

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

3 November 1999

(extract from Book 1)

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By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

The Governor

His Excellency the Honourable Sir JAMES AUGUSTINE GOBBO, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

Professor ADRIENNE E. CLARKE, AO

The Ministry

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

Heads of Parliamentary Departments

Council — Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Council: Mr A. V. Bray

Assembly — Clerk of the Legislative Assembly: Mr R. W. Purdey

Hansard — Chief Reporter: Ms C. J. Williams

Library — Librarian: Mr B. J. Davidson

Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Ms C. M. Haydon

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT — FIRST SESSION

President: The Hon. B. A. CHAMBERLAIN

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

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

Leader of the Government:

The Hon. M. M. GOULD

Deputy Leader of the Government:

The Hon. G. W. JENNINGS

Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. M. A. BIRRELL

Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. BILL FORWOOD

Leader of the National Party:

The Hon. R. M. HALLAM

Deputy Leader of the National Party:

The Hon. P. R. HALL

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

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Wednesday, 3 November 1999

**OPENING OF PARLIAMENT BY
COMMISSION**

Fifty-fourth Victorian Parliament opened by commission.

Senior Commissioner appointed by His Excellency the Governor of the state of Victoria for this purpose, the Honourable Mr John Harber Phillips, Chief Justice of Supreme Court of Victoria.

Proceedings commenced 11.03 a.m.

PROCLAMATION

Following proclamation read by Clerk:

I, Sir James Gobbo, AC, Governor of the state of Victoria, acting under section 8 and 20 of the Constitution Act 1975 and all other powers vested in me, fix 3 November 1999 at 11.00 a.m. as the time for the commencement and holding of the first session of the fifty-fourth Parliament of Victoria for the dispatch of business, at the Parliament Houses, Melbourne. The honourable the members of the Legislative Council and the members of the Legislative Assembly are required to attend at that time and place.

Given under my hand and the seal of the state of Victoria, at Melbourne, on
7 October 1999.
James Gobbo, Governor.

By His Excellency's Command,
J. G. Kennett, Premier.

Commissioners entered chamber and were conducted to chairs by Usher of the Black Rod.

Senior Commissioner directed that attendance of members of Legislative Assembly be requested.

Members of Legislative Assembly appeared at bar.

The SENIOR COMMISSIONER (Justice J. H. Phillips) — Honourable members of the Legislative Council and members of the Legislative Assembly: His Excellency the Governor, not thinking fit to be present in person, has been pleased to cause a commission to issue under the seal of the state constituting us his commissioners to do in his name all that is necessary to be performed in this Parliament. This will more fully appear from the commission, which will now be read by the Clerk.

Commission authorising commissioners to open Parliament read by Clerk.

The SENIOR COMMISSIONER — Honourable members of the Legislative Council and members of

the Legislative Assembly: I have it in command from His Excellency to let you know that later this day His Excellency will declare to you in person in this place the causes of his calling this Parliament together; and as it is necessary before you proceed to the dispatch of business that a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly be chosen, His Excellency requests that the Legislative Assembly proceed to the choice of a proper person to be such Speaker.

Members of the Legislative Assembly retired from Chamber.

Commissioner escorted from Chamber by Usher of Black Rod.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS

Senior Commissioner announced receipt of commission from His Excellency the Governor to administer oath or affirmation.

Commission read by Clerk.

Clerk announced receipt of return of writ issued by His Excellency the Governor for election of members to serve for provinces set out below and endorsed to show election of following members:

Province	Member
Ballarat	Hadden-Tregear, Hon. Dianne Gladys
Central Highlands	Stoney, Hon. Eadley Graeme
Chelsea	Smith, Hon. Robert Fredrick
Doutta Galla	Madden, Hon. Justin Mark
East Yarra	Birrell, Hon. Mark Alexander
Eumemmerring	Rich-Phillips, Hon. Gordon Kenneth
Geelong	Carbines, Hon. Elaine Cafferty
Gippsland	Davis, Hon. Philip Rivers
Higinbotham	Strong, Hon. Christopher Arthur
Jika Jika	Mikakos, Hon. Jenny
Koonung	Atkinson, Hon. Bruce Norman
Melbourne	Romanes, Hon. Glenyys Dorothy
Melbourne North	Thomson, Hon. Marsha Rose
Melbourne West	Darveniza, Hon. Kaye
Monash	Coote, Hon. Andrea
North Eastern	Baxter, Hon. William Robert
North Western	Bishop, Hon. Barry Wilfred

Province	Member
Silvan	Olexander, Hon. Andrew Phillip
South Eastern	Bowden, Hon. Ronald Henry
Templestowe	Forwood, Hon. William
Waverley	Brideson, Hon. Andrew Ronald
Western	Hallam, Hon. Roger Murray

RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS

The CLERK — I have also to announce that on 24 August 1999 Mr President received the following communication from His Excellency, the Governor:

Dear Mr President

I enclose letters of resignation received by me this day from the Hon. R. I. Knowles, MLC, the Hon. C. J. Hogg, MLC, and the Hon. B. T. Pullen, MLC, resigning their seats of Ballarat, Melbourne North and Melbourne respectively in the Legislative Council.

Yours sincerely
James Gobbo
Governor

Those letters, all addressed to His Excellency the Governor, read:

Your Excellency

I hereby tender my resignation as the member for Ballarat Province in the Legislative Council, effectively forthwith.

I do so to contest the seat of Gisborne in the Legislative Assembly at the forthcoming election.

I have been greatly honoured to serve in the Legislative Council for the past 23 years and will remember with great fondness my association not just with the institution but particularly with the members and officers of the Council over the period.

Yours faithfully
Rob Knowles

Dear Sir James

Having considered all the circumstances I wish to tender my resignation as member of the Legislative Council for Melbourne North Province.

I have acted promptly on the Premier's announcement to facilitate the holding of a by-election for my seat in conjunction with the general election.

It has been a great pleasure and honour to have represented Melbourne North Province from 1982–1999.

Yours faithfully
Caroline Hogg

Dear Sir James

Having considered all the circumstances I wish to tender my resignation as MLC for the seat of Melbourne Province in the Legislative Council.

I consider I have been very fortunate in being able to represent the people of such a diverse and rich area of Melbourne and to have been able to serve in a Labor government.

I have acted promptly on notice of the Premier's announcement to facilitate the holding of a by-election for my seat in conjunction with the general election.

Yours sincerely
Barry Pullen

Clerk announced receipt of return of writs issued by Mr President on 24 August 1999 for the Ballarat, Melbourne and Melbourne North provinces set out below:

Province	Member
Ballarat	McQuilten, Hon. John Martin
Melbourne	Jennings, Hon. Gavin Wayne
Melbourne North	Broad, Hon. Candy Celeste

Recently elected members took and subscribed either oath or affirmation of allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Senior Commissioner withdrew.

