by Mr Holding, the member for Springvale.

The comments as reported in *Hansard* of Wednesday, 10 May, are not an accurate record of a reported social occasion, and I find them offensive. Several people who were constantly with me that evening can confirm that nothing unacceptable took place.

I have reflected on the untrue and inflammatory statements made in the Legislative Assembly and am pleased to take this opportunity to set the record straight.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — On a point of order, Mr President, in relation to the comments that have just been made by the honourable member, which reflect on another member in another place, I understand that the document — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am sorry to interrupt the honourable member, but under standing order 120 a personal explanation cannot be debated, and that includes raising a point of order. I also direct the attention of the honourable member to standing order 127, which states:

No member shall allude to any debate of the same session, upon a question or bill ... except by the indulgence of the Council for personal explanations.

The fact is that the honourable member is entitled, given the leave of the house, under standing order 120 to make an explanation on a personal matter and such

matters cannot be debated, so I cannot entertain a point of order.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Well, can I make — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am sorry, no.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Mr President, I want to take a point of order, and I am entitled — —

Opposition members interjecting.

The PRESIDENT — Order! Sit down. If the point of order relates to the personal explanation I cannot — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Why don't you have the decency to allow me to speak?

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. R. A. Best — Are you questioning the Chair?

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — Yes I am.

The PRESIDENT — Order! The only matter before the house at the moment — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That's what I'm going to do.

The PRESIDENT — Order! This is not the time to do it. There is a motion. You give notice of motion to — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — I am aware of what I need to do. If you would allow people to actually speak — —

The PRESIDENT — Order! Hang on, you stood — —

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — I am allowed to speak.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I am sorry, the standing orders do not let me allow the honourable member to deal with the matter of the personal explanation. He should look at standing order 120, which I have just read.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — But it does if I get up on a point of order. You are required to listen to the point of order.

The PRESIDENT — Order! No, I am not.

Hon. T. C. Theophanous — That is incorrect.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment

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

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until a day and hour to be fixed by the President, which time of meeting shall be notified in writing to each honourable member.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the house do now adjourn.

Planning: Bulleen drive-in site

Hon. C. A. FURLETTI (Templestowe) — I refer the Minister assisting the Minister for Planning to the former Bulleen drive-in site at Greenaway Street, Bulleen. Last month the Minister for Planning appointed another advisory panel to determine appropriate uses and appropriate scale of development for the site and whether the request before the Manningham City Council for rezoning, use and development is consistent with the scope of the recommendations of the advisory committee chaired by Mrs Helen Gibson dated November 1996.

Manningham City Council owns part of the land that is the subject of the proposal and the redevelopment cannot proceed without the applicant acquiring that land. I ask the minister to give an assurance that the government will not take steps to bring the land owned by the Manningham City Council into public ownership and that he will allow the existing planning procedures and processes to remain in full force and effect.

Sport: football violence

Hon. D. G. HADDEN (Ballarat) — I raise with the Minister for Sport and Recreation the urgent and important issue concerning country football. In mid-April a brawl occurred off the field before a football game between the Hepburn and the Dunnstown football clubs at the Hepburn Recreation Reserve. As a result the Central Highlands Football League handed down a three-year suspension on the serious charge of bringing the game of football into disrepute that applied to the entire Hepburn Football Club — the senior and junior football and netball teams. The matter has

received ongoing and persistent local and statewide media attention since mid-April and the impact on the entire Hepburn Springs community has been devastating, to say the least. The parents of the junior members of the club wrote an open letter to the tribunal chairman questioning the ability of the decision to instil a spirit of sportsmanship in young players.

At a cost of some \$5000 the Hepburn Football Club has since appealed against the decision to the Victorian Country Football League and on 17 May was granted a temporary stay of the three-year suspension pending a full appeal hearing, which is due to be heard next week. However, that reprieve was short lived because the opposition team of Springbank and the umpires said that as they had not been given enough notice the team would be unavailable to play Hepburn last Saturday.

Another recent incident involved an entire junior football club known as the Lalor Bloods, who were suspended by the Diamond Valley Football League until next season because of a violent clash in an under 17s game on 21 May between Lalor and Montmorency.

Violent on-field and off-field clashes at country football matches seem to be escalating and are of serious concern to the local communities involved. Will the minister write to the various state sporting associations to encourage the adoption of codes of conduct for players, spectators and officials.

South Eastern Province constituent

Hon. R. H. BOWDEN (South Eastern) — I seek the assistance of the Minister for Small Business as the representative of ministers in the other place — the Minister for Community Services and the Minister for Housing, who is also the Minister for Aged Care. I raise a sensitive matter concerning the dignity of one of my constituents.

In recent weeks one of my constituents lost his home at the end of a very lengthy and difficult dispute — his family circumstances were not good — and it has been reported to me in recent days that he is now living in his car. That is not desirable for many reasons, with all respect. The community would consider the gentleman concerned to be responsible, yet he is frail and is now in need of counselling and the help of many government services.

I have the gentleman's name and a list of his contacts. I would appreciate it if I could communicate that information to the minister privately. I ask the government to provide the best possible assistance to my constituent in a sensitive way.

Government adviser: replacement

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I direct the attention of the Leader of the Government to the imminent departure of the government's upper house adviser, Mr Danny Pearson. Will the minister inform the house what strategies she will put in place to find a worthy replacement for Mr Pearson, who has given invaluable advice to the government, both in office and in opposition, and whose advice was pivotal to the election of the Bracks Labor government?

Although we all wish Mr Pearson well and the best of luck in his new career in the private sector working with David White, a former member of this place — he will need it — I seek an assurance from the minister that his replacement will be just as effective.

Public transport: Seniors concessions

Hon. E. J. POWELL (North Eastern) — I ask the Minister for Small Business as the representative of the Minister for Community Services in another place about seven-day travel concessions for Seniors Card holders in country Victoria. I have raised the issue a number of times in the house yet I have still not received a response. It is more than eight months since I first raised the issue and some very angry seniors are now visiting my office.

I will go through the saga. On 15 November 1999 I wrote to the Minister for Transport asking for a deputation for the Goulburn Valley Associated Independent Retirees. On 22 November 1999 I received a response from the office of the minister stating that the letter had been received, that the matter was receiving attention and that there would be a response as soon as possible.

On 25 February I again wrote to the Minister for Transport asking for a response and again requesting that he receive a deputation of independent retirees and others who had responded to me and wanted to meet the minister. On 28 February I received a response from the minister advising that the matter was the responsibility of the Minister for Aged Care and that the correspondence had been forwarded to her for her consideration and response.

On 20 March I received a response from the Minister for Community Services in the other place, who claims she is the minister responsible for state concession cards.