The President took the chair and read the prayer.

The PRESIDENT — Order! I remind honourable members that His Excellency the Governor will be pleased to receive me in the north library at 2.00 p.m. I ask honourable members to meet in the central library a few minutes before 2 o'clock to accompany me. I will resume the chair at 2.30 p.m.

Sitting suspended 11.27 a.m. until 2.30 p.m.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

Usher of the Black Rod announced approach of His Excellency the Governor.

His Excellency entered chamber accompanied by suite.

Legislative Assembly members, with Speaker, attended in response to His Excellency's summons.

His Excellency addressed following speech to both houses of Parliament:

Mr President and honourable members of the Legislative Council:

Mr Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly:

The general election on 18 September and supplementary election for Frankston East on 16 October resulted in a change of government in Victoria. The Leader of the Australian Labor Party, Mr Bracks, was offered and given the commission to govern after advising me that he enjoyed the support of two Independent members of the Legislative Assembly and one Independent member elect of the Legislative Assembly, and could form a minority government.

I have called you together today for the first session of the 54th Parliament to deliberate on the policy directions for the term of the new government.

The Australian Labor Party was pleased to enter into a formal memorandum of understanding with the Independent members for Mildura and Gippsland West, and the Independent member elect for Gippsland East, based on their Independents Charter Victoria 1999.

In his written response to the charter, Mr Bracks indicated that he supported the charter in its entirety and noted that it was his party's policy to implement the reforms it proposed to revitalise Victoria's democratic institutions, increase community participation in decision making and strengthen the power of key independent watchdogs. In particular, the five points listed in the charter formed the basis of the Australian Labor Party's election campaign and policy development process. The majority of Victorians who supported the Australian Labor Party did so on the understanding that they were voting for a government that would:

- promote open and accountable government;
- improve the democratic operation of the Parliament;
- establish clear plans, strategies and targets to address the urgent needs of rural and regional Victoria;
- introduce an improved code of conduct between government and all other members of the Parliament; and
- defer any further privatisation of public assets or long-term contracting of government services until an independent inquiry has assessed experience to date.

The government's legislative program will sow the seeds of lasting and permanent democratic reform,

focusing on the implementation of its program for good government and reform of the Parliament. The government will also commence implementation of its key commitments in the areas of health, education, community safety and growing the whole of the state together with the community.

The government's first item of legislation will restore the powers of the Auditor-General by repealing the 1997 Audit (Amendment) Act. The legislation will:

- restore the independence of the Auditor-General to conduct audits in his own right;
- enshrine the independence of the Office of the Auditor-General in the Victorian constitution;
- increase the recurrent funding of the Office of the Auditor-General; and
- ensure that all future appointments to the office of Auditor-General are made on the recommendation of the joint parliamentary Public Accounts and Estimates Committee.

The government's first priority is to restore public confidence in our democratic institutions. The government believes that Victorians demand and deserve a government with a real commitment to democratic practice. To this end, the government will:

- increase access to public documents by amending the Freedom of Information Act;
- restore the independence of the Director of Public Prosecutions and enshrine that office in the Victorian constitution; and
- abolish compulsory competitive tendering in local government.

The process of renewal will extend to the Parliament, and the government will introduce legislation to reform the Legislative Council. Should the Legislative Council block the government's legislation to reform that chamber, the legislation will be referred to the new Victorian constitutional commission for consideration of putting a question by way of plebiscite to the Victorian community. The government will establish the Victorian constitutional commission, made up of eminent persons representative of the community, so that it can begin its work of reviewing the state constitution.

Further, the government will act to extend parliamentary sitting days to a minimum of 50 per year, reform question time by providing for a minimum of

10 questions, and establish properly resourced standing committees to review legislation and the operation of the executive government. These measures reflect the government's belief that open public debate is vital for a healthy democracy. The government acknowledges and supports the right of the Parliament and the community to scrutinise the actions of the executive.

The government will establish a royal commission into the ambulance/Intergraph issue, including the handling of related freedom of information requests.

The new government is committed to restoring public confidence through a new era of openness and accountability. It will abolish ministerial credit cards and introduce tough new guidelines to ensure public servants and statutory office-holders do not misuse taxpayers' funds. The government will also initiate a review of key government consultancies, make public major government contracts, and commission an audit review to provide an assessment of major contracts entered into by the previous government.

The government believes that Victorians are citizens rather than customers and deserve accountability and decent standards in service delivery. At the same time, the government will commence planning for an essential services commission to protect the interests of Victorian consumers of privatised essential services. The government is committed to ensuring that each of our state's citizens is treated equally — with honesty, dignity and respect.

The government is especially proud of Victoria's reputation as the nation's multicultural capital and of the bipartisan support multiculturalism has enjoyed throughout many decades. The government is confident that through this continuing bipartisanship Victoria's status as a tolerant, mature, multicultural society will continue to grow and flourish.

The government is committed to a substantial four-year program of reform to reinvigorate the state and restore pride and public confidence in Victoria's school and hospital systems and the quality of services. The government will deliver better health, education and community services and help to build a proud and inclusive community of citizens founded on decency, openness and fairness.

The government recognises the desire of Victorians to live in a society where all citizens are valued, listened to and respected and in which all members of the community build the state together and meet its challenges together. Such a society is not divided into winners and losers. The government is committed to

building the whole state, and not just one part of it. This was the clear wish of the Victorian electorate, particularly those Victorians living in rural and regional communities. The government believes in a state that grows together, not as a series of competing postcodes.

The government will act immediately to rebuild our regional and rural communities. It will introduce legislation to establish a \$170 million regional infrastructure development fund. The fund will revive local economies by providing for infrastructure projects in regional and rural Victoria. The appointment of a Minister for State and Regional Development, to be supported by a new department of state and regional development, will strengthen the focus on regional development programs and opportunities. The Office of Rural Affairs will also be upgraded.

The cabinet will meet regularly in regional and rural Victoria as a community cabinet. The first community cabinet will be convened during this session.

The government will also abolish the catchment management authority tariff, which many country and regional Victorians see as an unfair impost.

A key priority will be to forge a new partnership with local government. The government believes that participation in grassroots democracy is vital to a fully engaged citizenship and that control over the future of their streets, suburbs and towns must be restored to local communities. The government will:

- convene a meeting of mayors and shire presidents from rural and regional Victoria to discuss priority actions to be taken to rejuvenate regional Victoria;

- announce interim height controls on the foreshore, to prevent inappropriate development;

- commence the preparation of guidelines that clearly define the scope and limits of ministerial intervention in planning matters; and

- hold a major meeting with all local councils to establish a new partnership between state and local government in planning.

The government has an innovative transport plan to link the state's regional cities and towns with Melbourne through the provision of affordable and safe transport routes. It will arrange for feasibility studies on a number of major improvements. Working in partnership with the private sector, the government will contribute \$20 million for a rapid transit link from Melbourne to the airport and \$20 million for a fast rail link to Geelong. These initiatives will cut travel times

to 15 minutes from the airport to Melbourne and 45 minutes from Melbourne to Geelong.

The government will also contribute \$20 million for a fast rail upgrade to Bendigo, aiming for an 80-minute link to Melbourne. The government will also contribute \$15 million to upgrade the Traralgon line, and \$25 million for a fast rail link to Ballarat — cutting travel time to under 60 minutes.

For the first time in the state's history, its great provincial cities will be properly connected to Melbourne. These links will ensure that Victoria's provincial cities thrive, attracting new residents and new industries. These links will carry commuters, produce, manufactured goods and exports. By joining our regions and towns to the capital, the government will help provide the setting for a new economic and social geography for Victoria. It will answer the powerful claim that regional Victoria has made for a fair share of job growth and prosperity.

The government is committed to driving that new growth and new prosperity beyond Victoria's provincial cities and into all of country Victoria by contributing \$40 million to the standardisation of the rural freight network from the regional infrastructure development fund. Standardisation will overcome a problem that has existed since Federation but which has never been adequately addressed.

The government's measures will ensure that Victoria enters the new century free of the transport and development problems that have held it back for 100 years. These services will be the new lifelines of the state, reinvigorating regional Victoria and renewing Melbourne by taking population pressure off its outer suburbs. To initiate this process, the government will:

- announce a review of the performance of transport services that have replaced country passenger services closed since 1992;

- commence discussions with rail companies in relation to the upgrading of major-provincial-cities-to-Melbourne rail networks;

- finalise tenders to improve and widen the Geelong freeway; and

- negotiate with Transurban to address the disadvantages faced by country motorists in relation to City Link tolls, with the intention of achieving a better deal for them.

The government will also make roads safer across the state. It will use a one-off dividend of \$240 million

from the Transport Accident Commission to fix accident black spots across the state. A full 50 per cent of that \$240 million will be spent in country Victoria. Country roads now account for 21 per cent of all road injuries and 40 per cent of all road deaths. Targeting black spots will both save lives and reduce costs.

The government recognises that building the whole of the state will require the targeting of struggling suburbs and towns to realise their full potential. The government will provide \$60 million over three years for community infrastructure projects in areas of high unemployment. The objective is to generate 2600 jobs every year for three years. The government will also go into partnership with the private sector to recruit 4700 new apprentices and trainees and get them into jobs. This represents a four-year commitment of \$26.25 million.

In addition, over four years the government will subsidise 2500 disadvantaged and long-term unemployed young people into new training places. The government rejects the notion of a lost generation and will work instead to ensure that every Victorian is given ample opportunity to participate in the life of the state.

The government will boost public and community housing by \$90 million over three years to build 800 housing units and create 1800 new jobs directly and more than 3000 new jobs indirectly.

The government believes in growing the whole of the state and will take immediate action to restore confidence in Victoria. Victoria must create wealth and provide sustained economic growth if it is to prosper. That prosperity must be based on high productivity, a highly skilled work force, wages that ensure a high standard of living and international competitiveness. The key to the government's approach will be inclusiveness. The government believes that Victoria is more than an economy — it is a society — and that economic prosperity is not an abstract goal but a social objective. The government will seek to share the benefits of prosperity among all Victorians.

The government will develop and implement industry plans in traditional and emerging sectors based on a strategic audit of Victorian industry. It will also establish an infrastructure planning council, a range of industry consultative committees and a council of small business representatives.

The government's review of the Retail Tenancies Act will focus on its operation and adequacy in protecting small and medium-size retail businesses.

The government will also consult widely with the dairy industry to develop a dairy industry plan and give all dairy farmers a vote in relation to industry arrangements.

Recognising the importance of information technology in the social and economic life of the state, the government is committed to making information technology accessible to industry and the community, including regional and rural Victoria.

More generally, the government will aggressively promote Victoria as an investment opportunity throughout Australia and internationally.

The government is committed to providing all Victorians with access to a quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. The government believes that education is a public right and favours an education system based on cooperation rather than competition. The government will take a new approach to education — giving every Victorian child the best possible start in a world-class education system in which every parent, teacher and student can take pride.

The government will discontinue the Schools of the Third Millennium program. The government believes that privatisation of our state school system is incompatible with the needs of Victorian children. It is implacably opposed to the introduction of notions of privilege into state education and strongly committed to a high standard of education for all. It will cut class sizes to 21 or less for prep, year 1 and year 2 and will employ an extra 650 teachers in its first term.

The government will commit \$57 million to needy non-government schools and will put \$10 million a year into school maintenance over three years. It will also provide extra support for smaller rural schools by introducing shared specialist teacher programs.

The government will also establish a post-compulsory education task force, expand the VCE and offer students the chance to complete their education at a TAFE college. The government is committed to linking schools, TAFE institutes, employers and communities in a planned approach to post-secondary education and training.

The government believes that Victorians deserve decent health services based on need rather than capacity to pay. It recognises the size of the task ahead in restoring confidence and pride in a health system. The government honours Victoria's health workers, who have maintained a high level of commitment through difficult times, and commits itself to reciprocating their dedication with decent resources and a markedly

different approach to health service delivery. The government reaffirms its commitment to rural and regional hospitals and health care services. It will demonstrate through its programs its fundamental belief that no Victorian who falls sick should be disadvantaged by postcode or income.

As part of its first steps to restoring confidence in the Victorian health system, the government will:

- stop the privatisation process at the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre, and other hospitals and nursing homes where privatisation contracts have not been entered into;

- review public hospital casemix funding, with particular reference to its impact on the quality of care, country hospital services and the care of patients after they leave hospital;

- reopen 290 hospital beds;

- redirect \$18 million from the health network bureaucracy to make hospitals cleaner and reduce emergency waiting times;

- increase funding for community health programs by \$37 million over four years; and

- repair the public dental program — including reducing costs to pensioners and shortening waiting lists.

The government is also committed to putting more nurses into hospitals, providing substantial funding for mental health and a hospital-to-home program which guarantees that decent health care does not end at the hospital door.

The government will help to ease the child-care burden with a subsidy to every four-year-old in a low-income family and will help community-owned child-care centres with direct grants for maintenance and equipment. In the first term, maternal and child health services will benefit from an extra \$10 million, and the government will employ an additional 100 school nurses to care for children in their junior secondary years.

The government recognises that the heartbeat of the state's economy is the people who work in it and that a safe workplace is an essential right of every employee. The government will take immediate steps to address the unacceptable levels of workplace death and injury. The government will introduce legislation to restore the right of seriously injured workers to sue at common

law. The government will also introduce a new crime of industrial manslaughter.