The minister has still not acknowledged my request to receive a deputation. She has missed the point about the anomaly with seniors cards across state borders in that

senior citizens living in New South Wales and Queensland have seven-day travel concessions but country Victorians can have concessions for only three days. The minister said the government has given a commitment to examine the feasibility of extending the Seniors Card discount from Monday to Friday, but that would still not match the seven-day pass issued in other states.

It is now three months since I received the minister's letter. What is the outcome of the feasibility study by the Department of Human Resources, and will the minister receive a deputation of self-funded retirees from the Goulburn Valley, Echuca and Warrnambool before the government makes any decision?

Ararat: wine industry

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Energy and Resources representing the Minister for Agriculture in another place. I refer to Labor's World Class and Green agriculture policy, which states:

A Labor government will work with the Victorian wine industry to establish a centre of excellence for the Victorian viticulture and winemaking industry at Aradale in Ararat ...

It will provide \$1.5 million from the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund as seed funding to kick-start the Aradale development.

In his contribution to the address-in-reply debate late last year the honourable member for Ripon said that the commitment was:

now government policy

and that subsequently, in the debate on the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund the Labor government committed to providing the \$1.5 million. He said:

Through its commitment Labor will get the ball rolling at Aradale and hence receive praise from the Ararat community.

I have been in contact with the Ararat community and I have one question: will the minister provide an update on when the ball will start rolling and the \$1.5 million will flow? I am interested to know the future of that initiative.

Mildura Base Hospital

Hon. R. A. BEST (North Western) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Industrial Relations representing the Minister for Health in another place. I refer to an article that appeared in the *Sunraysia Daily* of 31 May this year headed 'Health funding shock'. It

refers to an announcement by the Minister for Aged Care in the other place about a rehabilitation clinic to be based at the new Mildura hospital, and says that funding of \$736 000 will be allocated over three years.

According to the operators of the new Mildura hospital, Ramsay Healthcare, that announcement came as quite a shock. The article states:

The funding announcement caught Mildura hospital operators Ramsay Healthcare off guard yesterday, despite confirmation from the minister's office that the clinic would be built adjacent to the new hospital.

A spokesperson for the minister said the clinic would be purpose-built and acknowledged the service may not have been included in the initial construction plans for the hospital.

That article has caused quite a deal of concern within the Mildura area because, as most people associated with the new funding arrangements for the provision of health care services in Mildura know — and I compliment my colleague the Honourable Barry Bishop on playing such a prominent role — there has been an agreement within the contract agreed to by the state and the provider that a rehabilitation clinic would be part of the service provision.

This has caused a shock not only for the Ramsay Healthcare group and other health professionals and local government in the Mildura area but particularly for the two local members, Mr Bishop and me.

Are there to be two rehabilitation clinics in Mildura, or has the minister repackaged what was an agreement under the health service agreement between the former government and Ramsay Healthcare to try to take the credit for funding of the rehabilitation clinic?

Murrindindi Road: upgrade

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE (Central Highlands) — I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Energy and Resources as the representative of the Minister for State and Regional Development — it could also go to the Minister for Transport — about Murrindindi Road, which is vital for the Shire of Murrindindi. A commitment was given by the honourable member for Seymour, Ben Hardman, in the other place during the election campaign and after the election that the Bracks Labor government would fund the sealing of the road. We are now well down the track but there has been no commitment from the government. A minister cannot be found to take responsibility for funding the roadworks.

The Minister for Transport has indicated that it is not within his portfolio to fund the works, and the Minister

for State and Regional Development has said there are no direct funds and one would have to apply through the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund.

The 5 kilometres of unsealed road is vital for the region, which has a timber mill, a new trout farm, and wineries. The winegrowers are required to take their grapes out of the region to have them crushed.

Honourable members interjecting.

Hon. G. R. CRAIGE — They usually get crushed before they reach the bitumen road because the road is so rough that the grapes end up on the road!

Funding is urgently required. I am aware the council has made an application under the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund. I make a plea not only on behalf of the industry, but also for employment in regional Victoria, that sealing of the road be given the go-ahead.

Heatherton–Belgrave–Hallam road intersection: traffic congestion

Hon. N. B. LUCAS (Eumemmerring) — I direct the attention of the Minister for Energy and Resources, for the attention of the Minister for Transport in another place, to the intersection of Heatherton, Belgrave and Hallam roads in Narre Warren North where every morning during the peak hour traffic from three directions from the north and south banks up to get through the single roundabout. In the evening traffic from the city banks up, particularly in Heatherton Road. On inspection the other night I saw that more than 2 kilometres of traffic heading east was waiting to get through the roundabout.

There are two solutions: one is to install traffic lights and the other is to convert the single roundabout to a double roundabout. As growth continues to take place in Narre Warren and Berwick, traffic volumes will increase substantially. Over the past few years traffic congestion has made that intersection unworkable.

One of the reasons it is unworkable is that in both the morning and afternoon peak hours traffic is not coming towards the intersection from one direction. To make a roundabout work adequately traffic needs to be moving from every direction so breaks are created in the traffic flow. That is the only way everyone will get a fair go.

I ask that the Minister for Transport give consideration to the intersection and the urgency of undertaking a review of the adequacy of the existing single roundabout in coping with increasing traffic flow with a view to doing some work to address the problem.

GST: lay-by sales

Hon. G. B. ASHMAN (Koonung) — I refer the Minister for Small Business, who is also the Minister for Consumer Affairs, to a response she gave to a question on Tuesday. To paraphrase, the minister outlined the goods and services tax obligations for retailers and consumers regarding goods on lay-by and indicated that the GST would be absorbed by the retailer, not the consumer, if the contract were concluded after 1 July. She also indicated savings as a result of reductions in wholesale sales tax would be passed on to the consumer if the contract were concluded after 1 July.

In today's *Herald Sun* Chris Connolly, director of the Financial Services Consumer Policy Centre, indicated support for that ruling. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is reported as stating that stores will not be able to charge the GST if goods are paid off after 1 July unless the customer is fully informed. I cannot see where that comes up in the rulings of the taxation office. The tax rulings lead me to a quite different conclusion — that is, that any lay-by concluded after 1 July is subject to the GST and that therefore the customer would have a GST liability in exactly the same way as though the customer were picking a product off the shelf and purchasing it on the spot.

Perhaps the minister is aware of something I do not know about and, based on my reading of the tax rulings by the Australian Taxation Office, something the tax office is not quite clear on. Perhaps the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is making up the rules as it goes along. I ask the minister specifically what action she is taking to convey to retailers what actions they need to take to ensure they get full recovery of the GST from consumers and do not lose as a result of those transactions.