It is fundamental to the government's vision of a better Victoria to ensure that Victorians feel safe and secure in their own homes, streets and communities. The key objective of the state's police and emergency services is to protect the personal safety and security of all Victorians. Accordingly, the government will put 800 more police on the front line and will end the closure of police stations. It will also abolish the Police Board and Police Review Commission and establish a new, independent police appeals board to deal with matters affecting police discipline, promotion and transfer.

As part of a comprehensive plan to address the tragic problem of illicit drug use, the government will trial up to five medically supervised injecting facilities in consultation with local councils and communities. An expert committee will be established to:

- commence discussion with local councils in relation to drug injecting facilities in the areas announced by the government;

- examine the changing dimensions of the drug problem and in particular the increasing number of deaths associated with increased heroin use; and

- provide advice on the implementation of the government's drug policy.

The government recognises that education, rehabilitation and stronger policing must also be part of an effective strategy for addressing the problem of illicit drug use.

The government's environmental agenda will make Victoria a better place to live. It will build the principles of ecologically sustainable development into the process of decision making across the whole of government and strengthen environmental monitoring and reporting requirements.

The government will announce plans to negotiate with the New South Wales and federal governments to return 28 per cent of the original flow to the Snowy River. The government will also initiate a process to nominate Wilsons Promontory National Park for world heritage listing and will terminate the feasibility study for damming the Mitchell River.

The government recognises and aims to enhance Victoria's reputation as a producer of clean, green food. It will assist Victoria in gaining a greater competitive edge in export markets through a naturally Victorian

marketing campaign for food and some processed food products.

The government is committed to a civilised and properly regulated Victorian gaming industry in order to protect the Victorian community from irresponsible conduct. The government will:

- act to ensure truth in advertising in the gambling industry;

- introduce an enforceable code of conduct for gaming operators and venue owners; and

- review current problem gambling advertisements to determine their effectiveness.

The government will also act immediately to start negotiations with the Australian Football League to explore all feasible options to retain Waverley Park as an AFL venue.

Before moving to other legislation to be introduced by the government this year, it is with deep regret that I advise the Parliament of the deaths of three members of the Legislative Assembly: William Laurence (known as Larry) Floyd, member for Williamstown from 1955 to 1973; his successor, Gordon Francis Stirling, member for Williamstown from 1973 to 1988; and Frederick (known as Peter) McLellan, member for Frankston East from 1992 until September last.

In addition to the major legislative initiatives I have described, the government will also introduce a number of other bills which are necessary for the good government of Victoria:

- a bill to ensure that there are appropriate emergency powers available for the effective management of any incidents caused by the millennium bug;

- a bill to provide that certain decisions of the Federal Court and Family Court have effect as decisions of the Supreme Court, following the High Court's judgment earlier this year that vesting of state jurisdiction in federal courts is invalid;

- a bill to overcome the possible negative effects of a decision currently reserved by the High Court on jury selection practices, which, if adverse to the state, has the potential to undermine existing criminal convictions;

- a bill to authorise visiting health care professionals to provide health care services to visitors in Victoria in connection with special events such as the Sydney

Olympics without being registered under Victorian law; and

a bill to give the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre Trust the legal capacity to assume responsibility for the State Netball and Hockey Centre under construction at Royal Park, in order to ensure the effective management of the facility.

Mr President and honourable members of the Legislative Council:

Mr Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly:

The government's plans have been costed by Access Economics. They are achievable and lock in a four-year budget surplus. The government's financial management plan is the toughest in the nation. It will be overseen by an Expenditure Review Committee which is already in operation.

The government believes that proper financial management is fundamental to giving Victorians the good government they expect and deserve. The government is committed to tough financial principles that will be centred upon the restoration of the powers of the office of Auditor-General. These new powers will be enshrined in the constitution. In restoring the powers of the Auditor-General, the government sends the strongest possible signal that it will govern with openness and accountability.

The Auditor-General will report independently to the Parliament on budget day on the state of the budget surplus. Every government program will be publicly scrutinised. Victoria will therefore have the strongest independent guardian of its financial security in its history.

The government believes that the values by which strong families and strong communities live — the values of honour and openness and compassion — are the values which should be reflected in public policy. These values will be the hallmarks of this government's program of legislation and the measures against which it will be proud to be judged.

I now formally open this Parliament and pray that the guidance of almighty God may attend your deliberations.

Copies of speech handed to President and Speaker.

His Excellency and suite withdrew.

Members of Legislative Assembly retired from chamber.

Sitting suspended 3.29 p.m. until 5.00 p.m.

The PRESIDENT resumed the chair.

CONDOLENCES

Frederick Peter McLellan

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

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death, on 18 September 1999, of Frederick Peter McLellan, and places on record its acknowledgment of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as a member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Frankston East from 1992 to 1999.

Peter McLellan was born on 20 October 1942. He died suddenly of a heart attack in the early hours of Saturday, 18 September 1999, the day of the Victorian state election. He was only 56 years of age.

Peter entered Parliament as the elected member for Frankston East in October 1992. He will be remembered for his integrity. Peter was a straightshooter — an honest man who became an outstanding politician.

The son of Frederick and Catherine McLellan, Peter was raised in a housing estate in East Reservoir in an area known locally as Little Chicago, as I know well. Coming from Alamein Road in West Heidelberg, we met from time to time. Little Chicago was rough and tumble. As Peter recalled on a number of occasions, the residents alternated between their Little Chicago addresses and the Bluestone College at Coburg.

Peter was educated at the Holy Name Catholic Primary School in East Preston and at Taylor's College. He left school at age 15 to take up an apprenticeship in spare parts at the Rhodes motor company. He later worked as a laboratory assistant at Melbourne University before joining the army at the age of 19 in 1961.

From 1966 to 1967 Peter served as a medical orderly with two field ambulances in Malaya, Thailand and later Vietnam. After returning from Vietnam Peter met his future wife, Trish Foley, in Queensland.

At home Peter was notorious for his commentaries on the state of the world when watching the evening news. He eventually took up the challenge issued by his eldest daughter, Leanne, to do something about it and joined the Liberal Party in 1990. Peter was preselected for the seat of Frankston East in August 1991. He won the seat by the narrowest of margins, 0.2 per cent, in the 1992 election. However, in 1996 he increased that margin to 3.2 per cent.

Although Peter was known as a bit of a loner in this place, he determined early in his parliamentary career that he would make his presence count. His interest in road safety led him to become a member of the Road Safety Committee in 1992. Peter's outlook on life was shaped by an upbringing in a socially depressed working-class area. He had a great empathy for the underdog and a strong social conscience. Peter became an effective voice for the people of Frankston East, expressing their needs and concerns.

Peter's outspoken opposition to the previous government on a number of issues ultimately led to his resignation from the Liberal Party on 24 July 1998. For Peter this was a matter of conscience and a decision he never regretted taking. His courageous stance garnered him a great deal of admiration and respect from fellow parliamentarians and the public at large, especially the people of Frankston East.

Peter was a supporter of the disabled and a fighter for environmental issues. He was often spoken about. Mr Frank McCrohan, president of the Vietnam Veterans Association, remembers Peter as:

... level-headed, with both feet on the ground. He was big on looking after vets and getting them involved in local community projects. He could get above politics and his arguments were always well thought out and rational. He was a man of extremely strong principles.

Peter was the foundation president of the Frankston subbranch of the Vietnam Veterans Association. He was a Legatee, a Catholic and a Freemason. He was also a member of the Peninsula Pistol Club and a member of the committee of management, and was appointed delegate to the Victorian Pistol Association in 1981. Peter was the chief range officer of the Victorian Pistol Association, and a member of the Frankston Returned and Services Club and the Frankston Football Club in the former Victorian Football Association. We can attest to his keenness as a bowler at Parliament House; he was often seen bowling.

On behalf of the government, I extend condolences to the family of Peter McLellan, including his wife, Trish, son, Richard, and daughters Leanne and Maree and their families.

Hon. M. A. BIRRELL (East Yarra) — On behalf of the opposition and the Liberal and National parties, I am pleased to be able to join in this motion and pay our respects upon the tragic passing of Peter McLellan. He was by any measure a rough diamond. He was an individual. In 1992, having joined the Liberal Party in 1991, he was swept in with the election of the first

Kennett government. He made a memorable and positive contribution to public life as a result of his role in state Parliament.

Peter was elected in 1992 and re-elected in March 1996. As we all know, he tragically died on 18 September 1999 at the age of 56 years. As an individual he drew on a range of personal experiences. One of the most profound was his involvement in the Australian Army and his military service for his country.

Peter enlisted in the army in 1961. Between 1963 and 1966 he served in Malaya and Thailand and went on, as a matter of choice, to serve in Vietnam between 1966 and 1967. The camaraderie and experiences he gained from serving our nation overseas no doubt formed many of his values and his ongoing, long friendships.

Peter was educated from prep to year 8 in East Preston at Holy Name Primary School; he then went on to Taylor's College where he passed his intermediate certificate. Peter joined the Liberal Party after having a long interest in values associated with liberalism, and brought to the party the input it needed to properly represent the electorate of Frankston East.

Peter McLellan was a rough diamond. I use that term not disrespectfully but to explain the man and the style he brought to politics. Peter did not pretend that he was a person of high intellect or that he was extremely well read, but he had an understanding of ordinary people and tough circumstances, which resulted in a contribution that was both unique and valuable. I first learnt about Peter's keen involvement in the motor industry from the debates in which he participated in the Liberal Party room. Many discussions on bills and committee hearings went a lot longer as a result of Peter's practical input.

Peter was employed by the Rhodes Motor Company from 1956 to 1961 and was an RACV road service patrolman from 1969 to 1976. He was then self-employed in the motor industry doing repairs, sales and service up to the time that he became a member of Parliament.

As part of his rough-diamond nature, I should say that Peter was a former amateur boxer who brought a slightly pugnacious style to his political behaviour — he looked as if he could take a blow. He never looked like he wanted to lay a blow on you, but you often got the impression that he could handle himself if the circumstances demanded it. If one wanted to take him on, one also had to bear in mind that he was heavily involved in the Victorian Pistol Association. Peter was

the chief range officer for that association and a longstanding member of the Frankston RSL club. Of interest to many of us who attended Peter's service was the extraordinary support and respect shown to him at that service by individuals from the Vietnam Veterans Association, the Returned and Services League, the Victorian Pistol Association and a number of rifle clubs in his electorate.

Although Peter grew up in the staunch Labor area of Preston his values reflected those of the Liberal Party. He won endorsement from the Liberal Party to contest the newly formed seat of Frankston East in 1992, having joined the party only a matter of months earlier. As he said at the time, he was motivated by his distaste of the Cain and Kirner governments. Peter won Frankston East in the landslide of 1992, but he did not win his seat in a landslide. He won by the extraordinary margin of 129 votes — and he was damn proud of it. I do not think he was expecting to win, but he and the party knew he had a good chance at the time. He was proud to hold the then most marginal Liberal seat in the state.

At the 1996 election Peter showed that if one works hard in an electorate the margin can be affected. He increased his margin from 0.2 to 3.2 per cent following his tireless efforts throughout the electorate. As both Minister for Conservation and Environment in 1992–1996 and then as Minister for Industry, Science and Technology from 1996, I often visited Peter's electorate to discuss practical issues. When I was Minister for Conservation and Environment Peter was concerned about the government's plans to sell land surrounding a natural resource institute in the electorate. Peter believed some of the land should be sold for housing because there was a real need for housing in the area. He also strongly believed some of the land should be retained as a permanent nature reserve because the people of Frankston East knew the tough times but did not know much about the urban environmental pleasures enjoyed by people in other electorates. Peter fought for the land, and on his behalf I was pleased to secure it as a nature reserve.

I know that local people and history will treat him well, with his name being associated with preserving a large area of public open space in one of the most densely populated and tightly held landholdings of any Victorian electorate. His name will be associated with the permanent reservation of a public open space area for ordinary people to enjoy. It is a nature reserve, not manicured parkland. It is a beautiful area to remember him by.

Similarly, Peter was keen for me as Minister for Industry, Science and Technology to meet representatives of a number of businesses. I remember visiting with him Roma Food Products, a small business in his electorate that he thought had one helluva future. It was a small, exporting business. His observations were correct. From being a small business Roma Food Products went on to win major export awards from the British government and the Governor of Victoria. It therefore obtained recognition for the value that Peter had seen first but which took others a while to see.

Peter campaigned on a number of issues locally, none more important to him than drugs in the community. He opposed the harm minimisation approach. He did a lot of work in Parliament and many of his speeches were about drugs. He strongly supported mandatory detoxification and favoured increased rehabilitation services instead of imprisonment for drug users.

Peter was a member of the parliamentary Road Safety Committee and held strong views in that area. It should be said that far from making an academic contribution to the Road Safety Committee, he was able to talk with a high degree of experience drawn from the days when he was literally on the road in a previous job. Peter knew much more than we did about deregulating tow-truck licences and about many other topics, and brought to the party room an earthiness in the debate that helped get us off philosophy and competition policy and on to practical outcomes — and we welcomed it.

In the lead-up to his last election he was labelled as the people's pollicie. Given the work that he did, it was an appropriate title. Peter resigned from the Liberal Party for a number of reasons. I believe Peter regretted his resignation and the circumstances leading up to it, but it did not sour the personal relationship that he had with many people on both sides of the chamber. It certainly did not sour the relationship that many members of his family and his supporters had with us. Despite his resignation, Peter was respected by the Liberal Party for his commitment to his electorate and for pursuing issues of considerable importance to him. As anyone who attended Peter's service in the electorate will recall, he received an extraordinary and diverse range of community support in recognition of his contribution.