Unions: picket lines

Hon. D. McL. DAVIS (East Yarra) — Following debate last night and yesterday at question time, I ask the Minister for Industrial Relations a question. As Mr Leigh Hubbard has said, the Victorian Trades Hall Council has no conduct code for unionists. In the interests of community safety and prior to the 1 July kick-off of the manufacturing unions' Campaign 2000, will the minister insist that the Trades Hall Council develop and implement a responsible code of practice for picketing that ensures that no trade unionists will take part in an illegal or violent picket line?

Liquor: licences

Hon. ANDREA COOTE (Monash) — My question is to the Minister for Small Business. On 22 March in a media release from the minister's office she announced a review of the 8 per cent liquor licence limit as follows:

Ms Thomson said the Office of Regulation Reform would report its findings and recommendations to the government on May 31.

I ask the minister whether the Office of Regulation Reform reported its findings and, if so, whether they will be made available.

Snowy River

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Western) — I raise an issue with the Minister for Energy and Resources as the minister charged with the responsibility for the restitution of environmental flows down the Snowy River.

I note the recent comments attributed to the minister's New South Wales counterpart, the Honourable John Della Bosca, with whom the minister is presumably negotiating the cost sharing of the Snowy River project. Mr Della Bosca is reported as having said that perhaps we could simply change the title of the Banjo Paterson classic to read 'The man from Geehi River'.

In the face of that despondency does the minister still maintain that an environmental flow of 28 per cent is a rational and defensible target? If so, will she now advise the chamber what cost parameters she expects will be required to achieve the water savings to be redirected? I invite her to exclude for the purposes of the exercise two major cost drivers: the first being the opportunity cost that will be expressed in the capitalisation in the Snowy River hydro-electricity scheme when it is privatised; the second, the matching environmental flows to the Murray River which any success in the Snowy River will undoubtedly trigger.

Aquaculture: industry assistance

Hon. B. W. BISHOP (North Western) — My adjournment issue tonight is directed to the Minister for Energy and Resources. I have observed with great interest the statewide enthusiasm shown towards aquaculture in Victoria.

I have been pleased to be able to assist a number of the people who have started up businesses or now have them in operation. I note also that a number of these enterprises have been put into place by farmers seeking another income stream in hard times. These people

have put in a substantial investment in relation to aquaculture processes and are relying on every piece of information they can pick up as they work their way into what is in effect a relatively new world.

These operators have reported to me that they have been pleased with the assistance received from the minister's department. It is essential that the department be well placed to support the expanding industry of aquaculture, which has committed a substantial amount of its own resources not only in stocks but infrastructure and time.

My request is that, given the fact that the minister has just discontinued \$1.5 million of initiative funding from the Victorian aquaculture industry, which includes the Snobs Creek hatchery, what research and development resources will now be applied to Victoria's expanding aquaculture industry?

Heineken golf tournament

Hon. I. J. COVER (Geelong) — I have an issue I would like to raise, not surprisingly, for the attention of the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Even less surprising is that it goes to the issue of public funding required to secure the Heineken Golf Classic for Victoria. I acknowledge that I have raised this general issue previously, indeed several times. However, my interest has been sustained by the rich variety of responses offered by the minister.

As a case in point, last evening during the adjournment debate the minister stepped back from his previous announcement that the expenditure would appear in the budget papers in the years in which the money is expended, that is 2002–05.

I again refer the minister to page 286 of budget paper no. 2. Table B10: New Initiatives is an impressive list of output initiatives in several columns. The first column is headed 1999–00 — and I knew not to look there for the Heineken Golf Classic! The next column is headed 2000–01 and again I skipped over that. The next column is 2001–02 — getting warmer. I asked myself why the Heineken Golf Classic was not included in funding for that year. I decided that perhaps it was to be staged in the second half of 2002, so I gave the minister the benefit of the doubt. The next column is headed 2002–03 and the last is 2003–04. There is no mention of the Heineken Golf Classic.

Honourable Members — Shame!

Hon. I. J. COVER — I am mystified. If, as the minister reported to the house, the money will appear in the budget papers in the years it is expended, something

has obviously gone wrong and for the record I ask the minister to clarify the situation.

Industrial relations: employee entitlements

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (East Yarra) — The Minister for Industrial Relations would be aware that recently the federal government launched an employee entitlement support scheme, for which the commonwealth provides direct funding to unfortunate employees who have suffered a shortage of their entitlements as a result of their employer going out of business in one way or another. As a result of that initiative, for the first time in history the commonwealth government is providing funding for individuals who through no fault of their own do not get the lawful entitlements that they would expect.

The commonwealth government is seeking support from the states to match that funding and play a role in that environment. Recently the commonwealth government started the first funds rolling with grants to employees who had not gained their entitlements in the New South Wales town of Scone.

If during the parliamentary break a Victorian company is not able, through insolvency, to provide the proper entitlements and funding to its employees, will the Victorian government do its bit by ensuring that it provides some support to those employees?

In the absence of that support it is clear that those individuals will be left in an environment where their entitlements are not met and therefore they have some legitimate public complaint.

The commonwealth has shown a lead and the current Victorian government should not just talk about whether that fresh initiative is the best option. It should explain whether it will be involved in the scheme and if not whether it will make available some other form of direct financial assistance to those employees who do not get their lawful entitlements.

Sport: Women in Local Sport

Hon. P. R. HALL (Gippsland) — I raise a matter for the Minister for Sport and Recreation. Like my colleague the Honourable Ian Cover, I am in pursuit of some missing dollars in the sport and recreation budget.

I am searching for the funding promised for the promotion of women's sport. I do not need to remind the minister that at the last election a commitment was given by the Labor Party to provide \$1.662 million over three years for a special initiative called Women in

Local Sport. The revenue was to be raised from the proceeds of Labor's national footy tipping competition.

All honourable members would know that the national footy tipping competition failed to materialise this year and hence there appears to be a black hole in the funding promised by the government.

I seek an assurance from the minister that despite his failure to get the national footy tipping competition in place, he is prepared to honour the election commitment to provide \$1.662 million towards women's sport over the next three years.

Snowy River

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I refer the Minister for Energy and Resources to the Australian Labor Party's promises on the Snowy River. Given that all previous deadlines for reaching agreement with New South Wales on increasing the flows down the river have not been met, does the minister now concede that she has no deadline for solving the issue; or, if she does not concede that, does she have a public deadline that she will now set?

Minerals and petroleum: government policy

Hon. PHILIP DAVIS (Gippsland) — I refer the Minister for Energy and Resources to yesterday's ministerial statement in which she committed the government, and I quote:

... to investigate a process for ensuring that private land with high environmental value is given similar protection to equivalent Crown land in resource exploration and development proposals.

The impact of the commitment on private property rights will put investment confidence at risk. Will the minister assure the house that any measures to give private land 'similar protection to equivalent Crown land' will be considered by Parliament and not imposed by administrative action?

Responses

Hon. M. M. GOULD (Minister for Industrial Relations) — The Honourable Theo Theophanous asked about the departure of Daniel Pearson from the government's employ. I can confirm that Daniel Pearson, otherwise known as Danny, is to take up a senior position in the private sector. The honourable member asked whether I would be putting in place a comprehensive strategy to replace Danny Pearson in recognition of the pivotal role that he has played as evidenced by the government's performance in question time today.

We on this side of the house, as I am sure on the other side, wish him all the best in his new venture away from politics — something slightly different but still with a tinge of politics.

Hon. M. A. Birrell — Who's going to replace him? That's what you were asked!

Hon. M. M. GOULD — A comprehensive strategy — —

Hon. M. R. Thomson — Just keep going!

Hon. M. M. GOULD — The Honourable David Davis raised a matter about a code of practice with respect to the Trades Hall Council and the police concerning picket lines. Just for the edification of the honourable member, I point out that the trades hall and the police met yesterday about the very issue he raised. That is about the fourth or fifth time in the last four weeks. For the honourable member's information, I advise him that a code of practice is in place.

The Honourable Mark Birrell raised with me a proposal the federal minister for workplace relations, Mr Reith, has put in place, as identified in the federal budget, for employees who have lost their jobs because their companies have become insolvent. It is a poor package. As I have indicated to the house on a number of occasions, the proposal the federal government has put in place requires an open cheque book from the state government. It has no caps and there are no restrictions on the amounts of money the state government may be expected to pay.

The Labor-governed states have argued with the federal minister that he must put in place a proper scheme to ensure employees' entitlements are fully paid for through an insurance-type scheme. Those entitlements should be paid for by the employers and not the taxpayers. It is the employees' money and it is the employer's responsibility to set aside appropriate funding.

This government will not provide an open cheque book for a proposal subject to the discretion of the federal minister. The government will not expose Victorian taxpayers to an unknown liability.

Hon. R. A. Best — On a point of order, Mr President, I raised an issue with the Leader of the Government in her capacity as minister representing the Minister for Health in another place.

Hon. M. M. GOULD — I beg your pardon. The Honourable Ron Best raised a matter for referral to the Minister for Health about an article in the *Sunraysia*

Daily of 31 May on the rehabilitation clinic at the new Mildura Base Hospital. I will do that, and the minister will respond in the usual manner.

Hon. C. C. BROAD (Minister for Energy and Resources) — Mr Forwood asked that the Minister for Agriculture provide an update on the future of the proposed viticulture centre of excellence at Aradale at Ararat. I will pass the request on to the Minister for Agriculture.

Mr Craig asked the Minister for State and Regional Development, who is also fortuitously the Treasurer, to consider giving priority to the Shire of Murrindindi's application to the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund for the sealing of Murrindindi Road. I will refer the matter to the minister for response.

Mr Lucas raised a matter for the attention of the Minister for Transport requesting that the minister give consideration to reviewing traffic management at the intersection of Heatherton and two other roads with a view to improving traffic flows at the intersection. I will refer the matter to the minister.

Mr Hallam raised a number of matters relating to the Snowy River. The answer to the first part of his question is yes, and on the matter of costs, I should say those matters continue to be the subject of negotiation.

Mr Bishop referred to the two-year aquaculture initiative of the former government which finishes at the end of this month in accordance with that government's last budget. I have previously indicated that as the initiative is about to end I consider it an appropriate time to review what has been achieved from the initiative and that in the meantime the important research being undertaken at Snobs Creek and the Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute will continue.

Mr Stoney raised an issue concerning the Snowy River. My response is that I consider getting the right result in relation to restoring environmental flows to the Snowy is more important than setting arbitrary deadlines, but if I change my mind about the deadline I will be sure to let him know.

Mr Philip Davis referred to the ministerial statement I delivered in the house yesterday, particularly the commitment to examine raising protection available for conservation values of private land, and he asked that any proposals be considered by Parliament. At this stage I am not able to indicate the precise nature of the proposals that might be considered to achieve the objective of providing better protection to private landowners who wish to secure high conservation

values of their land. However, I advise him that proposals will be subject to an open and consultative process and that if they go to matters that are appropriate to bring before Parliament that is what will happen.

Hon. M. R. THOMSON (Minister for Small Business) — The Honourable Ron Bowden raised for the attention of the Minister for Housing and the Minister for Community Services the case of a gentleman who seems to have come upon hard times arising out of adverse findings in a legal case and who is living in his car and is in need of assistance. I will certainly pass the matter on to the ministers.

The Honourable Jeanette Powell raised for the attention of the Minister for Community Services the seven-day travel card concession for country residents who are Seniors Card holders. I will pass the matter on to the minister for response.

The Honourable Gerald Ashman raised with me the imposition of the goods and services tax on lay-bys and the rulings of the Australian Taxation Office on lay-bys containing GST provisions. I understand that the ATO has been handing out information on that issue. Officers of my department are checking on that now. Our understanding is that the information is being passed on to retailers via the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission booklet. The ACCC is trying to get that information out to retailers quickly so that they are aware of it. I am not certain that retailers will not be disadvantaged under some lay-by circumstances, and I am concerned about that.

The Honourable Andrea Coote raised the 8 per cent liquor licensing limit and the review that Office of Regulation Reform is conducting. I have been asked for an extension of time by that office, as it wants to do some more research into the matter. It has been granted an extension of time, and in due course an announcement will be made about that review.

Hon. J. M. MADDEN (Minister for Sport and Recreation) — The Honourable Carlo Furletti raised a matter about the site of the former Bulleen drive-in owned by the Manningham City Council. I will refer that matter to the Minister for Planning in the other place.

The Honourable Dianne Hadden asked a question about the Hepburn Springs Football Club. I would not want to interfere with the appeal hearing process; however, the question is timely in that I have recently written to a number of major elite sporting bodies in light of recent events, both nationally and internationally, seeking

clarification on codes of conduct and how they are communicated and policed. I will be happy to make the same request of state sporting associations, encouraging them to communicate codes of conduct if they do not already do so.

Hon. Bill Forwood — Were you ever reported?

Hon. J. M. MADDEN — In relation to the — —

Hon. Bill Forwood — He is nodding his head!

Hon. J. M. MADDEN — I was asked a question by the Honourable Ian Cover, who apparently has a fixation about golf. I have made myself clear on that issue on a number of occasions. I have tried to expand on that, and if it has not been made clear perhaps the budget papers should be read in a bit more detail. I refer the honourable member to the clause that states that the item is commercially confidential and that the amount will appear as an aggregate amount, as is usual in such instances.