Peter is survived by his parents, Frederick and Catherine, his wife, Trish, his children Leanne, Maree and Richard, and four grandchildren. Honourable members convey their appreciation to Peter for his service to the Frankston East community. We recognise

that the family and friends of a sitting member of Parliament who died so suddenly and unexpectedly deserve our support.

Hon. R. M. HALLAM (Western) — I wish to associate the National Party with the motion of condolence, and I do so with mixed emotions. On one hand honourable members are all deeply saddened at the passing of Peter McLellan — Frederick was his baptismal name — yet on the other it is appropriate to record his passing and his service to Parliament. We rejoice in his contribution. He was elected to Parliament in 1992, and many in this chamber have reason to remember that day well — it was the day the Kennett government came to power with a landslide. Peter left this world on 18 September this year. Again, even more honourable members would have reason to remember that date because it was the date upon which government changed hands in Victoria.

Peter McLellan was a member of Parliament for only seven years. Tragically, he died a month short of his 57th birthday. He had the chance to make a mark, and he did so. Mr Birrell said Peter McLellan was a rough diamond. He was all of that. However, he was also a person who did not quite fit the bill; he was somewhat different. He came to us with a whole range of special qualities that were the product of his background. I saw details of his contribution as his country's representative with postings as a serviceman in Malaya and Taiwan, and then, by choice, in Vietnam.

I am sorry I did not get to know Peter McLellan better. After having looked at his service record I realise it explains some of the things that drove him. We had many differences in the torrid times during the debates on the Auditor-General and workers compensation which caused him great distress. On one hand I personally had reason to differ from his opinions, but on the other I can say with great conviction that I came to admire him for those convictions and for his personal commitment to the beliefs he held so dearly.

While others may have criticised his decision to relinquish his membership of the Liberal Party it was a mark of his personal commitment that saw him make a brave move in the face of severe odds.

He won the seat of Frankston East by the shortest of half heads in 1992. He converted it into a relatively safe seat against the tide in 1996. In 1999 he faced the electors as an Independent and was confident of the outcome.

Not many members who have served this Parliament for such a short period could say they have made a

mark, but Peter did. Although we had differing views on a number of individual issues, I came to know and respect him greatly for his personal commitment and passion. One could almost cut it. He had absolute conviction about the issues that were driving him. I say to the chamber, and I do so advisedly, that he had a special quality that others would do well to aspire to.

Peter McLellan died tragically and we all mourn his passing. On behalf of the National Party, I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family and his supporters. If consolation can be found in this tragic loss it is the fact that Peter made a difference, and that is how he should be remembered.

Hon. T. C. THEOPHANOUS (Jika Jika) — I support the condolence motion for Peter McLellan. As has already been noted, Peter was elected to Parliament in 1992. He soon established himself around Parliament as a person of passion and principle. Both those words have been used to describe him. They are accurate descriptions of the man. He felt passionate about many things such as social justice and the environment. He had a strong sense of justice and the need for members of Parliament to represent their constituents according to their consciences. That was the important aspect of how he saw his role in Parliament — ultimately not according to what somebody else thought but according to one's own conscience.

He understood clearly that the separation of powers is a crucial aspect of democracy. He believed in it and fought for it. In that respect, and in many others, he was very much a small-l liberal in the tradition of John Stuart Mill.

Peter was different. He did not have the background of most Liberal Party members, but that is what made him special. It has been noted that he came from a working-class background, and he wore that as a proud badge of honour. On 16 March 1993 in his inaugural speech he is recorded at page 228 of *Hansard* as having said:

I grew up in East Reservoir, down the bottom of Tyler Street, an area given the dubious title of Little Chicago, a place where a knuckle sandwich was given or received on a regular basis.

Having grown up next door in Broadmeadows I can empathise with that. One never forgets such roots and the experience of growing up in a working-class area with its daily struggles.

His empathy with workers is evident from the many things he did in Parliament. As the Leader of the Opposition said, it was evident to me from his efforts

with the Pines Forest estate and his interest in housing. Those issues were important to him. He described himself as a tradesperson. He believed tradespeople knew what it was like to battle and to work to educate and raise their families. He noted that in his first speech. He believed the unskilled and semi-skilled should be respected alongside the highly educated and stressed the need to look after young people and the over 45s. Peter will mostly be remembered for his willingness to stick up for the principles he believed in even when the odds or numbers were against him.

On 20 November 1997 in the debate on the Audit (Amendment) Bill his speech, which is recorded at page 1346 of *Hansard*, begins with the words:

I know why I came into Parliament. It was to protect democracy ...

Those words should ring true for all members. He also said:

I said right from the word go that I would always support the independence of the Office of the Auditor-General.

He stuck to his guns. In his inaugural speech Peter stated:

The process in Parliament is that as a member you put your argument. You fight your fight. If you get done, so be it — at least you have not discarded your principles or wavered in the way you have gone about it.

Peter was a man of principle, a man who unfortunately has left us at an early age. His achievements were many and varied, and I will not itemise them again, as other honourable members have done so. Peter will be very much missed in Parliament and in Frankston East by his many friends and by his family. I extend my condolences to Peter's wife, Trish, and his children Richard, Leanne and Maree.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD (Templestowe) — I support the motion of condolence on the death of Peter McLellan. I did not know Peter before he came to this place in 1992, but I took to him immediately. Over the years we became good friends. Peter and I had a number of common interests, not the least of which was sport. He was a cricketer — a bowler — and a raconteur of some note. I enjoyed his company, and a good red, on more than one occasion.

Peter McLellan was an honest and straightforward bloke; you always knew exactly where you stood with him. He was fun to be with and he had a quirky sense of humour, although it was easy to get into an argument with him. He took his life and his politics seriously. He cared about people. People were the reason he put up his hand and joined the Liberal Party; people were the

reason he stood for and was elected to Parliament. My memories of Peter include discussing on more than one occasion what people would think about this or that.

Those who have read his inaugural speech in Parliament will well recognise his words when he told the Legislative Assembly on 16 March 1993, as reported in *Hansard*:

I listened with interest to other honourable members who, in describing their electorates, referred to the rolling hills, valleys, creeks or beautiful coastal sandy beaches.

In my electorate I can refer to the Pines Forest Flora and Fauna Reserve, four golf courses and the council tip.