The Honourable Peter Hall asked a question about funds for the promotion of women's sport and the national football tipping competition. No doubt he will be aware from the budget papers that the implementation of the football tipping competition has been delayed due to the ongoing discussions between a number of parties, led by the Minister for Gaming in the other place. The government is confident that the competition will be operating for next year's football season. Significant funds have already been distributed to state sporting associations for them to promote participation in sport by under-represented groups.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I have to report to the house that this afternoon the Minister for Consumer Affairs and I had a discussion over a sticky bun. We agreed to consume the evidence, and did so.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 7.04 p.m.

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.*

Thursday, 1 June 2000

State and Regional Development: overseas trade fair and exhibition funding

- 428. THE HON. M. A. BIRRELL** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development):
- (a) What delegations to overseas trade fairs or exhibitions by Victorian businesses will the Government be nominating in 2000–01 for specific financial support, listing each fair or exhibition and its date.
 - (b) What trade missions will the Government be nominating in 2000–01 for specific financial support, listing the title and approximate date of each mission.
 - (c) What funds were allocated in 1999–2000 for the above purposes and what funds will be allocated in 2000–01.

ANSWER:

The Department of State and Regional Development supports participation of groups of firms at overseas trade fairs by contributing to the cost of exhibition space, stand design and construction, translation activities and promotion. For trade missions, the Department contributes to costs such as consultant support, receptions, interpreters, translation and mission brochures.

Priority is given to a range of trade fairs and missions associated with the State's key industry sectors.

I am informed that the 2000–01 trade fairs and missions program is currently being developed.

The allocation for overseas trade fairs and missions in 1999–2000 is \$838,000. The allocation for 2000–01 has yet to be determined.

Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: Community Business Employment program

- 429. THE HON. M. A. BIRRELL** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment): With respect to the Community Business Employment Program (CBE) in 2000–01 and beyond, will the Minister provide (in tabular form) details of each of the specific performance criteria for — (i) the total CBE program; and (ii) each of the bodies chosen to deliver the program across Victoria.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The performance criteria for the 2000–01 Community Business Employment (CBE) program and individual providers are as published in the CBE program guidelines.

Premier: public sector pay rise

430. THE HON. M. A. BIRRELL — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Premier): What is the estimated cost to the State Government and its agencies of the recent Australian Industrial Relations Commission decision on pay rises for Victorian public sector employees.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Department of Treasury and Finance estimates the cost to the State Government of the decision in the matter of the s.170MX arbitration by the Full Bench of the AIRC, following the termination of a bargaining period involving the CPSU and the State of Victoria (Decision no. 351/00 S Print S 4568), to be \$33.9M in 1999–00 and \$27.1M per annum ongoing.

Environment and Conservation: Lake Colac

431. THE HON. ANDREA COOTE — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation): In relation to Lake Colac:

- (a) What is the most recent study of water quality in the lake, by whom was it made and what are the results.
- (b) What is the most recent study of the qualities of the sediment and/or silt in the lake, by whom was it made and what are the results.
- (c) What plans does the government have for improving the water quality of the lake.
- (d) What plans does the government have for dealing with silting problems in the lake.
- (e) What plans does the government have to support the beautification of the banks of the lake.
- (f) What plans does the government have to support the improvement of facilities surrounding the lake.
- (g) What advice does the government have in relation to water quality in the creeks and drains flowing into the lake.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (a) Water quality in Lake Colac was previously monitored quarterly as part of the Victorian Water Quality Monitoring Network Lakes Program (monitoring ceased in 1997). The last report summarising this data was prepared by Water Ecoscience in 1996 (published by NRE). It includes information about a range of parameters for Lake Colac.

The Lake is currently monitored monthly as part of the EPA's monitoring of 5 Western District Lakes. Parameters measured include: pH, EC, DO (dissolved oxygen), temperature, nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen), chlorophyll-a, and a range of heavy metals.

There is a State Environment Protection Policy for the Waters of Lake Colac and Catchment, which specifies a range of (mostly) quantitative objectives to be met to protect a range of beneficial uses. Attainment against turbidity, metals, DO and pH is high. Attainment against nutrient guidelines is low (ie nutrient levels are high).

Macroinvertebrates were monitored under the Salinity Mandatory Environmental Monitoring Program for two years (1996 and 1997). Reports have been prepared by the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (MAFRI) and indicate that the taxa richness (ie a measure of biodiversity) varied from low to medium.

- (b) Government is not aware of any sediment and silt analysis which has been undertaken.
- (c) The Corangamite CMA, in partnership with all stakeholders including Government, has developed a nutrient management plan. Lake Colac is a priority waterbody within the plan. Priority activities are aimed at minimising urban and agricultural inputs to the Lake.
- (d) The Corangamite CMA has installed a gross pollutant trap at the Armstrong Street drain (this is the main stormwater input to Colac).

The Corangamite CMA and Colac Otway Shire, in conjunction with the local Scouts, has instigated a drain stencilling program to educate people about the impact of stormwater drains on the Lake. The Corangamite CMA and Barwon Water, supported by Natural Heritage Trust funds, have been involved for the past three years in erosion control works on the Eastern Shore of Lake Colac. Rock groynes have been installed to control erosion and silt inputs.

- (e) The Corangamite CMA has undertaken (and will continue to undertake) restoration work which includes willow removal, extensive replanting with native vegetation and fencing to prevent stock access on the Lake Foreshore. This work is undertaken in conjunction with Colac Otway Shire and local landcare groups.
- (f) The Corangamite CCMA and Barwon Water have recently applied for a full-time WaterWatch coordinator for Colac and surrounds through the Living Cities Program.

Colac Otway Shire is currently developing tender documents for a management plan for Lake Colac in conjunction with Corangamite CMA and Friends of Lake Colac.

Barwon Water, working with EPA to meet current State Environment Protection Policy guidelines, have called for tenders for a new tertiary treatment plant to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus inputs to the Lake. In the future, Barwon Water will be looking at reuse options.

- (g) There are two major tributaries - Deans Creek and Barongarook Creek. Deans Creek is currently monitored for salinity. Some monitoring has been done in the past under the WaterWatch program. Further monitoring will be undertaken if the application for funding for a WW coordinator is successful.

Water quality in the creeks is being tackled through the Corangamite Nutrient Management Plan, the Corangamite Salinity program and considerable revegetation works. Some additional on-ground catchment works will also soon commence in the Barongarook catchment through NRE investment.

Health: ministerial appointments

- 438. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Planning: ministerial appointments

- 439. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Transport: ministerial appointments

440. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Local Government: ministerial appointments

444. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Local Government): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Workcover: ministerial appointments

445. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Workcover): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Community Services: ministerial appointments

446. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Community Services): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual boards.

Education: ministerial appointments

447. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Hon. P. A. Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Arts: ministerial appointments

448. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Industrial Relations: ministerial appointments

451. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

There are no Boards within my portfolio, and therefore the question is not applicable.

Aboriginal Affairs: ministerial appointments

454. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: ministerial appointments

458. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Major Projects and Tourism: ministerial appointments

461. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Major Projects and Tourism): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Health: ministerial appointments

468. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Planning: ministerial appointments

469. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Transport: ministerial appointments

470. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Local Government: ministerial appointments

474. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Local Government): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Workcover: ministerial appointments

475. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Workcover): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Community Services: ministerial appointments

476. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Community Services): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Education: ministerial appointments

477. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Hon. P. A. Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Arts: ministerial appointments

478. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Industrial Relations: ministerial appointments

481. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

There are no Commissions within my portfolio, and therefore the question is not applicable.

Aboriginal Affairs: ministerial appointments

484. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: ministerial appointments

488. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Major Projects and Tourism: ministerial appointments

491. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Major Projects and Tourism): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Health: ministerial appointments

- 498. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of Government Business Enterprises.

Planning: ministerial appointments

- 499. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of a Government Business Enterprise.

Transport: ministerial appointments

- 500. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of a Government Business Enterprise.

Local Government: ministerial appointments

- 504. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Local Government): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of a Government Business Enterprise.

Workcover: ministerial appointments

505. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Workcover): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committee of a Government Business Enterprise.

Community Services: ministerial appointments

506. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Community Services): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of Government Business Enterprises.

Education: ministerial appointments

507. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Hon. P. A. Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of a Government Business Enterprise.

Arts: ministerial appointments

508. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committee of a Government Business Enterprise.

Industrial Relations: ministerial appointments

511. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

There are no Government Business Enterprises within my portfolio, and therefore the question is not applicable.

Aboriginal Affairs: ministerial appointments

514. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of Government Business Enterprises.

Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: ministerial appointments

518. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committee of a Government Business Enterprise.

Major Projects and Tourism: ministerial appointments

521. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Major Projects and Tourism): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of Government Business Enterprises.

Health: ministerial appointments

528. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Health): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board

or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of Statutory Authorities.

Planning: ministerial appointments

529. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Planning): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of a Statutory Authority.

Transport: ministerial appointments

530. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual any Boards or Management Committees of a Statutory Authority.

Local Government: ministerial appointments

534. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Local Government): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of a Statutory Authority.

Workcover: ministerial appointments

535. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Workcover): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority.

Community Services: ministerial appointments

536. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Community Services): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of Statutory Authorities.

Education: ministerial appointments

537. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Education): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Hon. P. A. Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of a Statutory Authority.

Arts: ministerial appointments

538. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Arts): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority.

Industrial Relations: ministerial appointments

541. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

There are no Statutory Authorities within my portfolio, and therefore the question is not applicable.

Aboriginal Affairs: ministerial appointments

544. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of Statutory Authorities.

Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment: ministerial appointments

548. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority.

Major Projects and Tourism: ministerial appointments

551. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Major Projects and Tourism): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of Statutory Authorities.

Transport: airline Canada 3000

617. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Transport):

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Thursday, 1 June 2000

COUNCIL

1701

- (a) Since 19 October 1999 has the State Government had any discussions with airline Canada 3000 to begin services to Melbourne Airport from Toronto, Vancouver or Honolulu.
- (b) What marketing support, if any, has the State Government offered in connection with the above.

ANSWER:

As this question does not fall within my portfolio responsibilities, I am unable to provide an answer.

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.*

Friday, 2 June 2000

Small Business: safe work practices

- 432. THE HON. W. I. SMITH** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to the incentive package for small business to encourage safe work practices:
- (a) What consultation has been undertaken with small businesses.
 - (b) Which small business associations have been consulted.
 - (c) Has the Department of Treasury and Finance been consulted in regard to the financial implications of the package.
 - (d) Will there be a reduction in WorkCover premiums for small business.
 - (e) What is the time frame for implementation of the package.

ANSWER:

Consultations are proceeding with the Department of Treasury and Finance regarding development of an appropriate incentive package for small business to encourage safe work practices. Development of the package will include consultation with small business, with a view to ensuring that the WorkCover scheme better rewards the efforts of those small businesses providing a safe and healthy workplace.

Small Business: liquor laws

- 433. THE HON. BILL FORWOOD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business:
- (a) Have any discussions taken place between the Minister's office and/or department and the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel concerning legislative changes to liquor laws "to ensure that small businesses remain secure in a diverse market place for packaged liquor".
 - (b) Have drafting instructions been issued on this matter.

ANSWER:

- (a) No
- (b) No

Small Business: liquor licences

- 434. THE HON. BILL FORWOOD** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: In relation to the National Competition Policy review of the 8 percent liquor licence limit currently being undertaken by the Office of Regulation Reform and scheduled for completion by 31 May 2000:
- (a) What key interest groups have been consulted.

- (b) How many written submissions have been received, and from whom.
- (c) Which groups or individuals have met with the Office of Regulation Reform on this review.
- (d) How many times has the Reference Group met and with whom.
- (e) How much time has the Reference Group spent on this review.

ANSWER:

I am advised that the Office of Regulation Reform has had discussions with the following organisations:

Australian Consumers Association
 *Australian Drug Foundation
 Australian Hotels & Hospitality Association (Victoria)
 Australian Liquor, Hospitality & Miscellaneous Workers Union
 *Australian Liquor Marketers
 Australian Retailers Association
 Carlton & United Breweries
 Clubs Victoria
 Co-ordinating Council on the Control of Liquor Abuse
 D. McGrath & Associates
 Dan Murphy's
 Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia
 Franklins
 Erik B. Hopkinson & Associates
 *'Liquor Barons – Cheers – Liquor for Less' buying group
 *Liquor Stores Association of Victoria
 *Liquorland/Coles
 Master Grocers Association of Victoria
 *National Competition Council
 *Porters Liquor Hawthorn
 *Victoria Police
 Restaurant & Catering Association of Victoria
 *Ritchies Stores
 *Safeway/Woolworths
 Shop, Distributive & Allied Employees Union
 T J Board & Sons estate agents
 Tooheys
 *Turning Point Alcohol & Drug Centre
 *Victorian Wine Industry Association

- * Denotes the organisations that have lodged a submission as at 25 May 2000. In addition, one confidential submission has been lodged.

The Office has also spoken to numerous liquor business owners during the course of the review.

The Reference Group has only met with the Office of Regulation Reform. As at 25 May 2000, five meetings have been held. Generally, the time involved for group members in preparing for and attending a meeting and undertaking follow up action is approximately one day per meeting.

Premier: ministerial appointments

- 435. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Premier): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Premier's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The definition of Board for the purpose of this question has not been provided. Accordingly, Board is defined as the bodies referred to in question numbers 465, 495 and 525 and I refer the honourable member to the responses provided to those questions.

Treasurer: ministerial appointments

436. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Treasurer's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Multicultural Affairs: ministerial appointments

437. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Multicultural Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The question is answered in the response to Question 527.