It was a measure of the man that he could poke fun at the self-importance of others. He was proud to have won the seat of Frankston East for the Liberal Party. One night I discussed with him the Liberal Party preselection system which, I believe, often gets it right — and it certainly got it right with Frankston East and Peter! He was a proud Liberal. I again refer to his inaugural speech and his comments about his electorate, which he knew was a working-class area:

It is an electorate described by many as one that could not be won by a Liberal. I am here as proof that the people who made those statements were dead wrong.

What really got up Peter's nostrils was the suggestion that he was a oncer; that he was here for just one term. He set about ensuring that that would not be the case. As the Leader of the Opposition said, he worked his electorate well and assiduously. He was committed to being returned. On the night of the 1996 re-election I spoke on the telephone to Peter; to put it mildly, he was happy. He had had a good night!

Hon. N. B. Lucas — Euphoric.

Hon. BILL FORWOOD — That is a good word, Mr Lucas, to describe his mood, because he was delighted to have again won the most marginal seat then held by the government and to have turned it into an almost safe seat. He had taken a razor-thin margin of 0.2 per cent and increased it to 3.2 per cent and, in his words, turned Frankston East into an almost safe Liberal seat.

I had a lot to do with Peter McLellan when the audit legislation was amended in 1997 because, as honourable members may know, I was involved with the construction of the amending bill. In that role I found myself talking to those concerned about various aspects of it. Peter had probably more concerns about the changes than most honourable members and I had probably more conversations with him than with others. I remember talking with him about the bill's details,

including the investigative powers under clause 11, the power to obtain information, and the clause 15 power to report. I pointed out that the Auditor-General was funded by Parliament and could prepare a report and use his own resources under clause 11 to take evidence on oath and that that was enough. Peter appeared to accept the argument, but then his reply would be the unanswerable statement, 'But he cannot do an audit in his own right'.

I do not think anyone else has mentioned Peter's stubbornness. On a number of occasions I went through these explanations with him and, like the Leader of the National Party, was disappointed but not surprised at his decision not to vote on that legislation. I told Peter at the time that although I was disappointed I understood and accepted his decision. The mere fact that he was able to win his seat from the Labor Party and hold a seat that people did not think he could win again was for me the defining test in the Liberal context.

I conclude with some reflections on his humanity, because Peter was a very human man. His overwhelming desire and focus was to improve the lot of people less fortunate than he. His untimely passing leaves many of us sad. I am sad now to contribute to debate on the condolence motion. I express my sincere condolences to Peter's wife, Trish, and other members of his family.

Hon. K. M. SMITH (South Eastern) — I support the condolence motion for Peter McLellan. He was a good man, a straightshooter, a man of principle and something of a loner, but his belief in helping people is what got him elected to Parliament.

I knew Peter for about 16 years when he was a motor wrecker in Mornington. I did not meet him socially, but when I met him on electorate matters, usually weekly, he impressed me as a straightshooter. I recall receiving a telephone call on election day last September when I learnt that Peter had died. I found it hard to accept his death: I could not believe that our Peter McLellan had died, because he was so young.

For seven years Peter was a true representative of the people of Frankston East. If you could have entered into a computer the attributes that an elected member of Parliament should possess, what the electors of Frankston East would expect of their representative and the 100-odd other requirements of a member of Parliament you would find Peter's name would always have surfaced because the people loved him for the way he represented them. You had only to hear the way

people spoke about him at his funeral to realise the truth.

Peter was a politician with a social conscience; they called him the people's politician. He was just that — the people were right. He was tough and was always prepared to stand up for what he believed was right.

I served on a couple of bills committees with Peter. I remember having long arguments with him about liberalising the liquor control laws. I remember our once discussing the issue in the corridor beneath Parliament House. The discussion became heated, but as at the end of any discussion, Peter shook hands. He did not bear a grudge. People would listen when he made a point because he always spoke commonsense, which is what the people of Frankston East saw in Peter.

Peter was a Vietnam War veteran who stood tall and strong on his involvement in that war. He fought for the rights of the veterans when they were badly treated by the Australian public for so many years after they returned from Vietnam. I got to know Peter particularly well through my involvement with the Vietnam veterans in San Remo, where I would often bump into him. I found it nice to talk with Peter away from this place, although he was reluctant to talk about his time in Vietnam; he, like most Vietnam veterans, kept those stories to himself. Peter was always happy to stand up and fight for the rights of others.

I pass on my sincere condolences to Trish and to his children, Leanne, Maree and Richard. May he rest in peace.

Hon. R. H. BOWDEN (South Eastern) — I support the motion of condolence for our former colleague, Frederick Peter McLellan. I got to know Peter very well because in the year or so prior to the October 1992 general election Peter and I were preselected candidates for our respective seats. Peter's seat of Frankston East borders South Eastern Province. During 1991 and 1992 Peter was operating a motor business quite close to where I was centred in Somerville, and we became very good friends.

I recall on many occasions when I dropped in to discuss issues with Peter he was always friendly and offered me a cup of tea or coffee. He would produce the paper and together we would dissect the issues of the day in the context of our electorates. I knew Peter before 1991 but I quickly came to appreciate him afterwards.

As many honourable members have said today, Peter was a straightshooter and absolutely truthful. He was forthright and candid. His views were almost invariably

respected, even by those who did not always agree with them. He took many aspects of his upbringing and his values very seriously. As a colleague working in an area close to Peter's, I know the issues that affected the Frankston council were very much associated with his responsibilities as a member of Parliament and were very close to him.

Peter understood small business very well. More than 90 per cent of all businesses in Victoria are small. Small business is of extreme importance in the Frankston area and was a major feature of Peter's background. Peter had a good understanding of the pressures and issues that affect it.

Much has already been said about his commitment to the pistol clubs and his service to Parliament on road safety issues. Peter was a person of high integrity. When you got to know him you knew he was sincere. He appreciated and understood the educational values that affected his seat. He also had strong Masonic values, which on many occasions we shared.

Peter was a gifted photographer. I do not know if any honourable members in this chamber had the opportunity of seeing some of the wonderful photographs Peter took. If they ever have that opportunity, I suggest they take it up. Some of them are superb. Peter returned from a committee visit to the Northern Territory with some absolutely wonderful photographs.

Peter was totally committed to supporting the Vietnam veterans. As all honourable members know, he was a Vietnam veteran and did a great deal to help people to understand the feelings of the Vietnam vets at a time when that was very difficult. The degree of acceptance now accorded to Vietnam veterans is one tribute among the many accorded to Peter for his work. The Returned and Services League valued Peter's membership highly. I know from many conversations that the RSL will always hold his memory in high regard. Honourable members and Parliament will also remember Peter for a long time.

I extend to Peter's parents, to Trish and the family — Leanne, Maree and Richard — my condolences for the loss of a fine bloke.

Hon. E. G. STONEY (Central Highlands) — I desire to make a short contribution to the condolence motion. I came to know Peter McLellan well when we were both appointed to the Road Safety Committee in 1993. We spoke the same language and became a bit of a team on that committee as it considered issues such as

speed limits, drugs and driving, drugs and the trucking industry, motorcycles and many other practical matters.