Energy and Resources: ministerial appointments

441. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Finance: ministerial appointments

442. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Finance): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

State and Regional Development: ministerial appointments

443. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister’s portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Environment and Conservation: ministerial appointments

449. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister’s portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Women’s Affairs: ministerial appointments

450. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women’s Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister’s portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Agriculture: ministerial appointments

453. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister’s portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Attorney-General: ministerial appointments

455. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Attorney-General's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Manufacturing Industry: ministerial appointments

456. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Manufacturing Industry): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Racing: ministerial appointments

457. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Racing): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Sport and Recreation: ministerial appointments

459. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Gaming: ministerial appointments

460. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Gaming): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

There were no Ministerial appointments made to any Board within my portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

Housing: ministerial appointments

462. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Small Business: ministerial appointments

463. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Consumer Affairs: ministerial appointments

464. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards.

Premier: ministerial appointments

465. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Premier): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Premier's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

For the purpose of this question the term Ministerial appointment has been defined as an appointment made by the Minister. This does not include appointments made by the Governor in Council.

Professor Bill Russell, Dr Nicholas Seddon and Mr Ewen Waterman were appointed as members of the Audit Review of Government Contracts Panel.

Treasurer: ministerial appointments

466. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Treasurer's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Multicultural Affairs: ministerial appointments

467. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Multicultural Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No appointments were made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio in the period indicated.

Energy and Resources: ministerial appointments

471. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Finance: ministerial appointments

472. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Finance): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

State and Regional Development: ministerial appointments

473. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development): What is the name of each Ministerial

appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Environment and Conservation: ministerial appointments

479. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Women's Affairs: ministerial appointments

480. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Agriculture: ministerial appointments

483. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Attorney-General: ministerial appointments

485. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Attorney-General's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Manufacturing Industry: ministerial appointments

486. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Manufacturing Industry): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Racing: ministerial appointments

487. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Racing): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Sport and Recreation: ministerial appointments

489. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Gaming: ministerial appointments

490. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Gaming): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

There were no Ministerial appointments made to any Commission within my portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

Housing: ministerial appointments

492. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Small Business: ministerial appointments

493. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Commissions.

Consumer Affairs: ministerial appointments

494. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Commission within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

There are no Commissions within my portfolio responsibilities.

Premier: ministerial appointments

495. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Premier): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Premier's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

For the purpose of this question the term Ministerial appointment has been defined as an appointment made by the Minister. This does not include appointments made by the Governor in Council.

No ministerial appointments have been made to Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games Pty Ltd, Victorian Major Events Company Ltd or Federation Square Management Pty Ltd during this period.

Treasurer: ministerial appointments

496. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Treasurer's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the name of an individual Committee of a Government Business Enterprise.

Multicultural Affairs: ministerial appointments

497. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Multicultural Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No new appointments were made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio in the period indicated.

Energy and Resources: ministerial appointments

501. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the name of an individual Committee of a Government Business Enterprise.

Finance: ministerial appointments

502. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Finance): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committee of a Government Business Enterprise.

State and Regional Development: ministerial appointments

503. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development): What is the name of each Ministerial

appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of Government Business Enterprises.

Environment and Conservation: ministerial appointments

509. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the name of an individual Committee of a Government Business Enterprise.

Women's Affairs: ministerial appointments

510. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the name of an individual Committee of Government Business Enterprise.

Agriculture: ministerial appointments

513. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the name of an individual Committee of a Government Business Enterprise.

Attorney-General: ministerial appointments

- 515. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Attorney-General's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

There are no Government Business Enterprise's within my portfolio responsibilities.

Manufacturing Industry: ministerial appointments

- 516. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Manufacturing Industry): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of Government Business Enterprises.

Racing: ministerial appointments

- 517. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Racing): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of Government Business Enterprises.

Sport and Recreation: ministerial appointments

- 519. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of Government Business Enterprises.

Gaming: ministerial appointments

- 520. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Gaming): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any

Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

There were no Ministerial appointments made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within my portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

Housing: ministerial appointments

522. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Small Business: ministerial appointments

523. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Committees of Government Business Enterprises.

Consumer Affairs: ministerial appointments

524. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Committee of a Government Business Enterprise within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

There are no Government Business Enterprise's within my portfolio responsibilities.

Premier: ministerial appointments

525. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Premier): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Premier's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

For the purpose of this question the term Ministerial appointment has been defined as an appointment made by the Minister. This does not include appointments made by the Governor in Council.

No ministerial appointments have been made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within my portfolio during this period.

Treasurer: ministerial appointments

526. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Treasurer): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Treasurer's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority.

Multicultural Affairs: ministerial appointments

527. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Multicultural Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

No new Ministerial appointments were made to any Board or Management Committee of any Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio in the period indicated.

The period of appointment of three members of the Victorian Translating and Interpreting Services Board was extended from the appointment expiry date of 31st of October 1999 to 30th June 2000.

Energy and Resources: ministerial appointments

531. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of a Statutory Authority.

Finance: ministerial appointments

532. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Minister for Finance): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority.

State and Regional Development: ministerial appointments

533. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of Statutory Authorities.

Environment and Conservation: ministerial appointments

539. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Environment and Conservation): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of a Statutory Authority.

Women's Affairs: ministerial appointments

540. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Women's Affairs): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of a Statutory Authority.

Agriculture: ministerial appointments

543. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for Agriculture): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of a Statutory Authority.

Attorney-General: ministerial appointments

545. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Attorney-General): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Attorney-General's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority

Manufacturing Industry: ministerial appointments

546. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Manufacturing Industry): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of Statutory Authorities.

Racing: ministerial appointments

547. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Racing): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of Statutory Authorities.

Sport and Recreation: ministerial appointments

549. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of Statutory Authorities.

Gaming: ministerial appointments

550. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Sport and Recreation (for the Honourable the Minister for Gaming): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

Between 18 September 1999 and 29 February 2000 Mr Henry Bosch and Dr Desmond Hore were reappointed as members to the Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority.

Housing: ministerial appointments

552. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business (for the Honourable the Minister for Housing): What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

Nil.

Small Business: ministerial appointments

553. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. The Honourable Member may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Boards or Management Committees of Statutory Authorities.

Consumer Affairs: ministerial appointments

554. THE HON. P. A. KATSAMBANIS — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Consumer Affairs: What is the name of each Ministerial appointment made to any Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority within the Minister's portfolio between 18 September 1999 and 30 April 2000.

ANSWER:

To provide the information requested would require an inordinate amount of time and resources which are not available. Mr Katsambanis may wish to submit a question that includes the names of individual Board or Management Committee of a Statutory Authority

Small Business: regulation review program

555. THE HON. M. A. BIRRELL — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business:

- (a) What are the specific subject areas that the government has set for its regulation review program in 2000–01.
- (b) What funds will be allocated for regulation review in 2000–01.
- (c) Who will be conducting each of the reviews and when will they be completed.