Much has been said about Peter's practical knowledge. His input was of great value to the committee. We became close because we had both driven trucks, handled heavy machinery and driven a lot of miles without serious incident. We mostly supported each other at the table. I use the word 'mostly' advisedly because Peter was his own man and everybody has to make a point occasionally. At times Peter made a stand. However, we mostly supported each other. It was good, because his practical input added to the deliberations of the committee.

With things mechanical Peter was the best I knew. He knew what it was like to drive from Melbourne to Brisbane non-stop, unload and then come straight back to Melbourne. He had done it many times. He could speak from experience about what it was like in the tow-truck industry. As has been mentioned, he brought perspective to things about which some of the committee members had no idea. He knew about the problems motorcyclists face when battling drivers, wet roads and road hazards. When the committee went on excursions, Peter drove the bus. He did it well, and he did it safely. Those of us who do a bit of driving know what it is like on a bus — you are always driving with the bus driver! When Peter was not driving the bus there were grumbles from the back, 'Bring back McLellan! We want McLellan!'.

Peter was a very good driver and knew what a vehicle could do. He often put vehicles to the limit, but did it well. So far as I know he never made a mistake. When the committee visited garages, who was the one under the bonnet? It was Peter McLellan. Who was the one discussing the virtues of a cracked windscreen and whether it could be seen through or replaced? It was Peter McLellan. His practical driver's perspective always added up.

I remember a battle fought about a design fault in new cars. It concerned rear-vision mirrors and a blind spot just over the driver's right shoulder which meant that motorists could not see motorcycles behind or coming up beside their vehicles. That blind spot was evident even in the most modern rear-vision mirrors. Peter and I battled that out, and the subject was dealt with in the committee's final report. The committee recommended, and manufacturers were alerted to the problem, that rear-vision mirrors be redesigned so that motorcycles are not hidden when travelling behind motorists.

That is the sort of contribution Peter made right throughout his parliamentary career. His viewpoint and

input were rare and practical. He was his own man and he was respected for being his own man. He will be missed in this place. As Mr Birrell said earlier, history will be kind to him.

Hon. B. C. BOARDMAN (Chelsea) — I feel proud and honoured to be given an opportunity to contribute to the condolence motion for my mate Peter McLellan. I knew him personally for a number of years both prior to his entering Parliament and since.

For the first 13 months of my parliamentary career I had the pleasure, and at times the interesting experience, of sharing an office with Peter. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Peter because during that time he was not only of great assistance to me in my professional capacity but he also showed me extraordinary courtesy. He also assisted my staff who were learning about the adjustments necessary to go from private to public life as well as the operations of an electorate office. It is an experience I will treasure for the rest of my parliamentary career.

I first met Peter in 1993 when I was a young constable at the Frankston police station. At that time — I suppose nothing has really changed — members of Parliament visiting police stations did not receive any additional attention or privilege, but in Peter's case it was different — because everyone in the community knew and respected him.

Once I was at the front desk when he came in probably to renew a shooters licence or for some like matter, given his keen interests. We got talking about politics and the Liberal Party. He was one of the people who encouraged me to join and become active in the party and subsequently to stand for preselection. He was very helpful and a great source of information. If someone rang his office — no matter who the person was — he would always take the call and assist by finding out any desired information.

Late in 1995 when the Honourable Graeme Weideman retired from Parliament I went to see Peter and said, 'Peter, I might throw my hat into the ring and have a go'. He asked me how old I was — at the time I was 24 — laughed, and said, 'Don't be stupid. It took me a number of years to get into Parliament. You have your life ahead of you and a lot of experiences from which to learn before you talk about it. Have another go'. When I was successfully preselected I told him we would be not only campaign mates but also parliamentary mates. I eventually won, and we forged a close bond.

In 1996 Peter achieved a remarkable swing against all the odds. Frankston East received media attention and

scrutiny because many believed it would be the first seat to fall to the Labor Party. However, it did the reverse and went against the statewide swing. I told Peter his success was only because of the quality of his running mate in the upper house. He replied that his success had nothing to do with that but was due only to his local campaign, his knowledge and the respect in which he was held throughout the electorate.

During the time I shared an office with Peter I got to know him very well. I got to know about his life and upbringing — about his being an amateur boxer and about his army career and position as an army medic in the field ambulance in Thailand, Malaya and Vietnam. I got to know that he was a motor mechanic who had worked for the Royal Automotive Club of Victoria and about his parliamentary career. He was a man of a million stories, and he loved telling every single one of them. I learnt about Peter's honesty, integrity, dedication and commitment and about his respect for and empathy with his community. Most of all I learnt that he was one of those true, decent human beings who would always call a spade a spade. Although Peter and I hardly ever saw eye to eye and often argued, discussed and debated the issues, irrespective of the result of our discussions we had a strong respect for each other's opinions.

Peter was committed to assisting in the drug problem, particularly with rehabilitation programs. He spent a considerable amount of his parliamentary time researching the Delaware program followed in the United States of America. His one goal was to somehow and at some time implement a similar program in Victoria. He was vehemently opposed to safe-injecting facilities and harm minimisation. He believed the key to success in combating the drug problem in Victoria was through education and rehabilitation.

Most of all, in Peter I saw a man who enjoyed incredible local popularity, not only among members of the Returned and Services League and Vietnam veterans but also in his local community. His popularity even extended to local Australian Labor Party branch members, who saw him as an effective and good local politician.

When Peter left the Liberal Party we had words and did not talk for a little while, although we exchanged pleasantries as usual. However, I always had a deep respect and affection for him. In his local campaign as the people's pollie he relied on two key friends: an ex-Labor Party branch president, Bill Trotter, and an ex-Labor Party voter, Fletcher Davies, who recognised his commitment and contribution to the local

community. They dedicated their time to ensuring that he had the best campaign available.

I clearly remember being told on election day, shortly after his body had been discovered, that Peter had passed away. Apart from my initial upset and distress, I found the situation difficult because I was still actively campaigning out there and people were still handing out Peter's how-to-vote cards, but because of the sensitivity of the matter I could not tell them he had passed away. I felt awkward and distressed in my difficult position.

I had always thought Peter would go away with a bang — and, boy, did he go away with a bang. His story will be told many times over. To my friend and colleague who made a great contribution to public life and had the respect of members on all sides of the house, I say goodbye. I offer my sincere condolences and sympathy to his wife, Trish, his children Leanne, Maree and Richard, his four grandchildren, his parents and sister who live in Queensland, members of the Frankston East and Victorian communities, and friends who knew and respected him.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

That, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Frederick Peter McLellan the house do now adjourn until tomorrow at 10.00 a.m.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 5.57 p.m.