ANSWER:

The Victorian Government is currently undertaking a Strategic Audit of Victorian Industry. The industry audits will identify, among other things, regulatory impediments to investment and employment growth. This information will enable the Government to develop a targeted regulatory review program. As part of the audit, the Government has announced a strategic audit of the textile, clothing, footwear and leather industry. A sectoral review to complement the strategic audit is currently being planned by the Office of Regulation Reform.

The Office of Regulation Reform will continue to conduct regulatory reviews with the support of either Taskforces or Reference Groups. The completion of the reviews will be dependent on the outcomes of the Strategic Audit of Victorian Industry and the finalisation of the regulatory review program.

The allocation for regulation review in 2000–01 is \$1.5 million.

Small Business: training and business improvement services

556. THE HON. BILL FORWOOD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business:

- (a) Which Industry Groups is the Minister currently reaching agreement with to support them in addressing real and practical training and business improvement services.
- (b) When will these agreements be reached, how will these authorities be funded, and from which output group.

ANSWER:

Agreement is presently being reached with a number of industry groups to facilitate delivery of practical and relevant training and business improvement services. The intention is, essentially, to improve competitiveness through strengthened management skills. A feature of the program will be relevant one to one business counselling.

Small Business: equity and fair opportunities

557. THE HON. BILL FORWOOD — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Small Business:

- (a) What reviews are currently being undertaken to ensure equity and fair opportunities for small business operators.
- (b) When did each of these reviews commence, and what is the anticipated completion date of each.

ANSWER:

Equity and fairness of opportunity for small business operators is being pursued by means of a number of activities. These include establishment of the Small Business Advisory Council and ensuring that the WorkCover scheme better rewards the efforts of those small businesses providing a safe and healthy workplace.

Future activities in this area include reviewing the *Retail Tenancies Reform Act 1998* to determine what amendments are needed to afford small business greater protection under that Act, and enhancing training opportunities to strengthen business management competencies through funding of various industry associations.

State and Regional Development: ongoing five year STI initiative

558. THE HON. M. A. BIRRELL — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development):

- (a) What funding will be provided in each year of the “ongoing 5 year STI initiative” mentioned at p. 302 of Budget Paper No. 3.
- (b) What funding will be provided in 2000–01 for the STI Policy and Advisory Council.
- (c) In respect of the STI initiative funding, what project areas (or sub-programs) will be funded, and what is the expected break-up of the total funding to each project area in 2000–01.
- (d) How will bids for funding under the STI initiative be assessed, and by whom.

ANSWER:

Funding available under the ongoing 5 year STI Initiative is \$310 million. Allocations to date have been \$35 million in 1999–2000, with \$50 million budgeted for 2000–01. The Government, with advice from the newly formed advisory body, the Council for Knowledge, Innovation, Science and Engineering, will determine the funding profile over the three years of the program to 2003–04.

Direct costs of support in 2000–01 for the Council are included in the cost of \$0.1 million for the output “STI Policy and Advisory Council”.

Applications for the first round of contestable funding under the STI Initiative are currently being considered, and will be subjected to a rigorous assessment process. This will include evaluation by appropriate technical experts and scrutiny by the Council before a final decision is taken by the Government.

Premier: regional adviser appointment, Geelong

560. THE HON. I. J. COVER — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Industrial Relations (for the Honourable the Premier): Has Ms Kerri Erler taken up the post of regional adviser to the Premier for the Geelong region; if so — (i) is she employed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet or as a Ministerial Adviser on the Premier’s staff; (ii) what process was followed in her appointment; (iii) what will be the nature and extent of her duties and will the Premier provide a copy of her duty statement; (iv) what salary and expenses will be paid to her; and (v) what are the terms and conditions of her employment including costs of her office and vehicle; and does she have an office in the Geelong region.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- (i) Ms Erler is employed as a Ministerial Adviser within the Office of the Premier
- (ii) Like all applicants, Ms Erler applied as part of the recruitment process that took place for Ministerial staff between October and December 1999.
- (iii) Like all Ministerial Advisers, Ms Erler's duties include:
 - Provide expert and timely advice to the Minister and senior Ministerial staff on complex and sensitive policy issues.
 - Through the Senior Ministerial Adviser, maintain effective liaison with the Premier's office on all complex and sensitive policy areas.
 - Ensure that the resources of the portfolio Department are effectively employed to provide high level and appropriate advice and support to the Minister.
 - Assist in policy initiatives and research into the development of strategic policy responses.
 - Liaise with government departments, the private sector and the community as directed to identify key issues in relation to policy requirements.
 - Provide advice and support to the Minister and Senior Adviser in Parliamentary matters including Question time, legislative processes and parliamentary business.
 - Monitor and advise upon legislative and policy developments in Victoria, interstate and overseas.
 - Advise the Minister and Senior Policy Adviser on policy issues in a wide variety of negotiations, meetings and consultations.
 - Liaise with Departmental officers in relation to the preparation of policy and legislative documents.
 - As directed analyse and prepare reports, papers, policy statements, briefing notes and statistical information on policy and related matters and significant portfolio initiatives.
 - Assist the Senior Ministerial Adviser in the performance of their duties.
- (iv) Ms Erler's salary and expenses are commensurate with other Ministerial Advisers within the Office of the Premier.
- (v) Ms Erler's terms and conditions are commensurate with other Ministerial advisers within the Office of the Premier.

State and Regional Development: regional adviser appointments

- 562. THE HON. I. J. COVER** — To ask the Honourable the Minister for Energy and Resources (for the Honourable the Minister for State and Regional Development): Has the Government appointed regional advisers for West, South or East Gippsland, the Wimmera, the Mallee, Ballarat/Central Highlands, Western Victoria, Geelong, Bendigo/Goldfields, Goulburn Valley, North-East Victoria and, since they are also "regions", the eastern, western, south-east or northern suburbs of Melbourne; if so, who is employed in each or any of these regions and what are the terms and conditions of their employment.

ANSWER:

The resources of Regional Development Victoria are currently being expanded. This expansion includes the assembly of a team of nine Rural Community Development Officers, based in rural centres across the State.

These staff will be located in Ararat, Bairnsdale, Geelong-Colac, Horsham, Mildura, Seymour, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga. Three staff have been appointed to the Geelong-Colac, Warrnambool and Wodonga positions and appointments will be made to the remaining positions shortly. All staff will be employed under standard public service conditions.

Regional Development Victoria is also expanding its regional industries network. Rural industry specialists will be located at Shepparton and Ballarat to support the food processing sector. Rural commerce experts will be located in Ararat, Bendigo, Drouin and Echuca. All of the positions have been advertised and appointments will be made shortly.